

James Madison Program
in American Ideals and Institutions



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Senate Chamber of Whig Hall, Princeton University

Autonomy, Authority, and
Freedom: A 20th Anniversary
Conference in Honor of
Joseph Raz's *The Morality
of Freedom*

Why should liberties be respected? A prominent school of liberal political philosophy holds that it is a violation of equality or some other foundational principle of political morality for governmental authorities to limit liberty on the basis of judgments about what makes for or detracts from a valuable and morally worthy way of life. Twenty years ago, in *The Morality of Freedom*, Oxford philosopher and legal scholar Joseph Raz challenged this “anti-perfectionist” school of liberal thought in the name of a “perfectionist” version of liberalism. According to Raz, respect for liberties is required because they help to enable people to lead valuable and worthy lives. Raz’s liberalism has established itself as a principal competitor to the liberalism of John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, and other anti-perfectionist liberals. To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the publication by Oxford University Press of Professor Raz’s book, the James Madison Program is hosting a conference featuring distinguished moral, legal, and political theorists to revisit its leading themes and arguments.