



The *Ruhama* Girls' School and its Principal, Prof. Shraga Feivel Melzer

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At 1926, a branch of “The *Talmud Torah* for Girls” was established in Jerusalem’s *Ruhama* neighborhood. Founded by Hanna Spitzer, it was the “first Hebrew school for girls in Jerusalem established on a foundation of religion and tradition”. This branch, known as “The *Talmud Torah* for Girls ‘A’” was transferred to the sponsorship and supervision of the *HaPoel HaMizrachi* organization in 1931, until its closing in the 80’s. The *Mizrachi* appointed Prof. Shraga Feivel Melzer, one of its leaders in Jerusalem, to head the school, whose name was changed to *Ruhama* Girls’ School, after the neighborhood. The school’s eight-year study program, from first to eighth grade, adhered to the curriculum of other *Mizrachi* girls’ schools, favoring integration of religious with national and modern education. From 1938 until its closing, the school’s administration with its mostly national-religious teachers, regularly conducted meetings of an extraordinary nature, which we consider the jewel in the crown of their educational work. These gatherings took place every Friday afternoon, on the first day of every Hebrew month, on the eve of holidays and on memorial days, with the participation of the school’s upper classes (5th-8th grades). The central theme was usually a discourse by the principal on the weekly portion (of the Torah) or the Haftarah and the rabbinic commentaries. These talks instilled hundreds of future teachers, educators and mothers with their first great love for the Bible. The aim of this article is to document the school’s history and to propose its “gatherings” as a method of education. This article provides a chronicle of a national-religious girls’ school in Jerusalem spanning two important periods in the history of the country: the British Mandate and the period following the establishment of the State of Israel.

Key words: Shraga Feivel Melzer, HaMizrachi, schools, education.