

The RYS Daily 4/15/07 RYS in Kovno

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From The History of the Musar Movement 1840 - 1945 by Lester Samuel Eckman, Sheingold Publishers, 1975, pages 104 - 104.

It is interesting to me to note that the approach that RYS urged teachers to take described in the last paragraph is essentially the one that Rav Avigdor Miller took when he gave his shiurim.

Rabbi Salanter in Kovna

Many well-known Talmudists in the vicinity of Kovna attended Rabbi Salanter's discourses on Torah and morality. At the same time, Rabbi Salanter did not neglect the masses, to whom he spoke with simplicity and warmth.

Rabbi Israel Salanter took an active interest in teaching Torah and morality to college-educated Jews. He sent one of his best students, Israel Iser Einhorn, to the Petersburg Institute of Military Medicine. Einhorn became a high-ranking doctor in the Russian army. Unfortunately, as time passed, he became converted to the Russian Orthodox faith, causing great grief to Rabbi Salanter. However, Einhorn's younger brother also became a doctor in the army—but remained committed to the commands of Judaism, thus setting an example to other Jews. In almost all of the cities of Lithuania Rabbi Salanter encouraged workingmen to form groups to study law and ethics, using the books Chai Adam (Life of Man) and Msilath Yesarim (Path of the Righteous). Many men made progress with these books and were also enthusiastic in their study of Ein Jacob (Eye of Jacob) and the Mishnah.

In teaching the book Chai Adam, Rabbi Salanter's purpose was not only to relate the laws to the masses, but also to train them to study the laws by themselves. He urged teachers to explain every word in the beginning of the lesson and afterwards to repeat the whole sentence; and the listeners were to repeat everything several times to their teachers.

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