

The RYS Daily 3/23/07 Public and Political Action VIII

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These meetings revealed the typical dedication of the great Torah personalities to the welfare of their people. R. Israel's dynamic devotion and keen foresight were especially prominent. At one of the meetings called by R. Israel, an interesting encounter took place. Present were a number of eminent Torah authorities, among them: R. Elijah Schick of Lida (known as R. Elyele Zhagerer), and the prominent laymen previously mentioned: R. Elijah of Kretinga and R. Hillel of Mtsislavl. While the meeting was still in progress, the time for reciting the Minchah service was passing by. R. Israel stood up to recite the Tefillah. R. Elijah protested. Not only were they exempt from praying but it was forbidden, for the sake of Minchah, to interrupt the deliberations which were a matter of life and death. R. Israel conceded that, legally, R. Elijah was correct. However, troubles came so frequently, because of their manifold iniquities, that if people would follow this rule, they would cease praying altogether and forget how to worship. They would become devoid of Torah and Tefillah. He would therefore pray individually since the interruption would be very short. R. Elijah refused to accept the contention, and declared that such prayer was an abomination. When R. Israel finished, he said smilingly, that the two opinions held equal validity: "They are both the words of the living G-d". R. Elija had to show that danger to life sets aside all obligations, and he had to demonstrate that this practice should not become the rule, so that reciting prayers in their fixed times should not, G-d forbid, be eradicated from Israel."

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