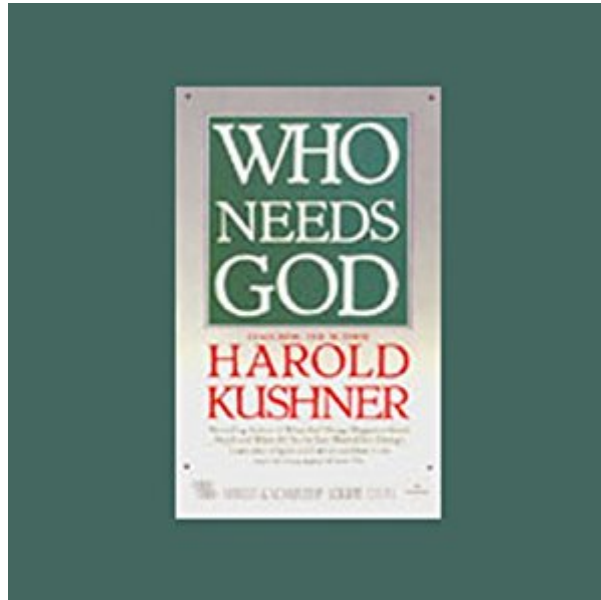


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# Who Needs God



## Synopsis

Filling a need for connection, joy and community. Rabbi Kushner shares a path to faith that offers new sources of comfort and strength for all of us. Powerful, provocative and persuasive. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 50 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Abridged

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Audio

Audible.com Release Date: May 3, 2000

Language: English

ASIN: B0000547FQ

Best Sellers Rank: #91 in [Books > Audible Audiobooks > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism](#)

#591 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Judaism > Jewish Life](#) #18077 in [Books >](#)

[Religion & Spirituality > Religious Studies > Theology](#)

## Customer Reviews

This is a great book. It arrived in the allotted time, was well packed for shipment, and was in better condition than stated in the description. It is great to find a book for which I've been searching at such a great price!

Harold Kushner is the best, read all you can of his books, you will find a man that is down to earth

This is a book that is very helpful in understanding the relationship between God and humankind. Kushner is among the best at bringing faith down to Earth.

It's too bad this book was published before I began collecting book reviews because it is an excellent book on congregational care and the response of a faith leader to his ambivalent flock. In the case of Harold Kushner, the flock is his synagogue, but his concerns sound very familiar to me as a Christian pastor. Like many, many people, I first became familiar with Kushner through his book "When Bad Things Happen to Good People." It was heartfelt, insightful and intelligent. I didn't agree with everything he said, but he kindled in me an interest in

Jewish practice and perspective. I found it very humane in the ways Christian (or quasi-Christian) practices sometimes were not. When I went to seminary, I was impressed by some of the Hebrew meanings of some words. Community was always the center, a corrective to the Greco-Roman individualism of Western Christianity. Kushner's reflections here remind me again of that corrective. "When Bad Things Happen" was reflection on loss and on the book of Job. This book is a series of reflections built loosely on the Psalms, especially as it relates to trying to guide his congregation in faith. I understand his exasperation and I wanted to stand up and cheer when he wrote of his inability to understand how otherwise intelligent people could reject evolution. On p. 17, he wrote, "This book is written for Paul, the bright, idealistic young man who asked why we need more than the commandment to be nice to each other." On p. 23, he answered with: "The issue is not what God is like. The issue is what kind of people we become when we attach ourselves to God." P. 27 "Religion is not primarily a set of beliefs | Religion is first and foremost a way of seeing." Chapter by chapter, his insights mount up. Of course, some places his Jewish perspective was different from my Christian one, but the wonderful thing about this book is that much, so much, of it made sense in more concrete ways than many of the "high falutin" theologians of my seminaries. I would recommend this book to anyone who wants to take a long, down to earth look at what faith means to them, and to the people they are trying to lead in faith. I commend him for being more open to Christian writings on faith than we Christians seem to be to contemporary Jewish writings on faith. Kushner is a scholar, a congregational rabbi, and closer to everyday life than many I others have read. I'd love to have a long discussion with him, commiserating about the frustrations of "pastoral" leadership and probing him about some of statements. This book is good enough for me to read it a second time for what I missed the first time. I read it as devotional reading and it was excellent for that purpose.

This book hit the spot for me: a believer who is not sure of the details of my belief and leery of organized religion. Kushner addressed all of the concerns I've been wrestling with on my own, specifically regarding the corruption, bullying, small-mindedness of many churches, including the common belief that only they have the truth and everyone else is on the fast track to hell. I have always been driven to find a religious community but, frankly, it's hard when you're a thinking person, and Rabbi Kushner offered reasons for both why the search is beneficial and how a person

can reconcile herself with an extremely imperfect church without necessarily having to agree with or condone the imperfections. Why would a person do that? What's the benefit? He offered plenty of excellent points, and, mind you, without any overt Jewish bias. As a gentile, I really appreciated that. I also appreciated his view that the specific details of theology or doctrine don't necessarily define a religion or make it true or untrue. If it's helping people grow and change, it's true in an essential way that can't be proved factually or empirically. That was also Joseph Campbell's feeling: religions are a chosen manner of connecting to the great unknown, and, in that way, they're all true.

Harold Kushner is one of my favorite spiritual authors because his books are filled with insights delivered in an accessible, warm and personal manner. He is really quite profound, yet immensely accessible. I chose this book because I thought it might help me regain some kind of faith in some kind of God. It may not have done the trick completely, but I found it very helpful. A faith in God can be seen as something very practical, a perspective that enables us to see the world and others in a way that makes sense, inspires some trust, and enables a vision of the whole rather than confusing parts. Science and technology seem to scoff at mystery, -- at anything non-material, at anything that cannot be adequately dealt with by reason and experimentation. Yet in our heart of hearts we know that, as Kushner puts it, there is a "sacred fire" which we know is there. Latent, yes, but still available to us. The entire book was very worthwhile, but the final chapter for me was very special. As Kushner says, "...it is hard to grow a soul when you have lost the knack..." "...it is hard to regain a sense of religion, of sacred community, of being in God's presence once we have lost it."

One of the best books written for doubters who still want to ponder their relationship to religion, either Jewish or Christian. Easy-to-read and thought-provoking. Rabbi Kushner explains and illuminates without preaching or sermonizing.

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