

## Rav Shimon Schwab on a TIDE Education

Rav Shimon Schwab addressed this issue when he wrote:

However, we are still very far removed from the ideal. And so are all other yeshivos and mesivtos which employ for their “English” department non-Jewish or irreligious Jewish teachers. If only the secular teacher would be endowed with a proper *hashkafah* and desire to be *mechanech* Jewish *neshamos* to become עובדי השם! Then he or she would not only manage to impart a masterful secular education with results which would impress the parents as well as the authorities, but every secular lesson could be turned into a genuine Jewish experience.

Rather than subjecting the students of a yeshivah to the schizophrenic jolt of switching over in the afternoon from *kodesh* to *chol*, and exposing them to the fascination of a foreign culture and non-Torah values, the ideal *Torah im Derech Eretz* teacher of the secular department would be capable of serving the whole menu of secular knowledge to the students as חולין על טהרת הקוש.

First of all, the secular teacher would impress his or her students with the concept that a first-class general education gives the student the wherewithal to make a *kiddush Hashem* in the outside world. Secondly, as a true *mechanech*, he or she would control the library, and all required reading of English literature would be discussed from a Torah viewpoint, clarifying where our Torah ideology differs from the philosophy of the author. The compositions written by the students should discuss the ideological Jewish interest contained in the literary masterpieces: what we can accept, and what we must reject.

The science teacher would point out, whenever there is an occasion, that all the universe is a grand revelation of the Creator. Fauna, flora, geography and the starry skies, the human and animal anatomy all are a veritable wonderland for the young mind to behold מה רבו מעשיך השם כולם בחכמה עשית. Whichever way science is exploring the universe, the teacher will show the students how all creatures reflect the limitless wisdom and glory of the בורא עולם, and how all the theories of evolution, etc., are mere theories, i.e., convenient ways to explain for a while the appearance of an inexplicable world to the unbelieving mind until a better answer presents itself.

History would be taught along with the description of the Jewish events which occurred in the particular period which happens to be the subject matter of the studies. The teacher would not miss the opportunity to stress how the Supreme Being controls the great historic drama of mankind, which is enacted upon earth by temporary rulers and heroes enslaving the disenfranchised masses, all like figures on a chess board which are moved about according to the master plan of the מלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא.

Social studies. What a wide field to teach all the required material against a framework of Jewish values and concepts! All in all, the students of the ideal *Torah im Derech Eretz* school would not only be trained to acquire a maximum of Torah knowledge, but they would also attain an exceptional degree of accomplishments in secular fields while enriching their hashkafah.

One reminiscence of my youth comes to mind. My saintly math teacher, עליו השלום, when he taught us how to describe  $1/3$  in decimal points as  $0.333\dots$ , pointed out to us that, “Here we are face to face with Eternity, so we get a faint idea what the word לנצח really means.”

Of course, all this remains a dream unless we make a concerted effort to give a gifted *ben Torah* or *bas Torah*, who is endowed with pedagogical skills and a love for teaching, the opportunity to get the mandatory diploma in a teachers' seminary. Such a seminary would have separate divisions for men and women, and would offer courses by recognized *talmidei chachamim* in the art of utilizing *derech eretz* in the spirit of Torah.

And another most important point remains. Once we are no longer dependent on Torah-less teachers of secular subjects, we will have to pay a dignified salary to our own breed of *limudei chol* instructors, commensurate with the vital role which they play in the lives of our youth.<sup>i</sup>

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<sup>i</sup> **The Fiftieth Anniversary of K'hal Adath Jeshurun**, Address delivered at 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, June 5, 1988 (20 Sivan 5748) reprinted in **Selected Speeches, A Collection of Addresses and Essays on Hashkafah, Contemporary Issues and Jewish History**, pages 229 – 231.