

From The Mussar Movement, Volume 1, Part 1, pages 250 -251.

Because of its geographic location, Memel had become a great commercial center. Thousands would stream there from the surrounding provincial towns of Lithuania to transact their business. Jews of the district who had known R. Israel from his youth, from the time that he had lived in nearby Salant, would stream to his house in Memel whenever they happened to come there, to listen to his remarks and to receive instruction from him.

In Memel, too, he concentrated his main attention upon the youth, the Torah students. A number of them were studying in the local Bet Midrash, as was the prevailing custom of the time. R. Israel watched over them, addressed them periodically, instructed them in Musar and in the fear of G-d, and provided them with their needs. When the new synagogue building was in the process of construction, he persuaded those responsible to erect a special annex to serve as a dormitory for these pupils. [9] He also took an interest in the university students and organized classes for them in his home, where he would lecture on the ethics of Judaism. He maintained continuing contact with several of them and kept check on the progress until they reached manhood. [10] Some became leaders of German Jewry.

9. The synagogue was formally dedicated with elaborate celebration in 1875 in the presence of the rabbis of all nearby localities, both Lithuanian and German, and R. Meir Leibush Malbim, then rabbi in Koenigsberg, also participated. In his address, he quoted the verse, "How goodly are thy tents O Jacob, thy dwelling places O Israel," and applied it to the present in this form: "How goodly are your tents, O Memel, if R. Israel resides in your dwellings."

10. Among these, the following are known to us: Rabbi Dr. Naftali Ehrmann: Dr. Wohlgemuth, son of the local rabbi; the son of R. Shabbetai Hurwitz of Memel; Mr. Jacob of Berlin, and others. (R. Israel's letters to Rabbi Dr. Ehrmann, preserved in the latter's private archives).

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