

The RYS Daily 11/30/06 Early Life of RYS XI

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Now his life's mission had once and for all become clear to him. He decided that the Jewish image could be repaired and Jews restored to the true path only through the agency of Musar, and so he resolved to dedicate his life to this purpose, to reverse the current of spiritual decline and thus change the fate of the entire generation. Yet he had so far not conceived any definite plan of action. For the time being he continued to seek and to grope.

He did realize, however, that without possessing an established reputation as a recognized Gaon in Torah learning, he would find no avenue of approach to Lithuanian Jewry. So, after an inner struggle, he decided to rise up to his full stature before the masses. At first he traveled through the various towns of the vicinity delivering his Torah discourses. Wherever he came, he astounded his audience by his genius. His name became a household word. Only a short time passed before the chorus of praise echoed through the world of Torah scholarship, that a mighty Torah genius had arisen in Israel.

R. Israel took full advantage of his new-found fame. Wherever he spoke, he seized the occasion to admonish his audiences, to administer moral reproof to them, to rouse them to spiritual revival, and so to gain adherents for his approach. An eloquent, gifted orator he instilled the fear of G-d in many hearts and drew people closer to their Father in Heaven.

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