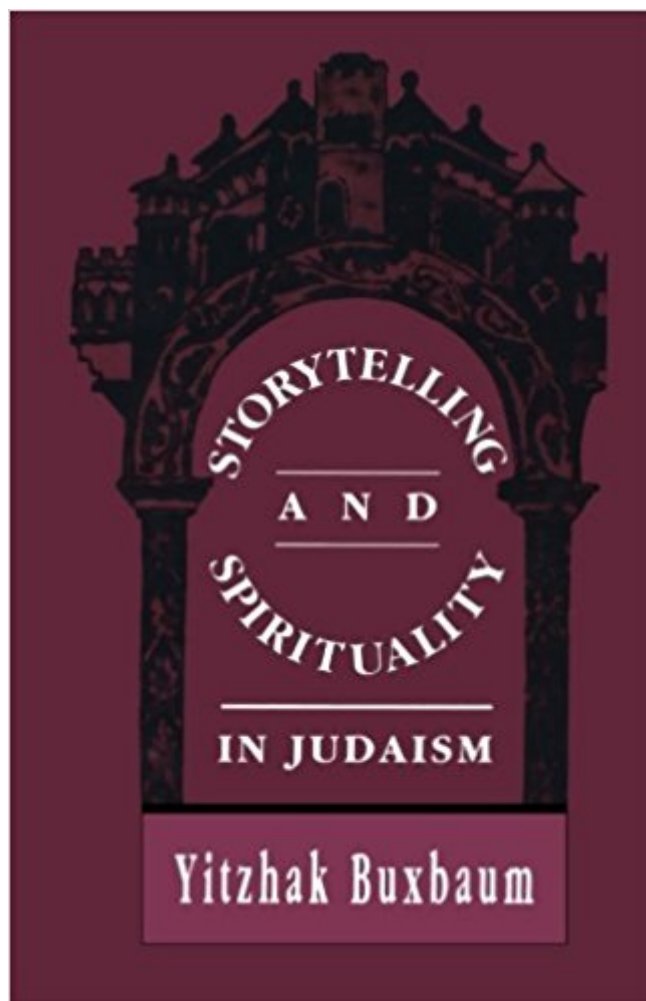


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# Storytelling And Spirituality In Judaism



## Synopsis

'The purpose of this book is to elevate stories and storytelling in people's esteem, so they will understand their holiness and appreciate them at their full worth. There are those who enjoy stories and storytelling but in the back of their minds think, 'After all, they're only stories.' But in the same way that the Western Wall of the Temple is not just a wall, a mere pile of stones, neither are the stories of the Torah or of the tzaddikim 'just stories.' Holy stories are the light of the world. When we understand that, when both tellers and listeners know they are engaged in sacred activity, we will hold stories and storytelling more dear. The teller will tell with the tongue of faith, the listeners will hear with ears of faith, and the circle of holiness will be closed.' -from the Introduction

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This book is a great introduction to the Hasidic "theology" of storytelling. It's a bit academic, but in the end a good read. It really opened my eyes to how Hasidim use storytelling and how it can be used as a spiritual teaching tool. It also has some of my all-time favorite Baal Shem Tov stories in it. I found this book when I took a class with Reb Yitzhak, and I learned a lot from both the book and the class. Even if you are not interested in Hasidic storytelling -- read this book. (Rabbi Jill Hammer) Storytelling is an integral feature of hasidic culture. "Mayses" about rebbes, their lives, teaching, and philosophies are a rich source of Jewish values and Buxbaum has taken the disparate strands and woven a colorful textile. He has made accessible material generally not available in English, and explicates it for those not acquainted with much of the esoteric lore. This

scholarly book is not just stories. What mainly interested me was the importance storytelling played in the lives of hasidic masters and how we can use these stories in this day and age. (Sylvia Friedman) In recent years there has been a revival of Jewish storytelling in North America and this book is the first and only work on the subject. The author increases our appreciation of how hasidic tales can awaken the religious spirit and how even the average person can become a valuable storyteller. (Canadian Jewish News)

Yitzhak Buxbaum is a *maggid*, an inspired and inspiring teacher and storyteller, who teaches at synagogues, Jewish community centers, and colleges. He graduated from Cornell University and has an advanced degree from the University of Michigan. The author of *Jewish Spiritual Practices* and *The Life and Teachings of Hillel*, he resides in New York City.

Yitzhak Buxbaum proves himself both as an accomplished teller of stories and an entertaining educator with his publishing of "Storytelling and Spirituality in Judaism." This book builds upon the Chasidic foundation established by the beloved Rabbi, Yisrael Baal Shem Tov, an original teller of sacred and spiritual tales. Dr. Buxbaum retells many familiar "old" stories, and also includes examples of respected contemporary storyteller's work.. Martin Buber and Elie Weisel among them. We are all potential tellers of spiritually significant tales. Style and technique can be augmented by insight. Yitzhak Buxbaum masterfully supplies all of these qualities, and allows us, with his engaging presentation, to learn and appreciate.

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