Rabbi Steve Kaye, American Red Cross Disaster Spiritual Care
Rabbi Steve provides spiritual care - mental health and disaster response services with the American Red Cross as well with numerous local and federal law enforcement agencies. He serves as the Red Cross - Colorado/Wyoming Disaster Spiritual Care Regional Advisor. In his 25 years in the field, he has responded to Columbine High School, Las Vegas, Aurora Movie Theater and Tree of Life - Pittsburgh, law enforcement line of duty deaths and aviation disasters. Steve is a congregational-organizational non-profit consultant and leadership coach based in Denver CO. Steve welcomes your inquires about engaging him as a consultant, coach, team building, or speaker on a wide array of topics.

“God does not cause our misfortunes. Some are caused by bad luck, some are caused by bad people, and some are simply an inevitable consequence of our being human and being mortal, living in a world of inflexible natural laws. The painful things that happen to us are not punishments for our misbehavior, nor are they in any way part of some grand design on God’s part. Because the tragedy is not God’s will, we need not feel hurt or betrayed by God when tragedy strikes. We can turn to Him for help in overcoming it, precisely because we can tell ourselves that God is as outraged by it as we are.”
— Harold S. Kushner, When Bad Things Happen to Good People

Rabbi Kushner and Rabbi Schulweis were students of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan at the Jewish Theological Seminary, NY. Both remained as active theological leaders within the Conservative movement as thought leaders in the area of “predicate theology”. Other disciple’s of Rabbi Kaplan founded the Jewish Reconstructionist Movement. [https://www.reconstructingjudaism.org](https://www.reconstructingjudaism.org)

**PREDICATE THEOLOGY IN MODERN JUDAISM**

*by* Ian Ellis-Jones

Predicate theology, as it is known, has contributed to a new understanding of the nature of God and religion. This “school of theology” was initially developed by Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan (1881-1983), the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism. Kaplan, a religious naturalist, rejected all traditional forms of theism, along with all notions of supernaturalism, and asserted that God was the sum of all natural processes that allowed a person to become self-fulfilled as a human being. Kaplan’s ideas were
popularized and further developed by one of his former students Rabbi Harold M Schulweis.

In predicate theology God, as opposed to the “qualities” of God, is essentially unknowable; thus, the emphasis is on “godliness” and those qualities or virtues that are “godlike” or “divine”. In his book Evil and the Morality of God (1984) Rabbi Schulweis has written that “the humanly comprehensible qualities of goodness, love, intelligence and creativity are godly... they themselves are worthy of adoration, cultivation, and emulation in the lives of the believers.”

Mordecai Kaplan spoke in terms of God, not as a person, but as “the Power” or “the Process”. In Questions Jews Ask (1956) Rabbi Kaplan wrote, “God is the Process by which the universe produces persons, and persons are the process by which God is manifest in the individual.” Rabbi David A Cooper, author of the best-seller God is a Verb (1997), writes: “What is God? In a way, there is no God. Our perception of God usually leads to a misunderstanding that seriously undermines our spiritual development.” Cooper goes on to say, “God is not what we think It is. God is not a thing, a being, a noun. It does not exist, as existence is defined, for It takes up no space and is not bound by time. Jewish mystics often refer to It as Ein Sof, which means Endlessness.” Further, writes Cooper, “The closest thing we can come to thinking about God is as a process rather than a being. We can think of it as “be-ing,” as verb rather than noun. Perhaps we would understand this concept better if we renamed God. We might call It God-ing, a process, rather than God, which suggests a noun.”

One of predicate theology’s modern exponents is Rabbi Harold S Kushner, author of the best-seller When Bad Things Happen to Good People (1981), who has written:

“Predicate theology” means that when we find statements about God that say, for example, “God is love, God is truth, God is the friend of the poor,” we are to concentrate on the predicate rather than on the subject. Those are not statements about God; they are statements about love, truth and befriending the poor, telling us that those are divine activities, moments in which God is present..... They are not things that God does; they are things that we do, and when we do them, God is present in our lives.

Similar views are expressed in Humanistic Judaism. Erich Fromm, one of the most respected humanists and social philosophers of the twentieth century, and author of the best-seller The Art of Loving (1956), saw God as standing for “the highest value, the most desirable good”, a “symbol of man’s own powers which he tries to realize in his life”, the “image of man’s higher self, a symbol of what man potentially is or ought to become”. In other words, God is an image, an idea, a symbol of what we human beings can ultimately become - a view shared by many modern day Unitarians.

http://www.sydneyunitarianchurch.org/Predicate_theology.pdf
Additional resources on Predicate Theology:

FROM GOD TO GODLINESS: PROPOSAL FOR A PREDICATE THEOLOGY - Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis


Theological Courage – Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis


The Harold M. Schulweis Institute – has an outstanding collection of articles and sermons by Rabbi Schulweis

https://www.vbs.org/learning/harold-m-schulweis-institute
Mitigation/Prevention: In this early phase, we are concerned with taking steps to make a community less vulnerable to the loss of life and mass destruction in a potential disaster. This might include improvements in public infrastructure, changes in zoning laws, increased regulation, and fireproofing and flood-proofing homes.

Preparedness: This stage involves promoting education, training, and outreach that could improve a community’s ability to respond to a disaster. It usually takes the form of plans and preparations to better position a family, an organization, or a municipality to take emergency action. This might include stocking up on food, water, and medical supplies; ensuring that the right people are trained in emergency protocol; maintaining the proper equipment, and developing a communications plan.

Response: This is the phase that attracts the most attention from the media, the public, and even emergency management professionals — for good reason. Often, it’s literally a matter of life and death. The response stage involves sometimes chaotic efforts to save lives, prevent further property damage, and provide humanitarian relief (food, shelter, clothing, health, and safety). As the disaster progresses, the response moves into cleanup, damage assessment, restoring utilities, and starting repairs.

Recovery: After the immediate threats to safety have been addressed and some level of stability has been achieved, the road to recovery begins. And it can last months, years, and even decades. This phase requires strategic planning that addresses the long-term needs of the community, including housing, employment, economic development, infrastructure, and other hefty concerns.

https://good360.org/impact-stories/the-four-phases-of-disaster-recovery