

From The Mussar Movement, Volume 1, Part 1 pages 229 - 230.

Arriving in Kovno, R. Israel contacted R. Zvi Nevayzer, a prominent philanthropist, and obtained his consent to the establishment of a Yeshivah in his Bet Midrash where the Musar spirit would be cultivated. Here R. Israel abandoned his original methods and adopted a more concentrated program. In Vilna he had brought his influence to bear upon mature laymen who had already established themselves and were leading their own, independent lives. He had hoped that by imparting a sound Judaism to them, he would effect a change in the rising generation as well. The education of the parents would ensure that their children would be raised correctly. To educate and effect changes in the lives of adults is a most difficult task, however, and entails the dissipation of effort among broad and diverse groups. In Kovno, however, he concentrated instead, for the most part, upon the education of the younger generation, training them in their formative years. He founded Bate Midrash where these young men would become great Torah scholars and at the same time Musar personalities imbued with the fear of G-d.

To some, these Bate Midrash appeared to be his answer to the Rabbinical Seminaries, to act as the bulwark against the specious "enlightenment" of the Haskalah and the foreign influences penetrating into the Jewish community. His disciples would be the true rabbis, outstanding in their knowledge and piety, who would dispel darkness that had enveloped the Jewish world.

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