



# Theology in the Responsa

*Louis Jacobs*

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Responsa are replies given by prominent rabbinic authorities to questions put to them by other scholars, asking for rulings on specific issues, generally of a practical nature. The responsa literature is thus a repository of the learning and sound sense of some of the greatest rabbinic authorities over a period of more than a thousand years down to the present, and relates to all the countries where Jews have lived. Although most of the emphasis in the responsa literature is undoubtedly on practice, nearly all the great compilations of responsa also contain discussions of a theological nature since changing conditions posed problems for belief as well as practice. In this volume, first published in 1975 and unrivalled in its treatment of the subject, Louis Jacobs examines those responsa in which theology is considered and highlights the changes that have occurred in the theological principles affecting the rabbis' attitudes to such questions as life after death, reward and punishment, and the problem of suffering. (PRINT ON DEMAND)

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