

The RYS Daily 4/20/07 Boldly Conceived, Revolutionary Plans

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HIS BOLDLY CONCEIVED, REVOLUTIONARY PLANS

Since he aspired to bring about a spiritual revolution in all sections of Jewry, R. Israel considered it necessary to arm himself with scientific knowledge as well. Hence, during his sojourn in Germany, he turned to the study of these subjects. A grandson, Emil Benjamin, author of the biography, R. Israel Lipkin Salant, related that R. Israel did acquire a background in several sciences, and several times asked this grandson to "help him by obtaining the science and humanities books he needed." Among these, an especially important role was accorded to Kant's philosophical works. When in Berlin, R. Israel would be the guest of Dr. Sternheim, who possessed a well-stocked library with a fair proportion of scientific works. R. Israel would spend day after day poring over the volumes. His residence at the Sternheim home attracted attention, and as a result, R. Israel gained the reputation of a great scholar both among Jews and non-Jews. Whenever he would walk in the street, people would pause to greet him and to glance at the bright face of the "Russian philosopher", as they called him, who was always deeply engrossed in thought and who exuded holiness in all his movements and behavior. Intellectuals, too, their curiosity piqued, would strike up a conversation with him on philosophical and ethical points of interest? All were visibly impressed with his solid logic and his capacity for the profoundest thinking.

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