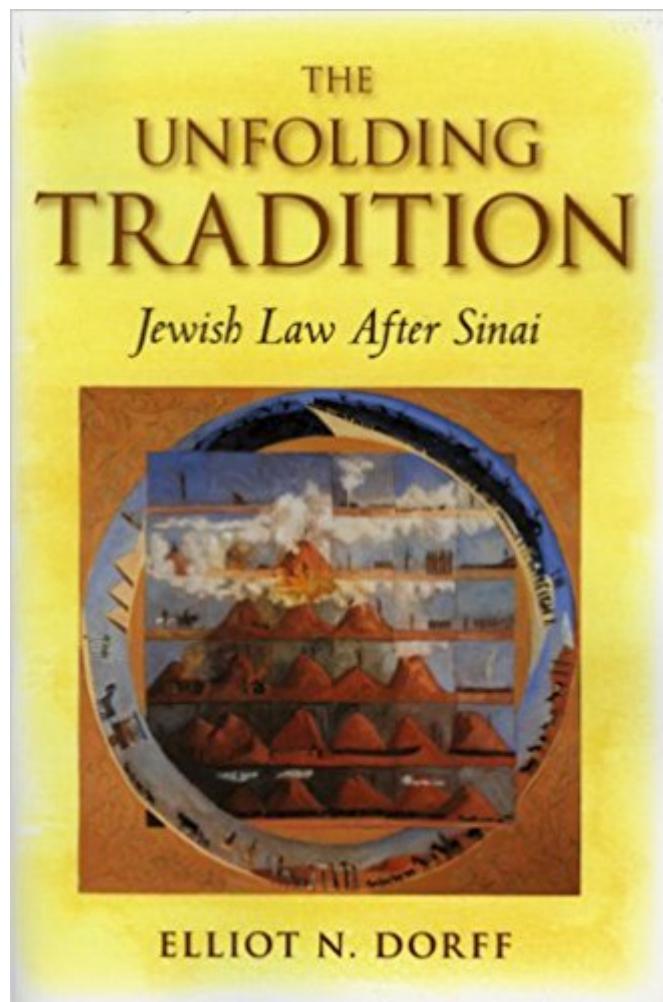


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The Unfolding Tradition: Jewish Law After Sinai



Synopsis

This volume analyzes the biblical and rabbinic roots of Jewish law, as interpreted by leading rabbis of the Conservative movement and beyond. This long-awaited work is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand the roots, development and interpretation of Jewish law in general, and for those who wish to know how Conservative Judaism evolved and what it represents.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

What is halakha (loosely translated as "Jewish law".) This book systematically discusses questions such as: Where does it come from? Are Jews obligated to obey it? If so, why? What does it mean to be obligated? How does one decide questions of Jewish law? Unfortunately, most Orthodox authors do not study philosophy, and make no attempt to systematically describe their approach of halakha. On the other extreme, Reform authors do not view halakha as authoritative in any way. They have produced no systematic view of Jewish law, and wildly disagree themselves over whether any part of should be normative at all. In contrast, it is Jews affiliated with Conservative, Traditional and Masorti Judaism who have thus produced the most intelligible and systematic writings on this subject. Not only does Rabbi Dorff systematically present his own philosophy in regards to the above questions, but he presents the views of many other Jewish thinkers, both inside Conservative Judaism, as well as Reform and Orthodoxy. Dorff presents a serious philosophical critique of every theory of law discussed: What are the strengths of each position, and what are the weaknesses. No partisan polemicist, he is equally critical of his own theory of law as he is of other people's theories. Why should anyone care about this subject? Rabbi Dorff writes:"A theory of law describes how the

author understands the nature of human beings and human society, the role of law for people and societies construed in that way, the sources of authority of the law, the ways in which the law can retain authority and yet change over time to remain relevant to current circumstances, and the relationship between law and morality, religion, and custom.

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