

The RYS Daily 11/27/06 Early Life of RYS VIII

From The Mussar Movement, Volume 1, page 189.

In similar vein, R. Israel initiated a new system of Torah study. At first, he rejected the pulpilistic approach to learning current in his time. He regarded such constructions as a deviation from the truth, and as encouraging pride and self-glorification. His youthful experience taught him that students would thereby try to show their powers to one another with their smart inventions, and that they would tend to traduce reason and distort the truth. He accordingly abandoned the approach altogether — and instead adopted a straightforward method by which he endeavored to discover the real intent of the Torah — and so arrive at the truth. Not long afterwards, he changed his mind, realizing that even the "objective" method gave rise to the same desire to exhibit one's mental powers, and could just as well lead to deviation from, and perversion of the truth, and to pride and arrogance. He thereupon gave his approbation to the pilpulistic and sharp,vitted approach, as necessary, as the sine qua non for the development of the student's proficiency in learning (his "ability to learn"). Yet he did not adopt it in its original form, but modified, deepened and broadened it, and did not regard it as an end in itself, but as the .means for clarifying the content, and from there to advance to the discovery of the truth.

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