

Subject: The RYS Daily 4/18/07 The Periodical "Ha-Lebanon"

From The History of the Musar Movement 1840 - 1945 by Lester Samuel Eckman, Sheingold Publishers, 1975, pages 107 - 108.

The Periodical "Ha-Lebanon"

When the Enlightenment showed that it was trying to make changes in the religious institutions of the Jews, Rabbi Salanter moved swiftly to counterbalance these attempts. For instance, the periodicals "Ha-Meliz" ("Interpreter") and "Ha-Magid" ("Preacher") were abusive to rabbis and came out in favor of changes in religious observance. Therefore Rabbi Salanter felt it necessary to develop modern tools to invalidate the arguments of the Maskilim. The periodical "Ha-Lebanon" ("Lebanon"), published in Paris, answered this need by supporting the rabbis against the verbal attacks of the men of the Enlightenment.

When Moses Lilienblum came out against the Talmud in his article "Additions to the Path of the Talmud," Rabbi Salanter asked Rabbi Isaac Margoliot of Kovna to write a book. The book, Strength of the Talmud, was published with Rabbi Salanter's financial assistance.

also chapter: The Musar Movement and the Enlightenment for more details.

It is paradoxical that the Maskilim did not mock or dishonor Rabbi Salanter, who was, so to speak, the "general in the battle against the Enlightenment."

At a time when the enlighteners covered with dust all the rabbis and believers of the generation, as it is told, and they published certain books to insult them, they did not mention the name of Rabbi Israel and they did not dishonor him. . . . At the time the writer Abraham Mapu published his book Ayit Tzabua (The Hypocrite), his enlightened friends scolded him for embarrassing Rabbi Israel through one of his characteristic scenes.

The followers of the Enlightenment "praised [Rabbi Salanter] and said of him that he was a harbinger of place and time to give life to many souls and to spread true knowledge and sound morality." One of the great writers of the Enlightenment, Kalman Shulman, said: "If there were in our time another man of his stature, there would be a revolution among the Jews."

The second generation of Maskilim also thought highly of Rabbi Salanter. One of these, Nahum Sokolow, wrote the following:

Indeed, his existence is not like our existence today; his ways are far apart from our ways. And only lofty ideas this outstanding man carried in his noble heart, and his spiritual paths are influential even now. He possessed a deep communal feeling; a people's conscience was beating in his heart, which took him out from the house of his study and made him a public servant of great energy, of strong determination.... Great he was in his spirit, in his morality, and in his thoughts.

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