

## RABBI'S MESSAGE

### WINTER READING LIST, 2019 SEVEN SPECIAL SELECTIONS

The beginning of a calendar year is always a good opportunity to renew our old, GOOD habits. One of mine is to find good books. Sometimes, I like to re-read something I've read long ago to see if I have a new perspective. Other times, I find a book on my shelf that I haven't finished yet. I'm always finding something interesting on Amazon (of course, remembering to log into AmazonSmile first so a portion of my purchase goes toward TBT *tzedakah*)! As the nights are cooler and it gets dark earlier, January is a good time for reading. Here are some titles that I've enjoy (or plan to enjoy soon):

***To Life! A Celebration of Jewish Being and Thinking***, by Rabbi Harold Kushner

Rabbi Kushner's writing style is simple, pensive and complete. He celebrates ways to be Jewish, and gives the personal touch that can make anyone feel as if you're carrying on a one-on-one conversation. Without judgment, he explains the *why* as well as the *what*.

***Jewish Stories One Generation Tells Another***, Retold by Peninnah Schram

This is a classic from my own mentor in Jewish storytelling. Ms. Schram is known as the Godmother of Jewish Stories. Look for anything with her name attached, and you know you'll have a winner. Many of the folk tales I share are adaptations of her adaptations.

***When do the Good Things Start? A Therapist Looks at Life's Ups and Downs (with a bit of help from Charlie Brown and his friends)***, by Rabbi Abraham Twerski, M.D.

What do you get when you pair a deeply spiritual, Hasidic rabbi with a brilliant psychiatrist who specializes in treating depression and chemical dependency? That's Rabbi Dr. Twerski, who also comes from a long line of rabbis. But with this book (and its sequel, ***Waking up Just in Time***), Twerski calls upon the wisdom of Charles Schultz and the Peanuts gang. Learning Judaism and psychotherapy from the comic strips is a unique experience!

***Wisdom of the Jewish Sages: A Modern Reading of Pirke Avot***, by Rabbi Rami Shapiro

Rabbi Shapiro, who visited Temple Beth Torah as a scholar-in-residence several years ago, has written many books. His works are regularly discussed on Sunday mornings at TBT at the 11:15 a.m. adult education sessions. With the style of a poet, Rabbi Rami looks at some of the most poignant teachings in Judaism and gives them a modern feel.

***Jesus, First Century Rabbi***, by Rabbi David Zaslow

Rabbi Zaslow takes a bold, fresh look at the historical Jesus and the Jewish roots of Christianity. In it, he compares Talmudic teachings with the Gospels; both works were completed after Jesus' death, but both may have been part of his Jewish development. I have personally studied with Rabbi Zaslow, and he has also been a guest rabbi at TBT in the past.

***The Path of Blessing: Experiencing the Energy and Abundance of the Divine***, by Rabbi Marcia Prager

Rabbi Prager is another one of my teachers. She takes a deep look at specific words that make up Jewish blessings, and helps find inner meaning in Jewish prayer.

***God is a Verb: Kabbalah and the Practice of Mystical Judaism***, by Rabbi David Cooper

The Hebrew spelling of God's sacred name is a mystical beginning to understanding of the holiness of "Being." Rabbi Cooper explores the four worlds of Kabbalah while bringing a close connection with God and the holy name.

All of the authors listed above have produced multiple books. If you find one you like, find others by the same author.

Happy reading!

L'shalom,

*Rabbi Dan Gordon*