



# For the Love of God and People: A Philosophy of Jewish Law

*Rabbi Elliot N. Dorff*

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Every generation of Jews in every denomination of Judaism finds itself facing complex legal questions. The status of same-sex unions and the plight of the agunah (a woman who cannot obtain a divorce), are just two of a myriad of thorny questions Jewish legal experts grapple with today. These are not esoteric problems but issues with a profound impact on the daily happiness of countless people. How do the rabbis who draft responses to these questions reach their conclusions? What informs their decisions and their approach to Jewish law? Acclaimed writer and legal expert Elliot Dorff addresses these and other questions in this intelligent, accessible guide to the philosophy behind Jewish law. In his view, Jewish law is an expression of the love we have for God and for our fellow human beings. This theme permeates his discussion of important aspects of the law. For example, what motivates modern Jews to follow Jewish law? How does Jewish law strike the balance between continuity and change? On what grounds and under what circumstances do human beings have the authority to interpret or even change God's laws? Dorff also offers a systematic comparison of Jewish law and U.S. law, based on his course on this subject at UCLA School of Law. Whether you are a lawyer or simply interested in the philosophy behind recent rabbinic decisions, this is a book that will deepen your understanding of the Jewish legal system and its role in the modern world.

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