

The RYS Daily 1/7/07 Rabbinical Seminaries

From The Mussar Movement, Volume 1, Part 1, pages 223 - 224.

It would be worthwhile to quote some excerpts referring to this subject from his private correspondence, the further to clarify his position : While he regarded the attainment of proficiency in practical rulings and of fitness for the rabbinate as a sine qua non for every student, he also took cognizance of the necessity for each to earn a livelihood: "In our days, when decisors are becoming scarcer, it is fitting that whoever has the fear of G-d should strive with all his might to attain the level of finesse for giving rulings. Thus should everyone presently engaged in assiduous Torah study become accomplished. The most basic [requirement] is for him to be sufficiently equipped to become rabbi or dayan, whichever befits him. To earn a living is also a worthy matter, according to the Torah. It is one's responsibility to care for his wife ... and one may not be lax in matters pertaining to one's fellow man... At a time like the present, this must be the objective of rendering decisions and studying for its own sake, to develop to reach the goal of the rabbinate."

On the other hand, he was opposed to the Rabbinical Seminaries that had been established in Germany, where the entire objective of study was to earn a livelihood. He expressed his view in these terms : "In my opinion it is a crime for the pious of Germany to be included in this, even though the world abroad seems to have to depend on the few pious. Indeed, this is their way: the very basis of the learning will be an axe to grind ... and this will be the `root of fruit of gall and wormwood,' that they will raise [rabbis] permitting what is forbidden, G-d forbid. As for us, we will follow the practice of our youth, where the Torah students and their supporters have in mind solely to produce great Torah scholars. Only afterwards, because of the lack of a livelihood, did they make it an axe to grind. And even the few who did study for ulterior motives were nullified by the majority."

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