

The RYS Daily 4/17/07 Kovna Kollel

From The History of the Musar Movement 1840 - 1945 by Lester Samuel Eckman, Sheingold Publishers, 1975, pages 106 - 107.

#### The Kovna Academy of Higher Learning

In 1877 Rabbi Salanter established an academy of higher learning in Kovna, for the purpose of providing expert teachers in Torah and musar. The academy also accepted married students who wanted to pursue their studies further.

The academy was made possible by the ten-thousand-ruble contribution of Obediah Lachman and the arduous work of Rabbi Eliezer Jacob Chvas. It won the support of Rabbi Isaac Elhanan and Alexander Lapidus, who set up an organization to raise funds for it. Messengers were dispatched to surrounding cities to collect funds. Rabbi Baruch Zev, Rabbi Eliezer Jacob, and others were instrumental in obtaining the necessary funds."

At the head of the Kovna academy were Rabbis Abraham Shenker, Nathan Zvi Finkel, and Zvi Rabinovitz. In 1880 Rabbi Rabinovitz took the position of rabbi in Midway Latvia. Rabbi Elhanan called a meeting to select new heads for the academy. The newly-appointed administrators were Rabbis Isaac Blazer, dean, and Rabbis Elijahu Markel and Baruch Broida, financial administrators. Under Rabbi Blazer's leadership the number of married students reached one hundred twenty. Among them were several well-known scholars: Rabbis Abraham Burstein, Zvi Mah-Yafith, Samuel Avigdor Fivolson, Joshua Klatzkin, Haim Rabinovitz, and others. When Rabbi Salanter visited the academy he participated in moral discussions with the students. He realized how difficult it was for a student to master every aspect of Jewish learning, therefore he advocated that students specialize in one field of Torah learning, so that they might become expert in their fields.

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