

The RYS Daily 3/14/07 Public and Political Action I

From The Mussar Movement Volume 1, Part 1, page 275.

CHAPTER 15 PUBLIC AND POLITICAL ACTION

Once he had taken up residence in Kovno, R. Israel began a new chapter of his life-history — his involvement in political action.

Until then his activities had chiefly been confined to spreading the fear of Heaven — to the realm of the spirit. Now, however, he began to take interest in the Jewish situation in Russia, and he emerged as a public and political figure of world stature. Here, too, all his deeds were motivated by his Musar principles, according to which the love for one's fellow human being and the performance of deeds of human compassion and kindness are among the main obligations devolving on every individual person — no less than the propagation of Torah learning and piety. And here too, R. Israel threw himself into these endeavors with his same devotion and indefatigable energy.

He organized public action and interceded on government level on a broad scale both in Russia and in the neighboring territories. His eyes were open to every event that transpired or was liable to occur; he propounded plans for the present and the future, and sought to rectify whatever was possible. He placed himself at the head of all the endeavors. He instigated and initiated them, and secretly guided all who played any role and his accomplishments were many and varied.

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