



Jewish Views of the Afterlife

By Simcha Paull Raphael

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The second edition of the classic *Jewish Views of the Afterlife* features new material on the practical implications of Jewish afterlife beliefs, including funeral, burial, shiva, and more. With an updated look at how views on life after death have changed in recent years, Simcha Paull Raphael guides the reader through 4,000 years of Jewish thought on the afterlife by investigating pertinent sacred texts produced in each era. Through a compilation of ideas found in the Bible, Apocrypha, rabbinic literature, medieval philosophy, medieval Midrash, Kabbalah, and Hasidism, the reader learns how Judaism conceived of the fate of the individual after death throughout Jewish history.

While many affirm a belief in the afterlife, a scarce few are aware of where these teachings can be found in Jewish literature. Among the topics discussed in this fascinating volume are heaven and hell, Olam Ha-Ba (The World to Come), Gan Eden, resurrection of the dead, immortality of the soul, and divine judgment prior to death. Both historical and contemporary, this book provides a rich resource for scholars and lay people, for teachers and students, and makes an important Jewish contribution to the growing contemporary psychology of death and dying.

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Editorial Review

Review

Jewish Views of the Afterlife introduces readers to previously inaccessible parts of the Jewish tradition. As Dr. Simcha Raphael mines the riches of afterlife visions, he offers new vistas of hope and comfort in confronting death and dying. This new edition's practical guidance for integrating these insights into spiritual care with dying and grieving individuals and families is invaluable. (Rabbi Dayle A. Friedman, author, *Jewish Visions for Aging: A Professional Guide for Fostering Wholeness*)

Can we imagine a Jewish Dante? *Jewish Views of the Afterlife* challenged prevailing contemporary assumptions about Judaism as a religion focused on life, not death, a religion opposed to all 'otherworldly' speculations. Now, with a second edition of this landmark book, readers can ponder and wonder afresh what it means to accept an 'afterlife,' and how such a worldview might influence the daily lives and experiences of those who hold it. This book is a model of how to present the richness and strangeness of a religious tradition's teachings, to a wide audience, in a thoroughly readable style. (Lucy Bregman, Temple University)

Simcha Raphael's book presents an array of images on life after death which convincingly dispel the misconception that Judaism lacks beliefs about the hereafter. In this second edition, a new chapter on death rituals deepens the contribution this book makes to contemporary Jewish life. From life review and ethical wills, to the work of chevra kaddisha, the Jewish burial society, this book provides a path for those of us seeking to connect ritual traditions around end of life to the full spirituality of the death process. Those working with Jewish death traditions, personally or professionally, should include this book in their reference library. (David Zinner, Kavod v'Nichum, North American Chevra Kaddisha Conference)

Praise for the first edition:[Raphael] traces, in a synoptic style, 4,000 years of Jewish thought on the afterlife by investigating pertinent sacred texts produced in each era. From the Bible, Apocrypha, rabbinic literature, medieval philosophy, medieval Midrash, Kabbalah, and Hasidism, the reader learns how Judaism conceived of the fate of the individual after death throughout Jewish history. (*Journal Of Nietzsche Studies*)

Praise for the first edition:Simcha Paull Raphael has performed an act of resurrection. He has restored the rich heritage of Jewish thought about life after death that has been repressed, disdained, or ignored for so long and he has made the heritage accessible for the first time to a new generation of Jews. (Rabbi Jack Riemer, editor of *The World of the High Holy Days* and *So That Your Values Live On*)

Since its first publication in 1994, I have recommended this book to many students and congregants.... Wide-ranging, passionate, clearly written, and thoroughly researched.... For many readers, then, this important work of scholarship may also be a spiritual resource. For all readers, it is an outstanding example of Jewish religious creativity today as well as a window into a neglected and surprisingly rich theme in Jewish religious texts. (*Studies In Religion/Sciences Religieuses*)

About the Author

Simcha Paull Raphael is adjunct assistant professor in Jewish Studies at Temple University, is a spiritual director at Reconstructionist Rabbinical College, and has a psychotherapy practice in Philadelphia where he specializes in bereavement. He has been involved in spiritually-oriented death awareness education for more than 20 years.

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