

YU Tsrav Mitzion Kollal

SERIDEI ESH

GATEWAYS TO THE GREATS

12/23/18

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WEINBERG, JEHIEL JACOB (1885-1966), talmudic authority,

thinker, and teacher. Weinberg studied in the yeshivot of Mir and Slobodka. In 1907 he was appointed rabbi in his native Pilwitski (in Lithuania). While there, he lectured to a group of advanced Talmud students and contributed articles to the periodical *Yagdil Torah*. With the outbreak of World War I, Weinberg went to Germany and studied at the University of Giesesen, where he was granted his doctorate for his thesis on the masorah. He was appointed rabbi of the Charlottenburg district of Berlin and in 1924 began to lecture in Talmud and *halakha* at the "Rabbiner-Seminar Fuer Das Orthodoxe Judentum", of which he later became rector. In his lectures and essays, Weinberg introduced German Orthodoxy to the viewpoints of the eastern European yeshivot. Following the closing of the Rabbiner-Seminar by the Nazis, he returned to eastern Europe and was later interned in various concentration camps. After the war, broken in health, he settled in Montreux, Switzerland, from where he exercised considerable influence, primarily through his writing. A profound talmudic scholar, at home in the critical-historical approach of modern scholarship, well read in general literature, and familiar with current problems, he educated a generation of intellectuals who became rabbis and communal leaders. He maintained close relations with the leading talmudists of his time and was held in respect by European scholars, becoming a link between eastern and western Jewry.



Weinberg's most important work is his responsa *Seridei Esh* (1961-69) in four volumes, the third and fourth volume appearing posthumously. Among the practical problems discussed are whether animals may be electrically stunned before *shehitah*, whether it is permitted to have a bat mitzva ceremony for girls corresponding with the boys' bar mitzva, and whether Jews may lecture on Jewish law to gentiles. In the course of his responsa, which reflect his independent and incisive reasoning, Weinberg elucidates many talmudic themes. He was considered an authoritative halakhist, and problems were addressed to him from all parts of the world. His essays (published in *Li-Ferakim*, 1936, and *Das Volk der Religion*, 1949) reveal not only his own originality, but the profound influence upon him of the ideas of Israel *Lipkin (Salanter) and Samson Raphael *Hirsch. His talmudic genius is apparent in *Mehkarim ba-Talmud* (1937-38). Weinberg was also a frequent contributor to rabbinic periodicals. He died in Montreux and was buried in Jerusalem.



- **Encyclopedia Judaica. BIOGRAPHY:**

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