

**THE JEWISH TEACHER: AN AID IN
TEACHING THE JUNIOR BIBLE FOR
THE JEWISH SCHOOL AND
HOME. SERIES I, EARLY HEROES
AND HEROINES**

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The Jewish Teacher: An Aid in Teaching the Junior Bible for the Jewish School and Home.
Series I, Early Heroes and Heroines by Eugene H. Lehman

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EUGENE H. LEHMAN

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AND HEROINES**

INTERNATIONAL GRADED BIBLE LESSONS
FOR JEWISH RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS

THE JEWISH TEACHER

AN AID IN TEACHING THE
JUNIOR BIBLE FOR THE JEWISH SCHOOL AND HOME

SERIES I
EARLY HEROES AND HEROINES

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PREPARING:
THE JEWISH TEACHER
FOR
SERIES II: Early Kings and Prophets
SERIES III: Later Kings and Prophets

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INTRODUCTION

I. THE AIM OF JEWISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

"And there shall be, like people, like priest; and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them for their doings." Hosea IV. 9.

In these words Hosea tells us that people are like their teachers, the priests: bad priests make bad people and are punished for their ways; good priests make good people and are rewarded for their doings. With equal truth we may say, "Like pupil, like teacher". The religious school teacher will likely produce products much like herself. If in presenting her lesson, she aims at nothing particular, she will probably hit that mark in the pupil's religious life. If on the other hand she has conceived in her own mind a definite purpose, has thought out a plan for attaining that purpose, and is living that purpose out in her own life, the chances are that her teaching will strike somewhere near the bull's eye. The ancient Hebrew definition of the verb *to sin* was *to miss the mark*.

Of course different synagogues and even different individuals in the same synagogue entertain different ideals for the future of Judaism. These varying ideals affect vitally the purposes of the schools. Thus, for example, the conservative party declares that "the aim of the Jewish education is the preservation of the Jews as a distinct people, existing and developing in the spirit of the Jewish Religion."* Accordingly in the schools of this party, primary emphasis is laid on subjects, especially the Torah, that will tend to perpetuate the distinctness of the Jewish people.

*"A Brief Survey of Thirty-one Conferences held by the Talmud Torah Principals in New York City." Page 8.

The more liberal party, on the other hand, holds that, "the aim is to create in every pupil a feeling of Jewish consciousness, a feeling that he is a real part of that great historic world movement, that had its rise before the days of Moses, that received and still receives its inspiration from the Hebrew prophets, that has altered itself throughout the centuries to meet the needs of existing generations, that will continue onward towards eternity, true to its source of inspiration, and loyal to its mission—a feeling that God demands that every pupil, as a part of this religious movement, must live at all times, in belief and in deed, a life the highest and most useful to all mankind that the school can lead the pupils to conceive of—a life that in the largest degree possible, must help to realize the prophetic mission of Israel." Accordingly, in the schools of this party, primary emphasis is laid on such subjects, especially ethics, as will tend to produce lives lived in harmony with the teachings of the Hebrew prophets.

Find out from your rabbi what the definite purpose of your school is; then write out (merely to think it out is not sufficient for a conscientious teacher) the distinct aim of your own class for the year. This class aim should possess two characteristics: (1) it should be in harmony with your school's general purpose; (2) it should answer the needs of your pupils. Finally, write down in your Lesson Plan (see page 9) the aim of every lesson you present—an aim that will form a link in the chain of the year's work.

II. METHODS OF JEWISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Other nations are held together largely by the possession of a common land; the Jews by the possession of a common Book. The life of the nations has nearly always depended on the soldier; the vitality of Judaism, on the teacher. "The world exists only by the breath of school children", declares the compiler of the Mishna, Judah the Prince. The Jews by means of education were able to produce a result, in which all other nations failed, i. e. the Jews alone have maintained their national integrity and their religious ideals from the dawn of history to the present day. What was

this method of education* that rendered the Jewish teacher mightier than the Roman soldier?

In brief, its chief characteristic was this, that education controlled the whole of life; and education or teaching (Torah) was practically synonymous with religion. Education accordingly began at the cradle and ended at the grave. In the school, in the home, on the playground, in the market place, at all times and everywhere, the most minute details of life were regulated by a law which had constantly to be studied and rigidly practised.

It should again be the task of the teacher to make religion and life one. She has mainly two agencies through which to work, the school and the home. The school should be thoroughly organized, completely graded, and should follow a progressive curriculum based on modern pedagogical methods.**

Teachers' meetings held at least fortnightly and conducted by a competent leader should offer a definite course of study both in child psychology and in the principles and subject matter of religious education. Associated with the school should be a Home Department under the supervision of a head visitor. The purpose of this department is to make the home a laboratory where the lessons taught in the class room are carried into practise. The department should aim to bring the teacher into the home of the pupil that she might learn something of his needs, and to bring the parents to the class room and parents' meetings, that they might co-operate with the teacher. Especially is this need of co-operation urgent among our newly arrived brethren, in whose midst, the children so quickly grow away from their fathers. To "americanize" too quickly, results in making neither Americans nor Jews of the children.

III. HOW TO USE THE JUNIOR BIBLE

The aim of this edition of the Bible is to make of the pupils both loyal Americans and faithful Jews. The Junior Bible contains the soul of the Hebrew Old Testament, to-

*See the writer's article on "Religious Education Among the Jews" in the *Encyclopedia of Sunday Schools*.

**See the writer's "Curriculum for Jewish Religious Schools."