

From The Mussar Movement, Volume 1, Part 1, pages 243 - 244.

As time passed, however, R. Israel realized that his office deprived him of the opportunity to study and distracted him from what he had set as his main function in life — to increase the fear of G-d in Israel. He might have had other reasons as well. Accordingly he relinquished his public offices.

During all this time, opportunities had arisen for him to assume honored rabbinical positions. The city of Suwalki addressed a formal letter of appointment to him. He was invited to become rabbi of Kovno" For "private reasons" he turned both down. **He was therefore forced to compromise his principle and make his peace with deriving his support from benefactors, since this relieved him of the responsibility of making a living and left him free to devote himself unhampered to his Musar mission. "That righteous man deplored this all his life" and held that he was supporting himself by robbery.** Yet he could let nothing stand in the way of his spreading the Musar doctrine in the world. His excuse was that being freed from financial cares, he could bring benefit to the entire community. For some time he accepted a regular allotment from R. Zvi Nevayzer, the philanthropist who had placed his Bet Midrash at R. Israel's disposal. Later, his disciple, the well known, generous public figure, R. Elijah Levinsohn of Kretinga, provided him with an allowance of 800 roubles per annum, and this is how he supported himself and his family for the rest of his life. When R. Elijah ran into difficulties and could not afford more than 200 roubles per annum, the balance was defrayed by a certain Friedlander. **Apart from the fixed sum, R. Israel would accept no other benefit from anyone, and even this allowance he reduced to the bare minimum of his requirements, to providing him with the basic necessities of life.**

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