

## The RYS Daily 11/28/06 Early Life of RYS IX

From The Mussar Movement, Volume 1, Part 1, pages 190 - 191.

Animated by the same critical spirit, R. Israel undertook the investigation of how best to become a truly G-d-fearing personality. His first thought was to conceal himself from the public eye, and to live in obscurity, freed from the distractions of fame and honor. He considered following the footsteps of Reb Zundel, to earn a living as one of the masses and serve G-d unobtrusively, and all the time to conceal his mental stature and piety. To prepare himself for such a life, he began committing the Talmud, Tosafot and other commentaries to memory. This would enable him to continue his studies under all conditions. He succeeded in learning half the Talmud by heart." He trained himself to pray like a common wagon driver, to recite the words at high speed, and yet to pray with all requisite concentration and fervor.= ' He sought a locality where he could live without anyone knowing his identity. It is told that he was about to accept a position as bookkeeper in the German city of Memel close by the Lithuanian border.

Suddenly, he changed his mind. He decided that anyone capable of influencing others had no right to live in seclusion. It was his duty to help his fellow men. "Just as in the material processes of the world, it is forbidden for one to work merely to feed his own mouth, since the world is based on kindness,' but is duty bound to bestow good upon others as well, and to consider the poor ... so in matters of the world to come, one is not merely to seek, gather and hoard all the spiritual bliss for himself alone, and to say: 'You are at peace, my soul,' but must enhance the glory of Heaven, have pity and compassion on human beings, and turn their hearts to fear G-d and to walk in His ways." The spiritual degeneration of Jewry was already becoming evident, and R. Israel was convinced that all who were capable had to rally to its rescue.

So strong had his conviction become, that he could not comprehend how "anyone, preeminent in learning and piety could hide himself at such a time, to sit modestly secluded in silence without a care for the generation..." He complained bitterly against many of the great leaders of the past generation, who had isolated themselves and had made no effort to educate their generation and strengthen its spirit. He did not hesitate placing the blame squarely upon them for the spiritual decline that had set in.

Earlier issues of The Daily Salanter are at  
<http://www.stevens.edu/golem/llevine/salanter/>