

The RYS Daily 4/16/07 RYS in Germany

From The History of the Musar Movement 1840 - 1945 by Lester Samuel Eckman, Sheingold Publishers, 1975, pages 105 - 106.

### Rabbi Salanter in Germany

After nine successful years in Kovna, Rabbi Salanter went to Germany, where Reform Judaism, secular education and assimilation were active forces among the Jews. Many Russian Jews were startled by his departure for Germany, but Rabbi Salanter felt that "communities in Germany were already so far removed from Judaism that the time was ripe to bring them back."

In the city of Koenigsburg he began to influence university students. He invited them to his home, where he lectured on Prophets, Talmud and musar. Rabbi Jacob Hirsch of Koenigsburg shared the lecture schedule with him. In Koenigsburg Rabbi Salanter published the pamphlet Igeret ha-Musar (Letter of Musar) .

In 1860 Rabbi Salanter settled in the city of Mamel, near the Lithuanian border. There two eminent merchants, Benjamin Heineman and Elijah Fishel, permitted him to use their homes for his work, and supported him in all his endeavors. Several university students in whom he took an interest became later leaders of German Jewry. Among these were Dr. Naphtali Eherman, Dr. Vilgimuth and others.

In Mamel, Rabbi Salanter began to publish a monthly periodical, "Hatvuna" ("Understanding"), stressing morality and ethical principles. Contributing to this publication were prominent rabbis from many countries, among them Rabbi Alexander Moshe Lapidus, Rabbi Eliezer Moshe Hurvitz, Rabbi Haim Berlin, the brothers Rabbi Yehiel and Rabbi Joshua Heller, Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveichik, Rabbi Josef Saul Natanson, Rabbi Mordecai Gimbel, Rabbi Meir Aurebach and Rabbi Samuel Salant (from Jerusalem), Rabbi Zvi Kalischer, Rabbi Shlomo Kluger, and Rabbi Samuel Avigdor Tosfah, among others. The periodical ran from 1860 to 1861, and then had to stop because of technical reasons.

Rabbi Salanter did not limit his work in Germany to projects in Koenigsburg and Mamel. He became a German citizen in order to be permitted to carry on his work. He mastered the German language and dressed like a German Jew, the more easily to exert his influence in spreading morality. He spent many months in Berlin, Frankfurt, Tilsit, Halberstadt, and other cities, and in every city he found supporters who helped him to recount the importance of musar, reverence and Torah knowledge. He was in close contact with the outstanding rabbis of Germany, in particular with Rabbi Eziel Hildesheimer of Berlin, Rabbi Raphael Hirsch of Frankfurt, and Rabbi Meir Lehman of Mayence. There is no doubt that he made a vital contribution to bringing Torah Judaism back to Germany.

Rabbi Salanter, with the help of his students, established "Beth Midrashoth" (houses of learning) in many cities of Lithuania and Germany, for workers who came to pray and to study there. He also encouraged the education of girls in knowledge of the laws of

Judaism.

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