

## The RYS Daily 3/2/07 Expands VIII

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R. Israel already had this goal (of training young men to become poskim) in his mind's eye when he established his Yeshivah in the Nevayzer Bet Midrash. There, too, he had taken in young married men and had striven to assist in the maintenance of their families. Here, however, he had the opportunity to establish an independent institution dedicated exclusively to this purpose.

He was fully aware that, to succeed, such an institution had to be headed by an outstanding Torah genius. Living in Memel, he dispatched his friend R. Eliezer Jacob to approach R. Alexander Mosheh Lapidus of Rossieny (Raseiniai), long a faithful follower of R. Israel's doctrine, to accept the post. R. Alexander Mosheh referred the offer to R. Isaac Elchanan Spektor, rabbi of Kovno from 1846 onwards, one of the very greatest of all Torah authorities of the generation.

In the meantime, R. Eliezer Jacob had also approached his relative, R. Nathan Zvi Finkel of Kelm, who had, apparently, been party to the idea ever since it had been conceived and had participated in its modest beginnings. The two gathered some ten outstanding young married men and accommodated them in one of the Bate Midrash of Slobodka, a suburb of Kovno." Among the first students, all destined to attain fame, were: R. Naftali Hertz Halevi, later to head the Bet Din of Jaffa; R. Isaac Maltzan of Kelm; R. Eliezer Shulevitz later to found and head of the Yeshivah of Lomza; R. Zvi of Tzaikeshoki; R. Notte Ginzburg of Vasilishok. R. Naftali Amsterdam was the tenth.

At first, R. Isaac Elchanan was reluctant to accept the offer, since he had become so heavily preoccupied with communal affairs. Once the institution had become firmly entrenched, and his son R. Zvi Rabinowitz — then engaged in business — had promised to share in the administrative duties, R. Isaac Elchanan agreed to take it under his wing and it thereafter bore his name.

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