

David Kidouchim z"l Founder of Torah veHinouch



David Kidouchim z"l was born in 1921 in Hara K'bira on the Island of Djerba. His community (one of two Jewish villages) could trace its ancient origins back to First Temple times and was deeply insular, religious and steeped in biblical traditions. He was raised solely by his mother Gzala from the age of 6, after his father and older brother were shot and killed trying to protect a neighbour during an altercation with local Arabs.

David received a religious education at the local yeshiva but also had an incredible drive to learn as much as he could about the world around him. In the early 1940s he met a young Jewish Palestinian soldier from the British army's Jewish Brigade and was astonished to hear conversational Hebrew being spoken. This was a pivotal moment in David's life and one that was to underpin his *raison d'être*. Self-taught he became fully literate in Hebrew, French, and Arabic. A passionate Zionist and Educator, he recognised the emergence of the State of Israel and the need of the community to speak Ivrit and to have some awareness of the modern world if they were to survive and to play an active part in the development of the new state.



David z"l and his wife Tzivia

At this time women were illiterate. Young girls were taught prayers and tehillim by rote but none could read or write nor had access to any other form of education. In the 1900's the community, concerned with the secular aspect of the 'Alliance Israelite Universelle', had firmly shut the door on the outside world and boys were subsequently banned from learning anything secular. David persisted with his dream and in 1944, with the support of the then Chief Rabbi Chalfon Cohen he was able to start educating boys. Several years



Diploma Ceremony – Students with Tzivia

later, joined by his wife Tzivia and with much persistence and sensitivity to the community's concerns he set up a girl's school called Torah Ve Hinouch (Torah and Education) followed by a co-educational kindergarten.

The impact David and Tzvia had on the Community cannot be overestimated. Over a 70 year period they taught 4 generations to speak Ivrit and transformed the community's life from every aspect; from name changes (from Arabic to Hebrew), dress (arab robes to modest modern attire) to enabling integration into Israeli society with ease when making Aliya.

They were awarded several accolades in Israel and the Diaspora because of this and the community was and remains incredibly proud of 'their' school.



Tzvia taught full time until into her 70's and David was Headmaster of the school until he passed away, age 95, in 2016, whilst visiting one of his children in Paris. His last words to his wife Tzvia was 'We need to go home, the school children are waiting for us'.



David z"l was buried in Jerusalem on the 13th Sivan. During the Shiva, in Israel, the family were overwhelmed with the people who came to pay their respects – one elderly attendee even still had his school exercise books and proudly passed them around.