

The RYS Daily 5/16/07 Last Days IX

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In 1882, two events occurred to R. Israel which he took as a Heavenly sign for him to leave Paris. Once he remained behind alone in the synagogue of the new community. A demented Jew suddenly fell upon him and demanded that he bring the Messiah forthwith. If not, he would murder R. Israel. Deeply engrossed in thought as usual, R. Israel did not notice the madman at first. The wild screams and repeated threats finally roused R. Israel, and he raised his head and looked at the madman in surprise, who thereupon became infuriated and rushed to seize a block of wood to beat him. R. Israel managed to close the door quickly and so to save his life 1'

Then he had an accident. Leaving Dr. Sternheim's lodgings, he slipped and fell down the steps. When he was lifted up, hardly any life was left in him. Miraculously, he was not hurt badly. He recovered his health in a few days.

In a letter to his son-in-law, R. Elijah Eliezer and the family, dated Shushan Purim (March 6, 1882), R. Israel mentioned the mishap: "Last Sunday, I experienced a miracle, thank G-d. I was walking along the corridor in the dark and didn't know the door was open. I fell down thirteen steps to the ground. Thank G-d I was only bruised at the back of the head and I hardly felt any pain."

Having been fully convinced that he was an emissary engaged in the performance of a mitzvah, R. Israel had always been confident that no evil would befall him in Paris. He expressed himself in this vein to R. Isaac Blazer: "As for me, my spirits do not fail, and I have no fear, since I am not living in Paris for any personal motives, but only to fulfill the will of G-d, may His Name be blessed; hence Paris can do me no harm." " After undergoing these experiences, however, he decided to leave. One particular morning, he awoke, packed his belongings and left. When asked the reason for his sudden departure, he told his surprised acquaintances that he did not want to die in Paris, as if he had received a premonition that his days were numbered.

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