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One of his closest associates once asked him: Why did he expend so much effort? R. Israel answered by using an analogy: "Once the government conducted a search in the streets of Vilna. Every passer-by was stopped and his identification document examined. When an investigation was made to discover the reason behind this action, it was found to be the outbreak of the French Revolution. Because of the occurrences in France, the Russian government became fearful that similar disturbances might erupt in its territory, and hence the order was given to institute the examination. The same situation obtains on the Jewish front. When we see such a disavowal of Judaism and assimilation in Germany, we must immediately examine our defences and repair all breaches."

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