Continue activities following the story – The Chickens Who Became Goats



By: **Ori Elon**
Illustrations: **Menachem Halberstadt**
Publisher: כתר
Age Group: **Preschool (3-5)**

כְּלָלִי

Family Activities

- You may want to look at the lovely illustrations by Menachem Halberstadt together, and ask your child to tell the story in their own words. We do not know what Rabbi Hanina Ben Dossa looked like, but we can imagine the lifestyle of his time and the Galilean landscape. Perhaps you would enjoy searching for clues about his time and place in the illustrations.
- Menachem Halberstadt added amusing details in his illustrations that are not mentioned in the text. You may want to look for the illustration of all the chickens in the yard. What are they doing? Did you find anything about this illustration funny?
- In the story, Rabbi Hanina describes the rooster and hen using signs: the rooster was black with a white spot, and the hen was white with gold dots. You may want to play the guessing game: one of you thinks of an object in the room and describes it using signs, and the other has to guess which object it is. Did you guess right?
- Have you or your child ever lost something dear? Was it found? Try to recall together the feeling you had when you discovered the item had been lost, or found.
- How can we refrain from losing things we hold dear? You may want to let your

child think of ideas to help them keep track of their property, and share some of your techniques and practices with them. You may also like to teach your child where items found are taken today (for instance the police station, or the "lost and found" in public places).

- Perhaps you would enjoy playing "Where's the lost chicken?": place the palm of your hand on a sheet of paper so your thumb is separate from the other fingers. Draw around your hand – the thumb will be the chicken's head, and the fingers will be its wings. Add feet, a cockscomb and beak, and cut out the chicken. One of the participants hides the chicken, and the others have to find it. The one who hid it can help the others find the lost chicken by saying "hot" or "cold" as they get nearer and further away from its hiding place.

כְּלָלִי

Who was Rabbi Hanina Ben Dossa?

Rabbi Hanina Ben Dossa was a Tanna – a scholar from the time of the Mishna – who lived in the Galilee some 2000 years ago. He was an incredible man, and many tales are told of his modesty and special qualities. Although Rabbi Hanina and his family lived in extreme poverty, he was not tempted to take anything that did not belong to him, and was very careful about returning any lost property to its rightful owners. The writer Ori Elon based his adaptation of the story of Rabbi Hanina and the lost rooster and hen on the following short story found in the Talmud, in the Tractate of Taanit, page 25a:

Once it happened that a man passed by Rabbi Hanina's house and left hens there and the wife of Rabbi Hanina Ben Dossa found them. Her husband, however, forbade her to eat of their eggs. As the eggs and the chickens increased in number he was very troubled by them and he therefore sold them and with the proceeds he purchased goats. One day the man who lost the hens passed by [the house] again and said to his companion: "Here I left my hens". Rabbi Hanina overhearing this asked him: "Have you any sign [by which to identify them]?" He replied: "Yes". He gave him the sign and took away the goats.