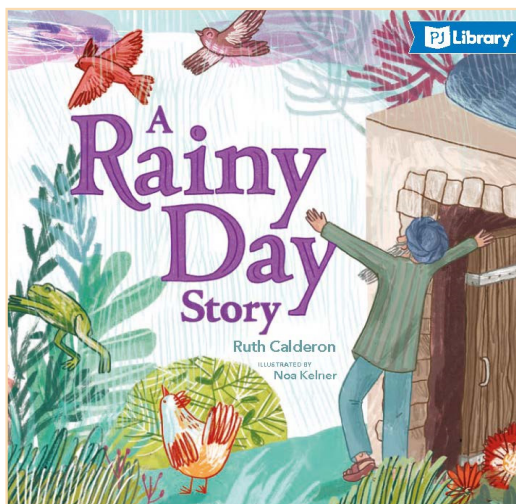


A Rainy Day Story

written by
Ruth Calderon

illustrated by
Noa Kelner

How do you pray?



HANDS ON!

Make Your Own Rain Stick

Want to hear the rain? You can shout a heartfelt plea to the heavens, the way Hanina does . . . or make your own rain stick.

Supplies:

- Empty paper towel tube
- Markers, crayons, or other art supplies
- Plastic wrap
- Scissors
- Tape
- Aluminum foil
- A handful of dried beans, rice, or unpopped popcorn kernels

Use your art supplies to decorate the tube. Cut a small piece of plastic wrap and cover one end of the tube with it, attaching it with tape. Loosely scrunch up a piece of foil into a snake-like shape and insert it into the tube. The foil should run most of the length of the tube. Put the beans, rice, or popcorn kernels into the tube. Cap the open end of the tube with more plastic wrap. Tilt the tube back and forth and listen to the rain.

<https://www.kixcereal.com/kix-cereal-recycled-craft-make-a-rainstick/>

Miracle Man

Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa lived in the first century C.E. in the northern part of Israel. According to the Talmud (the core collection of rabbinic writings) Hanina was intensely spiritual, doing many good deeds and performing miracles. In this story, Hanina faces a common life challenge: How do we balance our own needs with concern for others? Hanina advocates for himself, and God stops the rain. But after he dries off, Hanina realizes that he can't be happy while the rest of the world is suffering. So the next time you get soaked in the rain, consider it a damp reminder that we are all interconnected. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/rainyday.

A Rainy Holiday

First Hanina prays for the rain to stop, then for it to start again. There's a certain day of the year when Jews everywhere pray for rain to fall in Israel: Shemini Atzeret. Coming at the end of the weeklong harvest holiday of Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret comes with its own rain blessing. We may not want to get soaked to the skin, but without rain, crops cannot grow, and all creatures would suffer — not just human beings, but plants and animals, too. The land of Israel has long dry stretches, so when Shemini Atzeret rolls around, it is traditional to pray for and celebrate life-giving rain — and we can try to appreciate it the rest of the year, too.

The Power of Prayer

Hanina doesn't actually ask God to do anything about the rain; he simply cries out his heartfelt reactions to the weather. Many Jewish thinkers see prayer not as a request but as a way of clarifying our feelings. No matter how we pray, we can all marvel at Hanina's example. Yochanan ben Zakai, another first-century rabbi, said of Hanina's prayerful power: "Here's the difference between me and Hanina. He is like the king's bodyguard, who has constant access to the king's presence without having to wait for permission, while I, like a lord before a king, must await an opportune moment." Heartfelt prayer can connect each of us with the divine and our deepest selves.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

WHEN Hanina got soaked, should he have prayed to stop the rain? Why or why not?

WHY do people pray? If you pray, what do you say?

THE next time Hanina gets caught in the rain, what do you think he'll do? Has this story changed how you think about rain?