

A Profound Exploration of the Sacred Boundary Between Life and Death

Richard A. Light Releases *Jewish Rites of Death: Stories of Beauty and Transformation*



Santa Fe, New Mexico Dec 15, 2025 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Books To Life Marketing proudly announces the release of ***Jewish Rites of Death: Stories of Beauty and Transformation***, an award-winning and deeply moving exploration of Jewish death practices—rituals that reveal the dignity, compassion, and spiritual power embedded in one of life’s most universal experiences. Winner of the **2016 Nautilus Book Award**, Richard A. Light’s remarkable work illuminates a subject often misunderstood, avoided, or feared, offering readers a bridge to understanding the beauty and holiness present at the threshold between worlds.

A Message from the Author

“I think the takeaway from this book, and from all Jewish death-related customs and practices, is that life on Earth includes death, and both are sacred. How a culture treats its dead tells you a lot about the values and depth of that culture.

In Judaism, we strive to treat each person equally, and the manner in which we treat our dead teaches how to treat the living—and the earth as well—with respect and kindness.

Death teaches us to look through the lenses of wonder and gratitude as we walk through life. These teach us humility and kindness. This book is about everyday people helping others who cannot thank them. It's about such unconditional kindness, and the beauty and richness of including death in our lives rather than living in death denial. It creates an opening for a deeper understanding of life."

— **Richard A. Light**

Early Praise & Critical Acclaim

"Not just an intellectual experience... an emotional and spiritual one."

Literary consultant **Sarah Lopez** writes:

"Rick Light has given the world a rare gift: a book that speaks both to the mind and the heart.

The tenderness and reverence in the way Jewish tradition approaches death moved me deeply. The stories from volunteers who serve in the chevrah kadisha reminded me that holy work often happens quietly, behind closed doors, with hands that wash and prepare, and hearts that whisper prayers no one else will hear.

This book is a meditation on love, respect, and the mystery of being. It left me with tears in my eyes, gratitude in my heart, and a deeper sense of reverence for the traditions that help us navigate life's most sacred passages."

Rabbi Shefa Gold, acclaimed author of *The Magic of Hebrew Chant*, writes:

"Jewish Rites of Death achieves the rare integration of practicality and poetry. With unflinching courage and openhearted tenderness, Rick Light reveals death's power to open us to the preciousness of life."

From the **Foreword by Rabbi Jack Riemer**:

"I believe the future of Jewish life in America can be measured by how many people read this literally awesome book and learn to see both life and death in a whole new perspective."

Midwest Book Review praises the book as:

"Profoundly insightful, inspired and inspiring... exceptionally well written, organized, and presented. A highly recommended addition to any Judaic Studies collection."

About the Book

Jewish Rites of Death: Stories of Beauty and Transformation invites readers into an intimate and sacred space seldom seen outside the Jewish burial society. Through deeply personal accounts and insightful explanations, Richard A. Light reveals the gentle, respectful, and spiritually rich rituals that guide Jewish communities as they prepare the dead for burial.

The book explores:

- The **millennia-old practices** that shape Jewish end-of-life rituals
- The **"space between worlds"**—the sacred boundary where death and life meet
- Detailed descriptions of **taharah**, the washing and preparation of the body
- **Personal stories** from chevrah kadisha volunteers

- The emotional, spiritual, and transformative impact of serving the dead
- The profound Jewish belief that death is not taboo, but a natural continuation of life's sacred cycle

Accented by **artistic black-and-white photography**, the book presents both a practical guide and a spiritual meditation. Readers are invited to reflect deeply on what it means to live, to die, and to honor the humanity in every soul.

Award Recognition

- **Nautilus Book Award, 2016** — for its contribution to spiritual growth, compassionate action, and the healing of society.

Author Biography

Richard A. Light has spent nearly three decades teaching and illuminating Jewish end-of-life practices. In 1996, he founded a Chevrah Kadisha and led it for 18 years. He later became an instructor for the Gamliel Institute and has authored **seven books**, including four on Jewish death rituals and a widely praised Passover Haggadah. His taharah manual is nationally respected for blending traditional and modern liturgies, including chants by Rabbi Shefa Gold.

Light helped establish the Ben Zakkai Institute (now part of the **Jewish Association for Death Education—JADE**) and currently develops curricula for JADE's educational programs.

Beyond his Jewish scholarship, Light has taught outdoor skills such as rock climbing, backpacking, and skiing. His acclaimed backpacking book teaches readers how to lighten their load—spiritually fitting for a teacher who guides others across life's greatest threshold.

He spent 40 years in computer programming and management, including 15 years leading a supercomputing operations team at Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Book Details

Title: *Jewish Rites of Death: Stories of Beauty and Transformation*

Author: Richard A. Light

Category: Jewish / Religious Studies / Spirituality

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Purchase Link: Available on Amazon

Media Appearances:

Richard A. Light has been featured on **Spotlight Network TV** with Logan Crawford, where he discussed his book ***Jewish Rites of Death: Stories of Beauty and Transformation*** and shared insights into Jewish end-of-life practices. Watch the interview here:

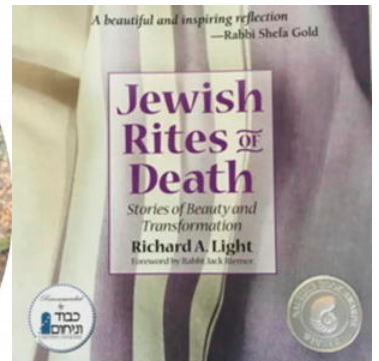
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8wPigFxFNMcg>

Connect with the Author

Website: richardalight.com

Jewish End-of-Life Resources: **jadeinfo.org**

Jewish End-of-Life Educational Tool: **hineni.jadeinfo.org**



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