

# Rabbi Harold Kushner's Book

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The book, "When Bad Things Happen to Good People" by Rabbi Harold Kushner intends to explore the customary spats with regard to the existence of God and the basis for some of the dreadful activities of the contemporary world. Generally, the author presents an exploitable case for God as his proposal is founded on the reality that even though God may not be regarded as all-powerful, He is a God that is full of love. He confesses that on several occasions he had encountered predicaments in life. These problems prompted him to seek help from God but he did not receive any help from the same God he sought solutions from.

During such periods, Rabbi Harold would meditate and in the process question the essence of engaging in good deeds yet there were no solutions given for his problems (Kushner 45). This book brings to light some of the answers the author was looking for. The perspectives highlighted in this book are, in my view, helpful and supportive in the quest to understand suffering. The author sheds light on the circumstances under which bad things may occur in an individual's life, yet that person is good. In his script, the notion that God does not intend to punish people but instead put them through a test, is clearly outlined.

Through God's test, one is presented with an opportunity to handle problems in a manner that will strengthen him or her and be well prepared for future encounters. Kushner relates these situations to the happenings in the bible and his confidence in a superior power, "God". He states that, "The God I believe in does not send us this problem; He gives us the strength to cope with it" (Maginn 67). On a personal basis, not so many individuals believe in the existence of one God who is so powerful. Kushner ensures that he does

not refer to God of the rest of the people but ' his' God. This reveals an almost non-favoritism attitude and illustrates a lot of admiration towards other people.

The situations occurring in Kushner's life present the tests meted by God and the manner in which he handles them, builds his confidence and character. Normally, people go to seek the assistance and guidance of a rabbi in order to attain comfort in times of misfortunes and tragedy. The rabbi in this case acts to counsel these individuals. This situation prompts the question, " Who does the rabbi go to in case he faces similar tragedies?" This is the situation in which Rabbi Kushner is facing. He had a son who was suffering from a horrifying health condition known as progeria, a speedy aging disorder.

This revelation made the rabbi to be extremely mystified as he believed that only the bad guys in the society are the ones who experienced bad things whereas the good were showered with niceties and blessings. Kushner found it hard to comprehend why his son had such fate yet he was not only a rabbi, but also had lived a clean life as a good man. No matter his thoughts on his son's illness, he had to face the fact that he would lose him and he could not reverse the situation (Kushner 72). This is the experience that prompted him to commence questioning the factors which determined who suffers and the reason for suffering. Through his personal investigations, it dawned to him that suffering is not only meant for the bad guys but also affects those people who are good.

His views are substantiated by the biblical story of Job, a devout servant of God who, subsequently, loses his wealth, children and even health.

However, he does not give up his faith in God as he chooses to persevere all these predicaments. He believes that no matter the actions of God, He needs to be exalted and not cursed. With time, Job sought answers from God as to why he was suffering yet he served Him faithfully. God gives Job a surerity that all will be well and this comes to pass.

God revealed to Job that morally upright individuals should be respectful out of adoration for Him without the thought that they will be rewarded with good luck. The essence of faith is stressed in times of suffering. The bible refers to faith as, " the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen" (Kushner 102). Through faith, one is strengthened and enlightened. It is developed after one endures hardship and suffering.

It tends to cultivate an extra confident perspective regarding misfortunes. The author highlights that though suffering may be random, it can be a basis of personal development and a way of growing our sensitivities. Kushner's visions debilitate an individual's emotional might at times of hardship and suffering. However, its impact is felt beyond the situations involving individual suffering as it further affects a person's sense of belonging. This has made individuals to find it not necessary to seek after values which, at one point in life, would be cut off without a substantial reason. In some instances, Kushner reveals the inability of God to prevent and control the sufferings encountered by people.

This tends to question the benevolence of God. If He is regarded as the one responsible for good things and not suffering, then why would He allow suffering to prevail? This expresses the lost benevolence attributed to God.

Once the authenticity of a horrifying episode sets in and an individual commences to experience the pain, bitterness ultimately takes the centre stage (Maginn 45). This suffering is responsible for the bitterness one has tends to isolate him or her from subsequent encounters that may result to the same experiences. The author's presentation of his opinions regarding God, faith and suffering is essential in comprehending how the three are related.