

# Reconstructing Jewish Law

By EUGENE KOHN

**L**EGALISM, the tendency to define principles in terms of concrete norms of behavior, has characterized the religious outlook of Judaism from its beginning. Unlike Pauline Christianity, which looked upon the Law as the instrument by which men were judged and condemned for their original sin, Judaism regarded it as an instrument of salvation. It held that "The Lord desired to justify Israel, therefore He made His law great and majestic" (Isaiah 42:21, as interpreted by Rabbi Hananya, the son of Akashya). Legalism has been recognized as characteristic of Judaism both by its foes and its friends. Anti-Semites have caricatured the Jew as forever standing on legal casuistries rather than on moral principles. On the other hand, Matthew Arnold regarded, as the great contribution of Hebraism to the world's culture, the Hebraic emphasis on conduct.

## The Breakdown of All Jewish Standards

In the light of this constant stress of Jewish religion on the disciplining of human behavior by explicit rules, we must view with the gravest concern the arrest not only in the development but in the operation of Jewish law in our day. The *Halakah*, the legal aspect of Jewish tradition, which was the main preoccupation of Jewish leaders and thinkers ever since the return from the Babylonian Exile, if not from an even earlier time, seems today to have almost ceased to function.

Consider how far we have fallen from any recognition of the importance of translating principles and ideals into rules of behavior. A man may be a known crook, a criminal, a person whose whole life is a *hillul hashem* (a defamation of God) and may still call himself a Jew and claim all of the prerogatives of his fellow-Jews without rebuke or censure. He may join a congregation,

even hold office in one; he may be married by a rabbi in a synagogue; he may be buried with Jewish rites in a Jewish cemetery. We have Jewish organizations and institutions that affect profoundly the fate and fortunes of the Jewish people, and yet there are no standards of conduct and character, not to mention Jewish knowledge, which aspirants to leadership in them must satisfy. Nobody today has a clear idea of how loyalty to Jewish religion should express itself in daily behavior. In regard to ritual, different schools of Jewish thought are at loggerheads with one another, and in respect to ethical conduct, there is no manifest distinction between Jewish mores and the mores of the non-Jewish population.

The breakdown of all authority and discipline in Jewish life is sufficiently deplorable in itself, but what is even more deplorable is the attitude of Jews toward that breakdown. If one points to participation of Jews in racketeering and other crimes, one meets with apologetics. Jews, we are told, are entitled to their quota of criminals. But is that a religious attitude? Since when has religion condoned sin? Of what avail is the long travail of our people for three millenia of its history, if its end product is to be men who make the headlines for their corruption and degeneracy? Of old, the main function of the Jewish community was the administration of Jewish law, the effort to implement, in terms of daily conduct, the spiritual ideals and values of the Jewish tradition. Today our communal institutions are mainly preoccupied with defense against anti-Semitism and the overcoming of handicaps imposed by anti-Semitism.

## The Failure of Religious Bodies to Cope with the Problem

Most disturbing of all, however, is the official attitude of our religious bodies to

the problem. It is to them that Jewish laymen look for leadership. But they look in vain. Not one of the major trends in Jewish religious thought shows any awareness of the gravity of the problem and the radical nature of the solution it requires.

The official position of Orthodoxy to Jewish law is that, as "the law of the Lord," it is "perfect." Some Jews, however few and far between, still manage to live according to traditional codes. As for the rest, let them return. If there is a disparity between the demands of the Law and the conditions of life, it is the conditions of life that have to be changed, not the Law. Such is the view of Orthodoxy. But ask its exponents what conditions of life should be changed and how they propose to change them, and the most serious reply that you can expect is a sigh.

Reform has another way of evading the problem. At its inception, in the days when the emancipation from the ghetto seemed to herald the speedy advent of a messianic era of universal good will and peace, Reform leaders were aware of the impossibility, from that time on, of operating with the traditional *halakah*, but they were unaware of the need of establishing a new form of Jewish legalism. Looking for a formula to adjust Judaism to the new conditions, they devised the theory that, henceforth, Judaism was a religion, and the Jews were no longer a nation in exile but a community of believers. Accordingly, the laws *ben adam lahavero* (between man and man) were conceived as lying within the province of the state rather than that of the Jewish community. And as for the laws *ben adam lamakom*, (between man and God), these must henceforth be regarded as rites and ceremonies valid only when they express and evoke universal ethical or religious ideals. All the particularistic rules, such as those referring to diet, dress, etc., were discarded. Jewish religion in its Reform version approximated the Protestant idea of "justification by faith," rather than by

conduct, although the faith, to be sure was faith in a conception of God derived from the Jewish philosophical tradition rather than from the Christian mythos.

The Conservative trend in Jewish life did show, from the beginning, a concern for the *halakah* and its adjustment to life. That concern, however, was uncreative, because it failed to estimate aright the full dimensions of the problem. Ever since the establishment of the Rabbinical Assembly and the United Synagogue, the adjustment of the *halakah* to the changing conditions of life has been on the agenda of the Conservative group. It has had a Committee on Jewish Law which instituted learned researches into the way the *halakah* might, without departing from its own modes of procedure and precedent, be so modified as to serve as a guide for Jewish behavior in our days. But during almost half a century of discussion it has produced no change in Jewish behavior. Only the rabbis listen to one another's opinions; and the laymen continue to do as they please. One gets the impression that the rabbis are earnestly seeking legal precedents to enable them to rationalize their own departures from traditional standards, and get rid of the guilt feelings occasioned by such departures. But when their lay members ask them how they should conduct themselves as Jews in the circumstances in which they have to live, the rabbis can only hem and haw. From their pulpits, however, they argue that, as a matter of history, Jewish law in every age adjusted to changing conditions without having lost its authority, and that the same could be done today.

#### A Problem of Reconstruction Not Adjustment

The weakness of the Conservative position on the *halakah* is that, although Conservative Jews deny the dogmatic, theological premise on which Orthodox tradition bases the authority of the *halakah*, they assume that the traditional method of developing it is still applicable. Like

the Orthodox, they refuse to face boldly and honestly the fundamental reasons *why* the *halakah* has become inoperative. Thus, they fail to see how irrelevant to the whole problem all their halakic researches really are. In a word, they treat as a problem of adjustment, what is not a problem of adjustment but one of reconstruction.

The distinction between the two types of problem may perhaps best be illustrated by a *mashal*. When a person drives a car, he has continually to adjust the mechanism to the changing conditions of the road. Now he has to turn the wheel to the right, now to the left, now he must put pressure on the accelerator and now on the brake pedal. But when the car comes to a dead stop without his will, and none of the ordinary ways of getting it started again seem to work, he had better lift the hood and find what is wrong with the motor. He may then discover that the car needs a thorough overhauling, perhaps an entirely new motor, that it needs to be not readjusted but reconstructed. Conservative religious bodies, in dealing with the problem of *halakah*, have not had the courage to lift the hood and find out why the *halakah* has broken down. Little wonder then that they do not know how to reconstruct it.

#### Diagnosis of the Problem

To change our simile, they are like physicians who prescribe a remedy without a previous diagnosis. Once we seriously ask ourselves why the traditional *halakah* has broken down, it becomes apparent that the problem of *halakah* is not a *halakic* problem, not one that is amenable to treatment by any sort of legalistic dialectic. During the whole period in which the *halakah* functioned effectively, its functioning was predicated on two assumptions that no longer obtain.

The first assumption was a theological one, namely, the belief that the laws were, quite literally, the word of God, and that

infractions of them would involve punishment by God, while obedience would assure His favor. Ever since a century or two before the Common Era, this belief was reinforced by the doctrine that obedience to the Torah, including the *Torah she-b'al peh* (Oral Law), assured one of a share in the world-to-come.

The second assumption was a sociological one based on the historic situation at that time, namely, the assumption that the Torah was designed for a community which was so separated from the rest of the world as to be governable completely by Jewish law, and by Jewish law only. That was obviously the case when the Jews were an independent nation on its own soil. It continued, however, to be true, in the main, even after Judaea lost its independence. Even in the dispersion, throughout classic antiquity and the Middle Ages, the relation of Jews to the states to which they owed political allegiance did not involve their personal relations to one another. They lived in autonomous communities governed by Jewish law, and their economic relations, their home life, and their education were all determined entirely by the standards laid down and enforced by Jewish law. Though denied some of the police powers which they had practiced when living an independent national life on their own soil, Jewish communal leaders still imposed such penalties as corporal punishment, fines, bans and excommunication to compel obedience to the traditional laws, both ethical and ritual. The Jewish communities were collectively subject to their rulers, but individual Jews had no organic relationship with the state or its non-Jewish population.

The uniformity in Jewish life before the Emancipation was thus possible because the normative aspects of Jewish life everywhere were based on a common religious belief with strong motivating power and on a segregated and autonomous communal life.

It hardly needs elaborate proof to dem-

onstrate how neither of these two assumptions obtains at the present time. How many living Jews believe that God ever ordered the extermination of the Canaanites, or the death penalty for gathering sticks on the Sabbath, or the prohibition of wearing a garment of wool and linen mixed? Certainly they would not be deterred from violating any of the traditional ritual taboos by fear that they would thereby forfeit their share in the world-to-come. Yet without belief in the divine source of the ritual or the ethical laws, what alternative motives would persuade modern Jews to accept the *halakah* as a whole? To suggest that it is a means to Jewish survival, is merely to invite the questions: If Jewish survival depends on such irrational forms of behavior, what is its value? Why should Jews resist being assimilated to the dominant culture?

As for the second assumption, it is obvious that Jews are unwilling to forfeit the benefits of their civil and political emancipation in order to live an autonomous ghetto existence. Even the Orthodox have had to accept the radical shrinking of the whole scope of the *halakah*. The scope of Jewish law, even for them, has shrunk from that of an all-inclusive code of behavior for Jews to one that is confined to ritual and the supplementation of civil law in the area of marriage and divorce. We say "supplementation" advisedly, because even Orthodox procedure must comply in the matter of marriage and divorce with the law of the state. It may and does insist on additional requirements, but cannot apply Jewish traditional standards where these conflict with those of the state.

So much for the diagnosis of why the authority of the *halakah* has broken down and why it can no longer be developed by traditional methods of legal interpretation exclusively. Must we, from that diagnosis, declare the malady to be fatal? I think not, but the malady requires a radical change of regimen. It needs to be treated as psychosomatic. By describing it as

psychosomatic, we refer to the fact that the symptoms of the malady are both ideological and sociological and call for both ideological and sociological treatment.

### Treating the Ideological Problem

Since Jews can no longer be made to obey any norms for Jewish behavior on the authority of a code deemed to have been dictated by a transcendent personal Ruler of the universe, some other motivating idea has to be depended on. And since the incorporation of Jews in the body politic of the state necessarily limits the scope of the *halakah* and the means available for the enforcement of Jewish standards, we have to rethink both the scope and the method by which the principle of Jewish legalism can be applied. That is true even in Israel where the Jews are a majority, as is apparent from the agitation for a national code of civil marriage in spite of the existence of religious courts that apply the norms of the respective religious communities to their own members. How much more obviously is it true of Diaspora Jewry in countries where Jews are a minority!

How then, can modern Jews, who do not accept the traditional doctrine that the *halakah* is, in all literalness, the word of God, be moved to accept any specific norms or laws of Jewish behavior? The answer is that, in our religious ideology, we must substitute a democratic concept of law for the traditional theocratic one. The democratic conception of law is that its authority is based on the consent of the governed. The authority of all democratic government is a delegated one. The delegation of authority is made because of the recognition that the individual cannot fulfill himself, cannot live his life at its best, without cooperating with his fellows in that society, and that such cooperation can be procured only if the individuals submit to rules laid down by the delegated authorities.

The democratization of Jewish law means that, henceforth, the Jewish community must itself be regarded as the source of Jewish legal authority. Modern Jews should avail themselves of the religious and ethical wisdom accumulated in the traditional *halakah*, but not of that wisdom alone. They must exercise their own intelligence and assume the responsibility for regulating their communal life by whatever wisdom they can derive from all available sources. That means that *modern Jewry must legislate for itself and not merely interpret a legal tradition.*

### Some Possible Objections Answered

Such a conception of the *halakah* may not at first sight seem religious, but it is. To the extent that the motive for accepting democratic authority is the quest for salvation or the good life, it is a manifestation of God. It bears testimony to that Power, both within and beyond man, on which we can depend for supporting our effort to achieve a truly human life, one in which the aggressive tendencies inherited from our animal ancestry are curbed by the spirit of justice and love, which is prophetic of the goal of human evolution. If we have faith in the potentialities of human nature and in the divine destiny of man to achieve ever greater freedom, responsibility and mutual cooperation, then we must have faith that the forms of behavior which can further human salvation or self-fulfilment are divine means for the achievement of salvation, and, to the extent that they actually serve this purpose, represent the law of God. The Torah, from this point of view, is sacred, not because its specific regulations are the communicated will or law of God, but because it is the record of our people's quest for God in the early formative period of its history and can afford inspiration and understanding of the divine conditions on which the success of our people's efforts to realize the worthwhileness or sacredness of life depends.

One does not have to believe that God revealed the Torah to Israel in order to perceive and acknowledge that the Torah has helped in every age to reveal God to Israel. And that is true of the Oral Torah as well as the written one.

The question may be raised whether our conception of democratic legal authority can motivate the conduct of modern men in the way that, in ages past, it was motivated by the hope of otherworldly salvation. Otherworldly salvation appealed to self-interest as a motive for conformity to the Law; is there any strong personal interest to which this new conception of authority can appeal? Such motivation may be found in the very strong desire of most Jews to belong. In our American life most individuals belong to some subcommunity of a religious character. The Jew, as a member of a minority group exposed to discrimination, sometimes seeks to detach himself from his group. But most Jews want to belong to the Jewish group partly because they fear, not without reason, that the majority group, all of whom have their own religious and cultural affiliations, will not accept them, and partly because they feel more at home with their fellow Jews, with whom they share a common tradition and a common fate.

There are two aspects to this desire for belonging. In the first place, we want to belong to a group that accepts us and that we can depend on to help us, one that accepts us not *in spite of* our being Jews, but *because of* that fact. Otherwise we would feel isolated and emotionally insecure. But that is only half of the motivation for wanting to belong to the Jewish people. That, by itself, would not motivate conformity with Jewish norms of behavior. But there is a second aspect which does. We want not only to be able to depend on a group which accepts us, but also to feel that that group *depends on us*, that it makes demands on our loyalty, that it holds us responsible and thus confers on us the dignity of moral

personality. Only a child is satisfied with the security of dependence; an adult wants the security of mutual responsibility. That means that there is a deep-seated psychological need for belonging to a community that has standards and thus helps us to function as responsible ethical personalities. Hence the breakdown of the old authoritarian rationale for conformity to Jewish standards of behavior does not mean that no alternative religious doctrine can be effective. *Such an alternative doctrine is the idea of a democratic communal authority directed to the discovery and implementation of the good life and utilizing the collective experience of the Jewish people in past and present to that end.*

### **An Important Implication of Democratic Authority**

One clear implication of this alternative doctrine is the insistence on the religious freedom of the individual in matters of ritual. In all theocratic codes, the assumption is that the traditional rituals represent instructions by God on how one must approach Him to gain or retain His favor. Any departure from the code is assumed to involve danger not merely for the individual but for the group. That accounts for the enforcement of Sabbath observance by the imposition of the death penalty for work on the Sabbath. No modern Jew would want to impose that penalty, but all other penalties for infractions of ritual observances would also be wrong. If such ritual injunctions or prohibitions are not dictated by God, by what right can one limit the freedom of the individual conscience? Enforced worship is no worship at all but mere mimicry. Diversity in matters of ritual must be recognized as legitimate.

To be sure most rituals are social and, since they involve whole groups, they become a form of collective self-expression. But they are such truly only if the uniformity of expression is based on a genuine common acceptance of the significance

of the ritual. Jews, for example, who have experienced the joy of some of the traditional forms of Sabbath observance, will want to band together for participating in them. But no extrinsic motive for observance, such as the penalizing of non-conformity, must interfere with the spontaneity of religious rites. A religious faith in the peoplehood of Israel and the value of its spiritual heritage should suffice to perpetuate those elements of Jewish customs and folk-ways which can help to hal-low one's personal life and reinforce one's ethical will and social responsibility.

### **Treating the Sociological Problem of the Halakah**

The development of the collective quest for the good life in terms both of ritual practice and ethical behavior cannot depend on a changed attitude of mind only. The somatic as well as the psychic element of the remedy must be applied. The great need here is one that has been so often expounded in *The Reconstructionist* that it ought to be superfluous to enlarge upon it. What is needed is the reorganization of the structure of Jewish communal life as a network of organic Jewish communities. The advantages of a more integrated Jewish communal life in terms of the elimination of waste and of needless rivalry and strife are obvious. So, too, in terms of the broadening of the base of Jewish communal interest. But these are minor considerations in comparison with the opportunity which a comprehensive, democratically chosen, functional central agency in every community can afford for establishing standards of how Jewish life shall be lived. The significance of the organic Jewish community from a religious standpoint lies mainly in its importance as a means of reestablishing a democratic source of authority to replace the theocratic source of authority that can no longer function.

To speak of any kind of communal authority immediately conjures up in many the fear of the sort of totalitarian rule

that existed in the old-world ghetto *kehillot*, in which all non-conformity was strictly penalized. That fear, however, ignores the fact that the kind of organic community which it is proposed to set up in this country would have to be one that differs from any under which Jews have ever lived or are living today anywhere in the world. It would rest on an entirely voluntarist basis. Jews would be free to join it and to resign from it. It would have no legal power to tax its members, though some contribution to its maintenance may reasonably be required as a condition of membership. It will not, like the Jewish communities of most European countries, be maintained by taxes levied on professing Jews by the state for the support of Jewish institutions. The rights and obligations of the members and of affiliated organizations would be formulated in constitutions drafted by the representatives of the community itself. It would not presume to dictate any form of religious ritual, since, as a democratic organization, it would be committed to freedom of conscience. It would have to recognize, therefore, the principle of diversity in unity, allowing its constituent bodies full freedom of separate action in the promotion of their particular interests, where these do not involve an unfair interference with the rights of others, and it would effect the cooperation of organizations of similar function on all matters on which they can work together.

Though lacking not only all police power, but even such powers of coercion as the theocratic communities of the Middle Ages possessed, it would still be able to develop standards of behavior in matters affecting the welfare of Jewry as a whole and the orderly and beneficent functioning of Jewish communal agencies and institutions. It could not preserve the traditional *halakah* for reasons that we have already indicated, but it could legislate standards of behavior in matters that fall within the jurisdiction of the Jewish community. It could, for example, impose conditions

on membership, which could be enforced by denying some or all of the community's services to those who refuse to discharge their communal responsibilities. It could lay down qualifications of education, character and experience for various forms of communal leadership. It could encourage the drafting of codes of ethical practice by Jewish institutions in regard to their methods of fund-raising, their personnel practices and their public relations. In a word, it could apply the pressure of a Jewish public opinion in raising the ethical standards of Jewish communal life.

The establishment of organic Jewish communities is not something that will be achieved today or tomorrow. It will come about only after a long period of evolution. Its development will probably be resisted by those Jews who are dominated by a fear that any mass movement of Jews would render more difficult their acceptance by their non-Jewish neighbors and their "integration" into the American civil community. It will be resisted by those who insist on the theocratic basis of Jewish communal life and who will not cooperate with others who do not accept that basis. It will be resisted by many rabbis, who will resent as "secularism" any attempt to put responsibility for the development of Jewish life on the laity and to take away from the rabbinate its prescriptive authority. Even Conservative rabbis, although they no longer accept the doctrine of the divine revelation of the traditional codes, still want to retain for the rabbinate a monopoly in determining what constitutes Jewish law. Perhaps they would be less opposed, if they realized that their authority would not necessarily be diminished, though it would be transformed in character, under a community organization based on a democratic rather than a theocratic foundation. Their superior familiarity with the Jewish spiritual and cultural heritage would give them the sort of authority that knowledge and experience always elicit. The Jewish layman

would still come to his rabbi for advice and would defer to his opinion if that opinion commended itself by its wisdom and its consideration of the actual contemporary situation. The rabbi, however, could not impose on him obedience to a code in the making or remaking of which he has no voice.

### What Can Be Done Now?

Must all efforts at the development of Jewish *halakah*, then, wait until some indefinite time in the future when the goal of organic community shall have been reached and all the obstacles that we have pointed out shall have been surmounted? Not at all. A beginning can be made now. It can be made by any Jewish organization whose members appreciate the need for developing standards of decent behavior among Jews and raising the spiritual and cultural level of Jewish life.

Take our congregations, for example. They look upon themselves as religious institutions committed to the sanctification of Jewish life. But to what extent is that purpose reflected in their activities? What are they doing to translate into terms of daily behavior the spiritual ideals that are preached from their pulpits and to which they give lip service in their educational activities? Most of them are utterly indiscriminate in their admission of members. They make no effort to initiate a candidate for membership into the standards of Jewish practice to which they are committed. In fact, they rarely formulate such standards for themselves. As long as one pays his dues, that is all that is expected of him. As a result, congregations include in their membership people who never attend a religious service except on the High Holidays or some personal occasion, like a bereavement or a *bar mitzvah* in the family, members who may join to promote their professional careers, or their social ambitions, or to be able to show their Christian neighbors that they are not communists but respectable

"church goers." These members then determine congregational policy, participate in electing rabbis, serve on school boards and ritual committees and hold responsible offices in the congregation. No wonder that fund-raising for synagogues often appeals to the lowest motives of competitive ostentation, that congregations resort to mendacious publicity, that there is no relation between what people say in their prayers and what they believe in their hearts, that religious schools do not inculcate a genuine religious faith or provide a genuine training in ethical character; that many congregations treat rabbis, cantors, teachers and other functionaries as mere hirelings without consideration of their personal needs and personal dignity.

By no means do all congregations fit into this description. None of them needs to. Congregations can, even now, assume a share of democratic responsibility for raising the spiritual level of Jewish life by defining the duties and qualifications of membership, and the requirements, in terms of Jewish knowledge and past Jewish experience, for holding various offices in the congregation. What is to prevent a congregation from insisting that the members of its Ritual Committee be required to make a study of the meaning of Jewish worship and of the contents of the traditional prayers so that they can judge, on some basis of knowledge, what the worship needs of the congregation are and how they can best be satisfied? What is to prevent a congregation from requiring some knowledge of Judaism and some familiarity with the educational objectives and curriculum of the school as a qualification for membership on a school board? Our laity should be given to understand that they are responsible for developing the Jewish way of life or *halakah*, and that the rabbi's role is that of resource personnel, to fill in the gaps in their knowledge, and give them guidance in meeting, in a Jewish religious spirit, the various personal and social problems that face them, but not to give orders or to



lay down the law. Congregations can, through their congregational unions, develop ethical standards in their personnel practices. Parent-Teacher Associations can discuss standards for the Jewish home and methods of developing the ethical character of the children through the home, the school and the synagogue. If the marriage and divorce laws of the state sometimes reflect standards that are lower than those of the traditional *halakah*, wise family counseling service can often effect better domestic relations than any attempts at applying the legal precedents of the *halakah*. In these and in many other ways, our congregations can, by a conscious and deliberate effort, develop standards that are based on the realities of present day life and translate general Jewish ideals into specific forms of Jewish behavior.

Other Jewish institutions can likewise endeavor to develop Jewish norms and standards. Most of the Jewish social services are supported by communal Jewish funds on the assumption that their work is part of a program of Jewish living, as indeed it should be. But what are the qualifications for the various tasks of Jewish social workers? How do they reckon with the fact that they are engaged by the Jewish community for *Jewish* social work? What Jewish goals are they striving for, and what are the principles that must guide them in achieving these goals?

If and when Jewish social workers define their professional objectives and standards in full awareness that they are expected thereby to participate in shaping Jewish life for the future in accordance with the ideal of making it a source of personal and group self-fulfilment, they will be writing an important chapter in

Jewish *halakah*. And so with all other Jewish institutions and associations.

Activities such as these can make a beginning toward the reconstruction of the Jewish way of life or *halakah*, but it may be pointed out that this represents a very limited field of influence for Jewish law, that the bulk of Jewish inter-personal relations would still be governed by the laws of the states and the nation, leaving the greater part of the wisdom accumulated in the *halakic* tradition without any influence on life. That, however, is not necessarily so, if we assess aright the implications of our living in two civilizations. Jews are not merely *subject* to the law of the land; they are *citizens*, sharing in developing that law. They are not apart from, but are a part of the civic community in which they live. The democratic religio-cultural pluralism of America gives an opportunity for every sub-community like the Jews to make its contribution to the civic life of the general community. If, then, Jews participated, both as individuals and through groups specifically interested in bringing the Jewish traditional ideals into fruitful operation on the American scene, Jewish religious institutions could influence the civic life of the country in the same way that the Christian churches do. Social, political and cultural problems which we share with our Christian neighbors can be studied by synagogue groups from the religious and ethical viewpoint, and their conclusions can be put on the free market of ideas in competition with the views of other religious and secular groups. Thus the characteristic emphasis of Judaism on behavior can be utilized as a motivation for raising the ethical and spiritual level of American life, as well as of Jewish, and the universal religious significance of Jewish legalism can thus be exemplified and applied.

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*The ideal teacher is said to be one who succeeds in making himself dispensable. He should train the pupil or student to learn to think and to do things by himself.*

*Unfortunately, too many teachers prove themselves dispensable without all this effort on their part.*



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