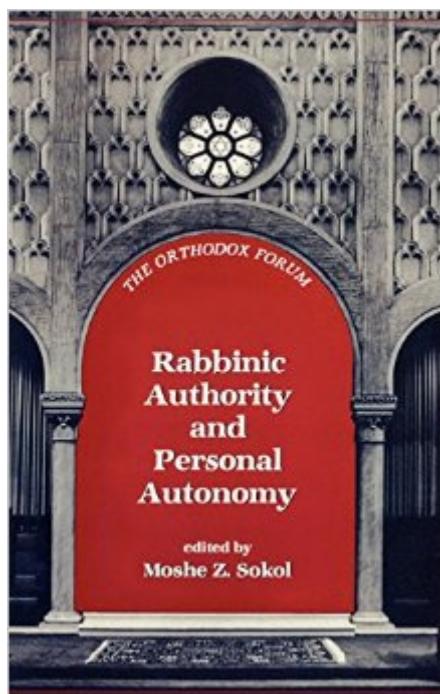


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Rabbinic Authority And Personal Autonomy (The Orthodox Forum Series)



Synopsis

Does traditional Jewish life encourage or discourage personal autonomy? To what extent are decisions of Jewish law influenced by subjective factors? Does rabbinic authority extend to all areas of life or does it confine itself to a narrower field of influence? What freedom does a rabbinic authority have to make innovations, and are there grounds for pluralism within the system of Jewish law? These questions cut to the core of Jewish life in the modern world. With the advent of modernity, great emphasis has been placed on the value of personal autonomy. Yet traditional Judaism has historically emphasized the authority of the rabbinic decision maker. The essays in this volume are concerned with exploring the tension between these two poles. Experts from such diverse fields as history, sociology, philosophy, and Jewish law explore the questions raised above. Their analyses are informed not only by their academic expertise but by their deep understanding of the Jewish legal system and Jewish life and their abiding concern for what it means to live that life in the modern world. The contributors to this volume were participants in the Orthodox Forum, an annual gathering of scholars who meet to consider major issues of concern to the Jewish community.

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