

The RYS Daily 7/10/07 Philosophical Thought I

From The Mussar Movement, Volume 1, Part 2, pages 136 - 137.

SOME OF HIS WAYS

CHAPTER 27

"CONSTANTLY ENGROSSED IN PHILOSOPHIC THOUGHTS"

We have so far delineated some of the main principles of R. Israel's Musar doctrine compiled from the few works and articles he had written. To obtain a broader view of his entire approach, it is necessary to turn to his personality and mode of living rather than his literary remains. Like every other Musar exponent, he manifested his outlook in his personal conduct. It constituted the mirror which reflected the essence of his teaching. It is the source of all for all the innovations and manifestations of his Musar doctrine. His personality then must be examined, his deeds depicted, to make it possible to gain an overview of his entire system.

These remarks, however, must be prefaced by the qualification that no attempt will be made here to evaluate his personality. This remained concealed, enveloped as it were in mystery. No one was capable of comprehending it in its entirety. No one really became fully familiar with it. Even his closest disciples, who spent years in his company, and gazed with their own eyes upon the radiance that emanated from his facial features, stood awed before the sight of this wondrous vision. They could not muster the boldness to appraise his greatness. Of all his disciples only R. Isaac Blazer undertook "to make known a small fraction of his great wisdom and fear of G-d, his righteousness and saintliness, and his holy manner and procedure." Yet, even he found it necessary to preface his writings with this reservation: "I am too weak, however, to recount the mighty nature of the force of his righteousness and saintliness, awesome above all praises. I shall only set down the smallest fringe of it here."

Earlier issues of The RYS Daily are at <http://www.stevens.edu/golem/llevine/salanter/>