

Books That Change Your Life – Reading Harold Kushner

Some time ago, someone asked me if they could write a book review for the Megillah. I think this is a wonderful idea and invite you to submit your own reviews to the Temple for publication. The idea also got me to thinking about books and authors that have had a profound influence on my own life.

Those of you that have studied with me know that I often refer to the books of Rabbi Harold S. Kushner. Rabbi Kushner is a Conservative rabbi who is best known for his best seller, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*. He wrote this book in the aftermath of having lost his 14 year old son to a horrible progressive disease. The book addresses the most difficult question that is asked of religion and of religious people: How could a powerful, just, loving God allow terrible tragedies to befall innocent people such as his son?

The titles of some of Rabbi Kushner's other books illustrate how he has continued to struggle with life and life's problems. They include: *Living a Life That Matters, How Good Do We Have to Be?, Who Needs God?, When All You've Ever Wanted Isn't Enough, Overcoming Life's Disappointments and When Children Ask About God*, just to name a few of his ten books. He writes in a friendly, personal way – in a manner that is filled with his long experience as a congregational rabbi.

It was only after re-reading some of his books (in some cases for the third and fourth time) that I have come to realize how much Rabbi Kushner has affected my life, my theology and my relationship with God. In one of his books, *To Life!*, he points out that our problem is not practicing Judaism or better understanding our traditions – our problem is living! Judaism, any religion worth its salt, should serve to help us with this most difficult problem.

Our world (and our library) is filled with wonderful and inspiring books. I wish you happy reading and hope you will take the time to share your recommendations with us.