



Introduction to Jewish and Catholic Bioethics: A Comparative Analysis (Moral Traditions)

Aaron Mackler

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Leavened with compassion, common sense, and a readable style, this introduction to complicated bioethical issues from both Jewish and Catholic perspectives is as informative as it is undaunting. Aaron Mackler takes the reader through methodology in Roman Catholic moral theology and compares and contrasts it with methodology as it is practiced in Jewish ethics. He then skillfully wends his way through many topics foremost on the contemporary ethical agenda for both Jewish and Catholic ethicists: euthanasia and assisted suicide, end-of-life decisions, abortion, in vitro fertilization, and the ever-growing problem of justice regarding access to health care and medical resources. A concluding chapter summarizes general tendencies in the comparison of the two traditions, and addresses the significance of convergence and divergence between these traditions for moral thinkers within each faith community, and generally in western democracies such as the United States.

As Mackler overviews these issues, he points out the divergences and the commonalities between the two traditions?clarifying each position and outlining the structure of thinking that supports them. At the heart of both Catholic and Jewish perspectives on bioethics is a life-affirming core, and while there may be differences in the "why" of those ethical divergences, and in the "how" each arrived at varying?or the same?conclusions, both traditions, in the words of James McCartney as quoted in the introduction, "are guided by the principle that life is precious; that we are bidden to preserve and guard our health; that we are bidden to intervene in nature to raise the human estate; and that our lives are not our own, but are part of the legacy bequeathed to us by the Creator." This book has been carefully crafted in that spirit.

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