

## The Daily RYS 11/24/06 Early Life of RYS VI

From The Mussar Movement, Volume 1, Part 1, pages 187 - 188.

It was at this time that an event occurred that was to impress its mark upon R. Israel and determine the course of the rest of his life. Among those who would frequent the Bet Midrash where R. Israel would be studying, was R. Zundel. R. Israel began taking note of R. Zundel's singular behavior, and closely to scrutinize all his actions and manners. It did not take long before R. Israel "would come and go as one of the family household, and contemplate (R. Zundel's) habits and how he served G-d, counting his every step. When he (R. Zundel) would go into the fields to study and rehearse his dicta relating to the fear of G-d and Musar, R. Israel would follow unobserved, so as to watch and listen to the sublime words of Musar."16 Once, R. Zundel suddenly became aware of R. Israel's presence. Seeing his interest, R. Zundel called out: "Yisroel, study Musar and you will become G-d fearing." The incident burned deeply into the young soul, and he became altogether transformed. In later years he would relate that "when he heard the voice of R. Zundel ordering him to study Musar, a fire, as it were, had descended to the very depths of his heart."

Although himself a noted Torah authority, R. Israel accepted R. Zundel as his Rebbe. "He attended him in sanctity and from him he acquired the approach to fearing G-d and Musar in serving G-d. He attended upon him (lit. "poured water on his hands") for many years, till his Rebbe left to dwell in honor in the Holy City of Jerusalem, may it be reestablished." Thereafter, R. Israel began to advance to ever higher levels in his fear of Heaven. With the full brilliance and keenness of his intellect, "he devoted himself to understanding and knowing how to serve G-d," to broadening and deepening the Musar discipline. He put all his faculties to use "to achieve spiritual purity and sense of the holy, to rise above temporal pursuits." Thus he continued to grow until he was exceedingly great, and he became the symbol of virtue and perfection to his entire generation.

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