

The RYS Daily 9/21/06 Concealing His Greatness VIII

From The Mussar Movement, Volume 1, Part 2, pages 170 - 171.

It is fitting here to transcribe an excerpt from one of R. Simchah Zisel Ziv's letters:
"Those who had made his acquaintance in his later years should not imagine that they really knew him. It is well known that many are liable to make this mistake. The truth is, however, that — in addition to his holy practice from his earliest times very much to hide his deeds, as I now know with absolute certainty — even when he acted as light-giver to the public, he only exposed what the situation required — whether with respect to Torah or the fear of G-d. Towards the end of his days, however, he had despaired of attaining his objective, realizing that the time was inopportune. Whoever came to know him in this period, knows nothing about him, however much the person imagines that he really does. We who knew him years ago when he was publicly active, realize that we do not know him, not out of the naive belief of women and children, but by means of clear and explicit proof. We had listened to one of his public addresses. We interpreted his remarks in our own way. Years later it became known to us that he had intended something entirely different, something that would never have occurred to us and would never occur to anyone else. This happened to us many, almost innumerable times. Nor have I come to recount his praises. It is not for me to do so. Even to elucidate the little I know of him would require much more space. My purpose is merely to inform those who had made his acquaintance in his later years, and who might mistakenly believe that they know him, that they do not even know that they do not know.