



The Chutzpah Imperative: Empowering Today's Jews for a Life That Matters

By Rabbi Edward Feinstein



The Chutzpah Imperative: Empowering Today's Jews for a Life That Matters By Rabbi Edward Feinstein

Reconnect with Judaism's most important contribution to humanity?and redeem our world.

"The gift of Judaism is an understanding of what it means to be a human being?what we can do, what we can hope for, how we can live with purpose, what is expected of us. It is a celebration of human freedom, human possibility and human responsibility. Judaism is a way to live a heroic life, to construct a life devoted to values that are eternal, values of ultimate significance. The reward of a Jewish life is walking the world with a profound faith that you matter, your life matters, your dreams matter. I call this *chutzpah*."

?from the Introduction

In this clarion call for a new way to "do Judaism," award-winning spiritual leader Rabbi Edward Feinstein urges us to recover this message of Jewish self-empowerment?or *chutzpah*?to reshape our world. He walks us through the history of *chutzpah*?from the early chapters of Genesis, Jewish biblical law and the Rabbis of the Talmud to the mystics of medieval Spain and the European Hasidic tradition, Zionism and post-Holocaust thought. By showing us the ever-presence of *chutzpah* in Judaism he reveals the inner story of the Jewish People's soul as well as the meaning that Judaism's deepest purpose and most precious treasure has for us today.

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Review

"Beautiful, provocative, evocative ... delivered by one of the great Jewish thinkers and teachers alive today.... Makes you yearn to see the Jewish tradition through Feinstein's eyes?daring, complicated, full of promise and overflowing with love."

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"A rollicking, insightful and persuasive tour through Torah, history, philosophy and modernity by one of the great storytellers and teachers of our time.... Brilliant! A must read!"

?**Dr. Ron Wolfson**, Fingerhut Professor of Education, American Jewish University; author, *Relational Judaism: Using the Power of Relationships to Transform the Jewish Community*

"It would be chutzpah for anyone but Rabbi Ed Feinstein to distill the teachings of these three intellectual giants of contemporary Jewish thought. The enduring insights of Rabbis Schulweis, Hartman and Greenberg are indispensable to all intellectually probing Jewish seekers."

?**Rabbi Rick Jacobs**, president, Union for Reform Judaism

"A work of love.... Ed's rare energy, wit and special tales are tenderly integrated into this passing of knowledge from teacher to student, from teacher to reader. Rabbi Feinstein's special sparks are everywhere on these pages."

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"Inimitable, beyond summary, engaging. Go read this book! Better yet, live it!"

?**Rabbi Irving (Yitz) Greenberg**, founding president, Clal/The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership; founding president, Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation

"A brilliant exposition of Judaism and its insistence that our defining religious contribution is chutzpah, the quality we must have and use to work together to improve the world."

?**Ruth Messinger**, president, American Jewish World Service

"Ed Feinstein might not have invented chutzpah, but he certainly has reclaimed it for the Jewish people. The Chutzpah Imperative is the perfect antidote to what is ailing us."

?**Craig Taubman**, singer-songwriter and producer; founder, Craig 'n Co.

"Profound, elegant and beautiful.... Rabbi Ed Feinstein is able to take the great classic stories of our tradition and shed new light and wisdom on them. Whether you are just learning about Judaism or have spent your life steeped in learning Torah, Ed Feinstein will give you new things to think about, transforming old understandings into brilliant, fresh approaches. Compelling, humorous and instructive ... hooray for Rabbi Feinstein's chutzpah in this breakthrough book that every generation from every background will enjoy."

?**Rabbi Asher Lopatin**, president, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School

"With the art of a storyteller, the craft of an educator and the wisdom of a philosopher, Rabbi Ed Feinstein guides us through the epic tales of our past and shows us again and again from where a Jew's dogged perseverance and vital engagement with the world emanates. He skillfully adjusts the focus for those of us

who see through a Jewish lens, and presents a compelling picture for those who are looking for one.”

?**Harlene Winnick Appelman**, executive director, Covenant Foundation

“It’s extraordinary how Rabbi Ed Feinstein has managed to place the aggressive and seemingly secular notion of ‘chutzpah’ at the heart of Judaism. But he’s right: It will take nothing less than chutzpah for this ancient tradition to realize its potential. Feinstein needed chutzpah to bring holiness to chutzpah.”

?**David Suissa**, president, Tribe Media/Jewish Journal

“Nudges us into an honest life, a compassionate path, questioning our way to goodness and to glory. This book will break your heart wide open, welcoming in the whole wide world.”

?**Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, DHL**, vice president, American Jewish University; author, *God of Becoming and Relationship: The Dynamic Nature of Process Theology*

About the Author

Rabbi Edward Feinstein is senior rabbi of Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, California. He is an instructor in the Ziegler Rabbinical School of American Jewish University and the Wexner Heritage Program. He is the author of *Tough Questions Jews Ask: A Young Adult's Guide to Building a Jewish Life* (Jewish Lights) and *Capturing the Moon*; and the editor of *Jews and Judaism in the 21st Century: Human Responsibilities, the Presence of God, and the Future of the Covenant* (Jewish Lights). He contributed to *May God Remember: Memory and Memorializing in Judaism*?Yizkor; *Who by Fire, Who by Water*?Un'taneh Tokef and *We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaism*?Ashamnu and Al Chet (all Jewish Lights).

Rabbi Laura Geller is senior rabbi of Temple Emanuel of Beverly Hills. She was twice named one of *Newsweek's* 50 Most Influential Rabbis in America and was featured in the PBS documentary *Jewish Americans*. She has contributed to many books and journals, and was on the editorial board of *The Torah: A Women's Commentary*.

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