The system of Jewish law, or halakhah, addresses almost every area of life. In many of these areas, legal decisions turn on the determination of facts that belong, in the modern world, to the province of experts. Thus, for example, medical expertise is essential for answering legal questions around life support, menstrual purity, and Sabbath observance. To address questions concerning mingled species and ritual blessings, the halakhic system must have recourse to botanical expertise. The dietary laws raise numerous issues that implicate the knowledge of food chemists. The dependence of halakhah on technical expertise raises practical challenges and also poses a potential threat to rabbinic authority. While modern science exacerbates these problems, they are not new. The lecture examines sources from late antiquity reflecting rabbinic awareness of and attempts to grapple with them. Its particular focus is on the issue of kosher meat.

Tzvi Novick occupies the Abrams Chair of Jewish Thought and Culture at the University of Notre Dame, where he teaches in the Department of Theology. His book, *What is Good, and What God Demands: Normative Structures in Tannaitic Literature*, was a revision of an award-winning dissertation at Yale University. He has published widely on topics in the Hebrew Bible, the Second Temple period, rabbinics, and liturgy, and is currently completing a book on pre-Islamic liturgical poetry written by rabbinic Jews, Samaritans, and Christians.