

## BOOK REVIEWS



**Einat Ramon, comp., and David Golinkin, ed.,  
*Truth & Lovingkindness: Sources on Spiritual Care in the Midrash  
and in Modern Jewish Thought* (Jerusalem: Schechter Institute of  
Jewish Studies, 2018), 120 pp.**

In *Truth & Lovingkindness*, Ramon, one of the pioneers of professional spiritual care in Israel, asserts that death is an inherent part of life but that this fact is repressed by many. Through midrashic (Jewish biblical commentary) and Jewish philosophical sources, annotations, and questions for discussion and reflection, she sets out to normalize human vulnerability, including death, illness, and old age. She highlights ways that Jewish thinkers and commentators have acknowledged mortality and the meaning of life. She encourages readers to use the Jewish learning method of *havruta* (learning with partners or in a group) to engage in dialogue.

This book may be helpful to spiritual leaders, caregivers, and educators from all backgrounds as they seek to stimulate or deepen conversations about mortality, human vulnerability, and spiritual healing in their communities of ministry. The book offers a glimpse into the spiritual learning methods core to Jewish thought and practice and offers sources that could be new to those well versed in Jewish spiritual resources. This book is accessible to both professional and volunteer spiritual caregivers.

A strength of the book is Ramon's encouragement that spiritual caregivers and the people in their care can benefit from discussing these topics in times of good health and joy just as much as in times of crisis. Ramon acknowledges that some of the perspectives may seem foreign and suggests that this could stimulate vibrant conversation and engagement with the material. Although much of this material is timeless, a longer volume

might more fully address the cultural, social, and intellectual tensions between when these materials were written and the current moment. Ramon's own reflections offer helpful clarifications and context.

Overall, this brief book of compiled textual and philosophical sources is a meaningful contribution to the literature on spiritual care and offers sources that will likely stimulate dialogue about life and death.

Allison Kestenbaum  
UC San Diego Health  
San Diego, California