

The Daily RYS 6/1/07 Mussar Doctrine II

From The Mussar Movement, Volume 1, Part 2, pages 12 - 13.

He had acquired much of his doctrine from his Rebbe, R. Zundel, and from the Musar works of earlier authors, and he relied for the most part upon the dicta of the Sages of the Talmud. Yet, since R. Israel gave them expression, and covered them with flesh, bone and skin — because he constructed a consistent and coherent thought system out of them, all ascribe the initiation of the entire discipline to him.

The essential features of his doctrine are based upon his premise that the fear of G-d is a profound wisdom and can only be acquired through strenuous effort.

It is not to be grasped at first sight °° through superficial contemplation. To fear G-d involves a complete human psychology. It is a great, scientific discipline that encompasses all the problems of the world and all outlooks on life. Profound and systematic study and research and penetration to the sources are required in order to grasp its methods and cardinal principles, its specific details and approaches.

Yet more than an intellectual discipline, it is a skill, an art. It is not acquired by mere desire. It requires the most intense spiritual effort, the penetration into the depths of human drives and the innermost recesses of the spirit. The keenest means and the most sustained and consistent effort are required to master it.

This sums up R. Israel's entire Musar doctrine, The rest is commentary.

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