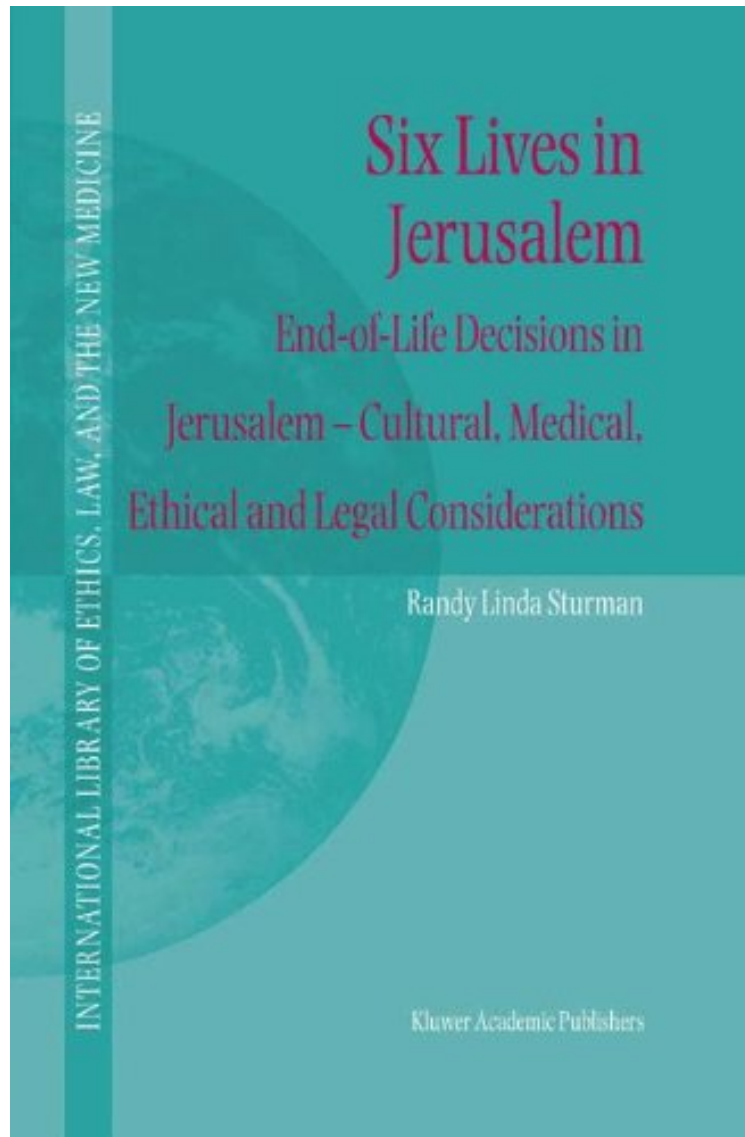


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Six Lives in Jerusalem: End-of-Life Decisions in Jerusalem Cultural, Medical, Ethical and Legal Considerations (International Library of Ethics, Law, and the New Medicine)

Randy L. Sturman

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whether the patient is suffering? Should the ability to think and reason be considered as the most important factor? For instance, should a patient with Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) who is mentally alert yet unable to move from the neck down be allowed to refuse medical treatment; and, if so, at what point in her treatment should one consider her life no longer worth living? Is there a difference between not inserting a respirator into a patient who is unable to breathe and not inserting a feeding tube into a patient who is unable to eat? In other words, where does one draw the line between a life worth living and one that is beyond hope, and what criteria should be used? Several of my cases address this issue. 2. What are the religious influences that affect the decision-making process? Israelis all seem to agree that they are a Jewish state and that their Jewishness is extremely important to their collective identity; however, they have a difficult time defining what this means. There is a great deal of ambivalence, especially among the less religious, as to what role religion should be allowed to play in their lives. Many resent the control that the religious have over their lives; yet, they also feel that it is beneficial and should play some role in affecting the morals of the country.