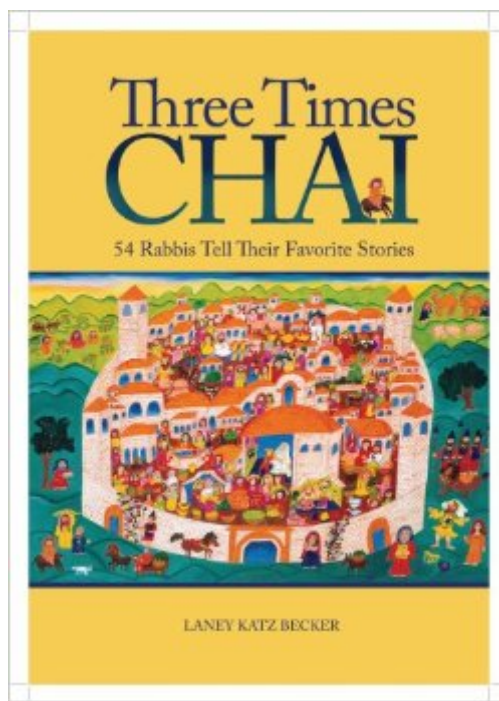


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Three Times Chai



Synopsis

Why do the disciples of the Ba al Shem Tov want to sneak out of prayer services? How can it happen that when two men climb down a chimney, one comes out clean while the other comes out dirty? What lesson does the mother teach her son by grabbing his pinky finger and pointing to his fingernail? If God is everywhere, why does the seer of Lublin go into the forest to find God? The answers to these curious questions, and many others, are revealed in the fifty-four stories in *Three Times Chai*. Storytelling has always been central to the Jewish tradition, and it's easy to understand why: A good story entertains, enlightens, and at its best, inspires. It's little wonder that to inform hearts as well as minds, we often choose to tell a story. *Three Times Chai* presents the very best of the Jewish tradition of storytelling in the voices of fifty-four contemporary rabbis. Some of their stories are light and humorous; others invite more reflection. And whether it leaves a smile on your lips or a lump in your throat, each story reflects a Jewish ideal. Each one can help us think about who we are, the nature of our relationships, and the way in which we would ideally lead our lives. The stories in *Three Times Chai* are diverse in origin, style, and content: There are classic Bible stories, rabbinic and modern commentary, folktales, and legends. And the rabbis who retell these stories are likewise diverse in their backgrounds and personal beliefs. Some of them are well-known in the Jewish community; some are well-known for their storytelling abilities; some have only just begun to establish their own voice. All of them retell their favorite stories in their own voice, allowing their unique style and personality to shine through. Each story is followed by a brief explanation about why it is the rabbi's favorite. You need not be religious to appreciate what these stories have to say; the lessons are universal. They remind us that even while we are entertained, we have a tremendous responsibility to ourselves, to our families, to our neighbors, and to our communities. Most certainly, among these fifty-four stories you will find your own favorites!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Reading this book is like attending a storytelling festival in print! Laney Katz Becker has invited fifty-four rabbis, from all branches of Judaism, to contribute their favorite stories. A great variety of genres are included: classic Bible stories, midrashim, folktales, extended jokes, and legends. The stories come from many different places, time periods, and cultures. Each brief story, most as short as a page or two, reflects a Jewish value and is written in an oral style. At the end of each story there is an instructive note from the contributor explaining the story's lesson and why it is the rabbi's favorite or how the rabbi applies the story's lesson. The book is divided into four sections:

1)Community -- stories about relationships, tzedakah, and tikun olam, our responsibility to heal the world; 2)Religion -- stories about Jewish identity, practices, and spirituality; 3) God's World --stories about the ways in which we relate to God and live according to God's plan; and 4)Outlook -- stories about our attitudes, choices, and quests for truth, honesty, wisdom, and courage. As wonderful as this book is, it would have become an even greater resource if sources for the stories were also included. Some of the rabbis do indicate in their personal notes where or when or from whom they first heard the story but about half of the stories have no sources given. Nevertheless, more source information, supplied by the rabbi or else by Laney Katz Becker who collected and edited the stories, would have added a valuable dimension to such a collection.

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