

## The RYS Daily 2/6/07 Germany II

From The Mussar Movement, Volume 1, Part 1, pages 247 - 248.

Despite these reasons, his departure from Russia evoked extreme astonishment. Was no room left in the vastnesses of Russia for further achievement? Millions of Jews lived within its territory and they constituted the center of world Jewry. His disciples turned to him for an explanation. By way of a reply, R. Israel drew this analogy: Horses going downhill had run amok. The driver tried to restrain them, but to no avail. To try to pull them back would only endanger his own life. He would be dragged underfoot and trampled to death. Only after the horses had managed to reach the bottom of the hill would he be able to rein them in. Judaism was in a similar state. Spiritually, the Russian Jewish communities were petting downhill and no one could do anything to slow them down. In Germany, however, the downhill race had run its course, and the horses had moved so far away that it was now possible to check and set them straight!

It was illness that first forced R. Israel to come to Germany. He was compelled to travel to Halberstadt in 1847 for medical attention, and he stayed for some time as the guest of R. Shalom Hirsch' From then onwards he settled permanently in Germany. After recovering his health, he moved to Koenigsberg, where he began his activities, concentrating them first upon academic youth. He would invite local Jewish university students to his home. Every evening he would conduct classes for them in the Books of the Prophets, Talmud, Musar and Judaism. He was assisted by R. Jacob Zvi Mecklenburg (author of Haketav Vehakabbalah), the local rabbi. It was then that he published, anonymously, his famous Iggeret Hamusar (Musar Epistle) bound in a single volume together with the Tomar Devorah (Koenigsberg, 1858).

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