

The RYS Daily 5/3/07 His Son

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R. Israel also discerned the danger in students making science their major field of interest. Beside the harm that would ensue through the increase of ignorance and a declining familiarity with the sources, this would also entail alienation from religion and encourage assimilation. In a specific instance, he unequivocally expressed his views. He gave vent to his extreme grief at one of his sons, Yom Tov Lipman Lipkin, becoming a scientist.

Gifted with intelligence of the genius class, influenced, and aided and abetted by the Maskilim, Lipman left the parental home at the age of fifteen and studied philosophy at the universities of Koenigsberg and Vienna. After receiving the degree of doctor of philosophy, *summa cum laude*, he went to St. Petersburg for advanced research and in order to take up the post of professor. He invented a mechanical device to convert linear into circular motion thereby solving a problem which had baffled scientists until then. The machine was known as the "Lipman Parallelogram" or the "Lipman Mechanism" in the scientific world. He earned world-wide fame and a leading English mathematician sent a letter to the St. Petersburg university, congratulating them on their good fortune to have so great a scholar, whose name would redound through all ages and whose invention brought happiness and benefit to humanity. Yet, with all his superior education and renown, he remained faithful to his people and his G—d, and was an outstanding example of high ethical conduct and noble character — his behavior remaining an eternal tribute to his memory.

R. Israel, however, was deeply distressed that his son had abandoned the study of Torah, since the son had excelled so well in it in his youth. The father derived no comfort at all from the son's remarkable achievements in the world of science, and cut off his support during all the son's student years. R. Israel exerted every effort to restore his son to Torah study. When *Hamaggid* reported in 1865, that "Mr. Lipkin was on his way to Koenigsberg to engage in advanced research," the editor added that this was the son of R. Israel of Salant, and that he was "a pride to his saintly father, the Gaon, as well, may he live, who did not prevent the son from attending lectures at university, and so to integrate Torah and science, for the greater glory of the sons of our people." A few weeks later the same periodical (No. 11) carried a letter over the signature of R. Israel with these remarks: "Since Truth is the lamp at the feet of the righteousness that goes about on earth, I find it my duty publicly to proclaim that no glory accrues to me, as the slip of your pen would seem to indicate, in respect of my son. On the contrary, to me this is a `bitterness of the spirit'. My heart grieves at the path which my son has wanted to set for himself. Whoever loves his soul and has the power to persuade him, to turn his desire not to run counter to my will and wishes, will do a great favor to one as depressed in spirit as I am today".

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