The Essential Agus

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GIVEN HIS TRADITIONAL talmudic training and extensive talmudic erudition, aligned with his sense that the halakah (Jewish law) required some modification to be meaningful in our time, it is not surprising that Rabbi Agus was an active participant in the discussion over the development of a distinctively Conservative philosophy of Jewish law. He officially joined the Conservative Rabbinical Assembly in 1946 and was a member of its Committee on Jewish Law and Standards from 1948 to 1986.

The following selection, chosen to accompany Elliot N. Dorff's essay "Jewish Law as Standards" in American Rabbi: The Life and Thought of Jacob B. Agus (New York, 1996), is drawn from Jacob B. Agus' Guideposts in Modern Judaism (New York, 1954), 85–137.