

A Practical Guide to Rabbinic Counselling edited by Yisrael N. Levitz, PhD and  
Abraham J. Twersky, MD

A Jewish Lights Classic Reprint, Jewish Lights Publishing, 2012.

Judaism and Health: A Handbook of Practical, Professional and Scholarly Resources  
edited by Jeff Levin, PhD, MPH and Michele F. Prince, LCSW, MAJCS  
Jewish Lights Publishing 2013.

These two volumes from Jewish Lights Publishing represent a valuable contribution to the rabbinic library, regardless of in which part of the rabbinate the rabbi works.

In a Practical Guide, Drs. Twersky and Levitz, rabbis and practitioners of psychology and psychiatry, draw on their practical experience as well as memories of their own rabbinic training, to investigate a range of aspects of counselling into which many congregational rabbis will be drawn. Twenty chapters, authored by an array of stellar contributors – rabbis, therapists, psychologists and psychotherapists – tackle such subjects as Mental Health and Mental Illness, Counselling Congregants in Crisis, Suicide, Addiction, Domestic Abuse and Conflict Resolution.

However much we teach rabbinic students about the practical challenges with which they will be faced, we cannot cover every eventuality, and though this superb volume cannot claim to do that either it covers a broad enough field to make itself an essential source of advice and guidance for any rabbi about to face a daunting pastoral challenge.

Judaism and Health has a similarly impressive pantheon of contributors, most of them rabbis, and is divided into five main sections: Judaism, Medicine, and Healing; Jewish Pastoral Care and Caregiving; Jewish Approaches to Coping with Challenge; Judaism, Psychology, and Health; Jewish Communal, Organizational, and Policy Perspectives.

While some of the chapters, into which each of the sections is sub-divided, are of a practical nature, there is an enthralling balance between the practical and the spiritual, indicating, as does Rabbi Elliott Dorff in his introduction, that there **is** a distinctly Jewish approach to health and healthcare and if rabbis are to immerse themselves in health related issues they should not do it as 'semi-sanctified social workers' but rather should draw on the depth and breadth of our religious traditions in this regard. All of the chapters in this book are informative and worth reading and reflecting upon, some are exceptional: in my subjective judgement I would single out Words Worth Healing by William Cutter and Judaism and Resilience by Shira Stern.

This volume should be on the shelf of every rabbinic library.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh