

A Hen for Izzy Pippik

By Aubrey Davis

Illustrated by Marie Lafrance

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On one foot: This book is an adaptation of the Talmudic story about Rabbi Chaninah ben Dosa. The name Chaninah comes from the Hebrew for gracious, and this rabbi was known for his kindness and charity to others. In the original story the chickens are so difficult to care for, the rabbi sells them to buy goats. He eventually gives the returning stranger a herd of goats.

A Hen FOR Izzy Pippik

WRITTEN BY Aubrey Davis

ILLUSTRATED BY Marie Lafrance

Adapted from a story in the Babylonian Talmud



Highlighted Jewish Values:

Caring for animals

צֶעַר בְּעֲלֵי חַיִּים
Tza'ar ba'alei chayim

Returning a lost object

הַשְּׁבֵת אֲבֵדָה
Ha-sha-vat a-vei-da

Connection to *shmita* (theme):

Animals and people share food and resources in a *shmita* year, highlighting the interdependence of all creatures in a just society. In this story, Shaina demonstrates the importance of preserving both the chicken and the egg for the future; she discovers that her consideration of others' property rights benefit the community as a whole.

Optional preparation for reading the story:

Gather a few costume pieces and props, such as hats, scarves, aprons, and baskets to recreate Shaina's village.

Before You Read

Jewish Values and Background Information

Caring for animals – *tza'ar ba'alei chayim*

Three aspects of this value to consider:

- We are dependent on animals for food and our eco-system
- Animals are vulnerable; kindness to all creatures helps make us better people
- We have a responsibility to maintain the balance of nature

Jewish law teaches us to be respectful of all animals – after all, they were here first. According to the Torah animals were created on the fifth day of Creation, while humankind was born the following day. In rabbinic literature, there is a consistent theme of considering animals' needs before our own. God tells the Israelites, “I will give grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied” [Deuteronomy 11:15]. Rabbinic sages see significance in the order of the words in this sentence – cattle receive their food before people. The Talmud, the root of Jewish law and custom, warns, “A person should not acquire domestic animals, wild beasts, or birds before buying food for those animals to eat” [Ketubot 4:8].

Returning a lost object – *hashavat aveida*

Three aspects of this value to consider:

- Respecting others' property is a basic building-block of community
- Ownership is not a simple matter of what is in your possession
- Don't wait for someone looking for their lost object – take action to find that person

“Finders keepers” is not a Jewish concept. The Torah teaches us "If you see another person's animal, you shall not hide from it; you must return it to the owner. If the owner is not known to you, then you should bring the object into your house, where it shall remain until the owner inquires after it, and you will return it to him. So shall you do for his donkey, his garment, or any lost article that you may find" [Deuteronomy 22:1-3]. Deeper meanings of the text hint to our emotional connection to our possessions. Rabbinic sages hope to instill a sense of fairness and concern for the person who lost the object, as well as a healthy attitude about possession.

When You Read

Introducing the story and engaging the children

Set the stage with questions

Does anyone here have a pet?

What would you do if you found a lost pet?

In this book a little girl finds a lost hen. What's a hen? Let's find out what the girl does with the hen.



Choose a storytelling technique (optional)

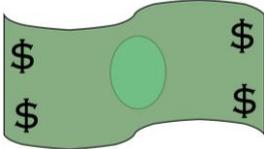
1. Sound train. Shuffle and distribute numbered cards. As you turn the pages of the book, assign a sound to the person holding the next numbered card. You might call out two or more numbers at once, with sounds such as the baby banging on pots on the first page, to chickens, roosters, goats, and car horns.
2. Feelings. There is an unusual range of emotion in this book from boredom and anger to loyalty and love. Ask the students to act out these expressions as they arise in the story.

After You Read

Making connections and making it personal

Caring for animals	Returning a lost object
Discuss	Discuss
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you describe some of the ways in which Shaina cared for Yevka? • How did Yevka and her chickens help the town? • What do chickens need to have a good life? • Think of one animal, and discuss the ways in which that animal helps the world. In what ways can people help and support that animal? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did Shaina refuse to let her family eat Yevka's eggs? • Shaina thinks that the chicken and all of its children belong to Izzy Pippik, even though she took care of the chickens for many months. Do you agree? • Why didn't Izzy Pippik take Yevka and all of the chickens?



Caring for animals	Returning a lost object
<p>Discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The laws of kashrut focus on which foods are fit to eat. One of the rules concerns kind treatment of animals. A modern movement called <i>eco-kashrut</i> expands the rules to include environmental considerations as well as the lives of animals and people. What do you think some of the issues of <i>eco-kashrut</i> are? 	<p>Discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have you ever found a lost object? What did you do with it? How long and how hard do you think you should search for the owner of a lost object?
<p>Activities</p> <p>Animal tag: Teacher identifies “It” and names an animal in Hebrew (with English help if necessary). Children move as the animal named, and “It” tags as many players as possible. Every 15-20 seconds, change who’s “It” and the name of the animal until all have had a turn as “It”.</p> <p>Happy animals: Make sets of three cards by subject, such as bee, flower, honey; cow, milk, grass. (Variation: ask students to come up with the groups.) Mix up cards and distribute one card per student. Ask the children to find the other cards in their group. Discuss the connection between the cards. After several rounds, discuss the choices with the class. Conclude by highlighting the interdependence of all things in nature.</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <p>Council of animals: Each student makes a mask of an animal. Think about what that animal would like to say to human beings. Wear your mask and share your message with the class.</p> </div>	<p>Activities</p> <p>Lost and found: Most schools have a lost and found hidden in the office. Brainstorm ways to return these objects to their owners. For example, visit classrooms with the objects or design “Found” posters for the school.</p> <p>Preventing loss: Have a label-making fest. Make and decorate labels for <i>siddurim</i>, books, or even moveable furniture in your school environment.</p> <p>Debate: Pretend you find \$100 in the parking lot. What would you do with it? Divide into teams and prepare arguments.</p> <div style="text-align: right;">  </div> <p>Camouflage: Hide ten objects outside in a play area. Have children look around and identify the objects without telling others. Who found all ten?</p>
<p>Taking it home – caring for the earth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer at an animal shelter Plant a butterfly and bee garden Create a blessing for your pet. Consider adding it your Shabbat ritual after the Blessing of the Children 	<p>Taking it home – returning lost objects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look around your house and find all of the lost objects and pair up single socks. Ask families about objects they have lost or found. Collect their stories in a book.

