

The RYS Daily 1/31/07 Kovna XVIII

From The Mussar Movement, Volume 1, Part 1, page 242.

Apart from his having to earn his livelihood, another factor, too, was involved. When R. Israel left Vilna, the heads of the Kovno community were desirous that he settle among them. They accordingly asked R. Leib Shapiro (d. 1853), the local rabbi, for his opinion. R. Leib agreed that R. Israel should live in Kovno, but on one condition: He was not to reside there as an ordinary layman, but would have to accept some position which would entail his rendering Halachic rulings. When asked his reason, R. Leib replied: "Even the greatest Gaon and most sublime saint cannot understand or sympathize with the soul suffering of the person responsible for giving Halachic rulings to the public, and to judge him favorably — unless he, too, happens to be in the same position." Consequently, R. Israel was forced to accept some communal office.

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