

T E A C H     T H E M     T O R A H

THE JEWISH STUDIES EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME

OF THE

KING DAVID HIGH SCHOOL, LIVERPOOL

prepared and written by

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Liverpool - Tammuz 5732 / July 1972

## INTRODUCTION

On taking over as the Director of Jewish Education at the King David High School, Liverpool, I found that great emphasis had been placed in the Jewish Studies curricula on the translation of texts.

Investigations soon showed that lesson after lesson of translation was of very minimal benefit to the type of pupil found at this School, and had in fact caused a reaction against Jewish Studies in general. It was thus obvious that a radical re-organisation of the curricula was necessary.

In planning such a re-organisation the following factors had to be borne in mind :

- 1) nearly ninety per cent of all the Jewish pupils in Liverpool attend the King David High School.
- 2) the majority of the Jews in Liverpool are unfortunately not observant in all the Mitzvot in the Torah, and hence rely heavily on the School for the Jewish education of their children.
- 3) a very limited amount of time is allocated in the timetable to Jewish Studies.

It can thus be seen that the effectiveness of the Jewish Studies programme in this School could be a major factor in determining the state of the Liverpool Jewish community in the coming generation.

In planning the new curricula, I have therefore used the following principles :

- a) to cover as wide a range of subjects as possible, within the limited time allocated to Jewish Studies.
- b) many of the observances of Judaism (which in an observant society the pupils would learn and see at home and Synagogue) must be incorporated into the Jewish Studies lessons at school. For these pupils a teaching of Yiddishkeit is an integral part of the teaching of Jewish Studies.
- c) great emphasis must be placed on the practical aspects of each subject and much less emphasis on the translation of texts. (All "parrot-like" translation must disappear completely).

Thus courses in practical Dinim, in which one stresses and demonstrates the practical aspects of religious observances are being introduced into the first three years.

The use and translation of texts has been smoothly blended into the various courses.

- d) the use of audio-visual aids, which today are very important and valuable tools in education. The aids which we intend to use come from Israel, U.S.A., and this country, and a number, including a sound-tape library, are being prepared in the school. I am constantly combing catalogues etc., in order that the latest suitable audio and visual aids can be incorporated into the courses.

Each course, in fact starts with a list of the books and materials which are required for that course.

- e) the King David High School being comprehensive has both grammar and secondary modern streams and generally speaking different courses have been prepared for these different streams.

Alternatively more time has been allocated for a secondary modern stream to cover a course than for a grammar stream. The pupils in the first year secondary modern stream usually have a mental age of about nine and thus methods such as colouring, which are used in a Primary School have been incorporated into their courses.

- f) ethical teachings have been introduced into courses for all the years and it is hoped that teachers will discuss these teachings in class with the pupils.
- g) gemara forms an important part of the Rabbinics course in the third year.
- h) passages and subjects dealing with the importance of the Land of Israel have been incorporated into these courses and it is hoped that this will add to the pupils love for Israel and encourage them to go on Aliyah.
- i) the various subjects within the field of Jewish Studies do not operate completely independent of one another but link-ups are arranged between the subjects. For example whilst one is studying Purim in the Practical Dinim course, one will be studying Mishnayot on Megillah and Rashi on Parashat Amalek in the Rabinnics course; whilst one is studying Shabbat and Festivals in the Chumash course, one will be studying Kiddush in the Practical Dinim course, the laws of Shabbat from the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch in the Rabbinics course and the Festivals in the Cycle of the Jewish year course.

Generally speaking, suitable text books have not been available for the needs of these curricula and so detailed courses have been written. In some cases, such as the Jewish History courses, there are suitable text books and the headings of topics to be covered have been listed.

I thank the Almighty, the gracious Giver of Knowledge, for enabling me to prepare and bring out this work, and I earnestly pray that the words of the Psalmist "Oh, how I love thy Torah, all the day it is my meditation" will become fully applicable to all those who will benefit from these courses.

NOTATION FOR COURSES.

Each course is designated by three symbols -two numbers followed by a letter. The explanation of these symbols is as follows:

First symbol .This designates the year for which the course has been written. i.e 1 signifies first year, 2-second year and so on.

Second symbol This designates the group or groups for which the course has been written, as follows:

- 3 signifies course for slow-learning group (gimmel) only
- 4 signifies course for aleph and bet groups only
- 6 signifies course for all groups.

Third symbol This designates the subject of the course as follows:

- A. Chumash
- B. Nach
- C. Rabbinics
- D. Siddur
- E. Practical Dinim
- F. Jewish History
- G. Cycle of the Jewish Year
- H. Reading
- J. General Jewish Knowledge
- K. Problems confronting a Jew today
- L. Barmitzvah (boys)
- M. Eshet Chayil (Girls)
- O. Scripture knowledge 0-level syllabus

Examples.:

Course 14C -is a first year course, written for aleph and bet groups the subject of the course is Rabbinics.

course 46F- is a fourth year course-written for all groups and the subject of the course is Jewish History