

### The RYS Daily 12/8/06 Vilna III

From The Mussar Movement, Volume 1, Part 1, pages 198 - 199.

As time progressed, an increasing number of pupils drawn from Vilna and its environments gathered around R. Israel. Among these were a number of prominent Torah scholars. R. Israel founded an excellent Yeshivah there, where many famous Geonim received their education. In 1846, Sir Moses Montefiore stopped over in Vilna; he paid a visit to the Yeshivah in the Zarece grounds and the two conversed together for some time? "R. Israel disseminated Torah to all who came to hear him, and would deliver daily discourses. He opened his storehouse of knowledge and displayed his powerful command of all aspects of Talmudic study, in dialectic, in sharp witted invention, in presenting the plain meaning of the text, and in delivering profoundly into the Halachah. He also taught how to proceed in rendering Halachic rulings and wrought wonders in bringing forth pearls, deriving novel laws" (from the text).

His lectures were so keen and profound that few could follow them to the end. R. Hillel Milkovsky of Umstislavl compared him to R. Jonathan Eybeschütz of Prague, and related that he "was seized with a headache for several weeks in consequence of his straining to follow R. Israel to the depths of his ideas and to grasp for once the profundity of his dialectical discussions." His shiurim became the topic of conversation among the great scholars, and "in ail the Bate Midrash of Vilna, people would discuss and debate his 1tovellae." Apart from the keenness of his argumentation, he also demonstrated his phenomenal erudition in all fields of Torah learning, particularly in the Choshen Mishpat, to the extent that the Geonim of the time felt overwhelmed by him, "and regarded themselves as dwarfs in the presence of a terrifying giant."

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