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## ■ Forthcoming new book

*“The Torah was not given to angels. We are all of us blemished.”*

# Jewish Perspectives on Theology and the Human Experience of Disability

Edited by Rabbi Judith Z. Abrams, PhD

Maqom: A School for Adult Talmud Study, Houston, Texas

William C. Gaventa, MDiv

Coordinator, Community and Congregational Supports, The Elizabeth M. Boggs Center on Developmental Disabilities, The University Affiliated Program of New Jersey, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey

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## ■ rave reviews from your colleagues

*“Offers an inclusive kaleidoscopic view of Judaism and how Judaism approaches disability. Each sensitive contribution adds depth and perspective to the moral imperatives confronting Jewish law, individuals, families, communities and humanity. Read in parts or as a whole, this work is an instrumental text for study, exploration and great comfort.”*

—Rabbi Micah Hyman, MA, Chaplain, UCLA Medical Center

*“A BOOK OF TENDER SCHOLARSHIP advocating Shleimut, a whole community response to the learning challenged. . . . Multi denominational perspectives offer a wide range of advocacy.”*

—Rabbi Nathan Goldberg, Director of Pastoral Care and Education, Beth Israel Medical Center

## ■ about the book

### *A re-examination of Jewish scripture and teachings about disabilities*

Few people are untouched by the issue of disability, whether personally or through a friend or relative. **Jewish Perspectives on Theology and the Human Experience of Disability** shares moving insights from around the world and across the broad spectrum of Judaism on how and why the Jewish community is incomplete without the presence and participation of the disabled. Authors representing each of the three main movements of Judaism—Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform—examine theology, scripture, ethics, practical theology, religious education, and personal experience to understand and apply the lessons and wisdom of the past to issues of the present.

Authors from Israel, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia reflect on their theological understandings of specific disabilities and on disability as a whole. **Jewish Perspectives on Theology and the Human Experience of Disability** re-examines tradition, teachings, and beliefs to shatter stereotypes of Judaism and

common interpretations of scripture. This unique book addresses several disabilities (blindness, deafness, intellectual disabilities, autism, learning disabilities), and a wide range of topics, including human rights and disabilities, Jewish laws concerning niddah, misconceptions about disabilities in the Hebrew Bible, Jewish community programs to include people with disabilities, and the need to educate American Jews about Jewish genetic diseases.

### **Jewish Perspectives on Theology and the Human Experience of Disability** examines:

- three methods that allow Jews who are blind to participate in the Torah service
- the spiritual needs of people with learning disabilities
- the attitude of Jewish Law toward marriage and parenthood on people with intellectual disabilities
- how the rabbis of the Mishnah incorporated Greco-Roman beliefs about the connections between hearing, speech, and intelligence into Jewish law
- a sampling of opinions issued on matters concerning disabilities by the Responsa Committee of the Central Conference of American Rabbis
- how the Jewish sages have made participation by people with disabilities possible
- *and much more*

**Jewish Perspectives on Theology and the Human Experience of Disability** also includes reviews of *Judaism and Disability: Portrayals in Ancient Texts from the Tanach through the Bavil* and *Disability in Jewish Law*, as well as comprehensive resource collections. This book is an essential read for clergy and lay leaders involved in the support of people with disabilities, for the families of people with disabilities, and for anyone working with the disabled.

For a complete list of contents, visit our Web site at:  
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■ **about the editors**

**Rabbi Judith Z. Abrams, PhD**, is Founder and Director of Maqom: A School for Adult Talmud Study in Houston, Texas. She was ordained at Hebrew Union College in 1985 and earned her PhD in Rabbinic Literature from the Baltimore Hebrew University in 1993. Rabbi Abrams received the Covenant Award in 1999, presented each year by the Covenant Foundation to outstanding Jewish educators in North America. Her latest book, *Torah and Company* (Ben Yahuda Press), is her 18th.

**William C. Gaventa, MDiv**, is Associate Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and Director of Community and Congregational Supports at the Elizabeth M. Boggs Center of Developmental Disabilities in New Brunswick, New Jersey. He also coordinates a training and technical assistance team for New Jersey Self Determination Initiative, which now supports more than 300 individuals and their families.

Mr. Gaventa also serves as coordinator of Family Support for the Georgia Developmental Disabilities Council, Chaplain and Coordinator of Religious Services for the Monroe Developmental Center, and Executive Secretary for the Religion Division of the AAMR since 1985. He is serving on the Board of Directors of the AAMR, 2002-2005. He is co-editor of *The Theological Voice of Wolfensberger; Spirituality and Intellectual Disability: International Perspectives on the Effect of Culture and Religion on Healing Body, Mind, and Soul*; and *The Pastoral Voice of Robert Perske*, all from Haworth Press.

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