

The Daily RYS 8/1/06 Amount of Damage

From The Mussar Movement, Volume I, part 2, pages 207 - 208.

What evoked most surprise was that R. Israel took no account of the amount of damage - the view current among the masses. He applied the full severity of the law of robbery or damage just as well to a penny's worth as to large sums, for the law of robbery did not make any such distinctions. In 1835 the famous controversy broke out between the Vilna and Slavia publishing houses. It created a furor in the Jewish community. Contemporaneous geonim compiled lengthy responses on the case, some ruling in favor of one litigant, others in favor of the other. R. Israel protested: "Why is it that only in a case involving the wealthiest people, where large sums of money are at stake, has such a furor raged in the camp of the great Torah authorities? Why did no similar tumult occur in a dispute between two poor men? Does not the Torah enjoin: 'You shall hear the small and the great alike'¹⁰ and 'a case over a perutah is the same as a case involving 100 maneh?'

R. Israel paid the most discriminating attention to these matters. He served as the living example of the awareness of, and attention to, this field. He would study Musar especially as it applied to such matters.

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