



## **CHAYAT HASHAVUA: WOLF**

### **CAN ANYONE TEACH US THE HEBREW NAME FOR THE WOLF?**

- It's *z'eiv*, from the root צאף.
- The basic meaning is to drive or frighten away.
- Given the way a lot of people feel about wolves, that's probably a pretty good name for them.

### **IN THE BIBLE, Z'EIV IS DESCRIBED AS A FIERCE AND CRUEL ANIMAL.**

- Why do you think the Bible and Rabbis believed wolves to be fierce and cruel? (There were many more wolves and many fewer people in smaller towns and villages, so the wolves may have been much more aggressive then.)
- In the writings of the Rabbis it is said that, when hungry, wolves will attack people (Taanit 19a); the Rabbis reported actual incidents, such as the killing of two children by wolves in Transjordan (Taanit 3:6); and they reported incidents of wolves killing large numbers of sheep, 300 in one incident (Betzah 60a).

### **THERE ARE RELATIVELY FEW WOLVES NOW IN THE UNITED STATES AND WESTERN EUROPE.**

- Why do you think there are so few wolves today where most people live? (They have been hunted to extinction; and the development of cities and large towns has encroached on their hunting territory.)
- Do we have a lot of attacks on people by wolves nowadays? (Few, if any, healthy wolves have attacked people, whom they try to avoid.)

### **WHAT DO WOLVES AND DOGS HAVE IN COMMON AND WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT THEM?**

- How much does a large male dog weigh, and how much do you think a full-grown Timber Wolf weighs? (Both are about 175 pounds.)
- Wolves and dogs can mate and have puppies.
- Dogs are domesticated and do not hunt for their own food; wolves are predators, usually hunting and killing small animals and birds, but sometimes as a pack attacking reindeer, sheep, or other large animals, usually the weak, old, or very young.
- Wolves incidentally are important as predators, because they prevent the overpopulation of certain animals.

- Wolves, like dogs, are pack and den animals.

### **IT'S TIME FOR THE WOLF QUIZ!**

- Where do wolves make their dens? (Caves, hollow tree trunks, thickets, and holes in the ground that they have dug.)
- Why do wolves howl? (It's a way to call the pack together, to signal other packs, to let other animals know that they have claimed certain territory, and to have fun!)
- How many species of wolf exist in the world today? (Two—the gray or timber wolf found only in Canada, Alaska, and northern Europe and Russia, except for a few isolated packs in other regions; and the red wolf, found only in Texas and the southeastern United States.)
- How long does a full-grown wolf measure, end to end? (Six and a half feet.)
- Is the wolf a carnivore or omnivore, eating only other animals or plants too? (If they can't find prey, they also feed on berries.)

### **TWO DOGS GUARDING A FLOCK WERE JEALOUS OF EACH OTHER. (Sefer Ha-Aggadah)**

- But when a wolf came and attacked one of them, the other said to himself: If I do not help, the wolf will kill him today, and tomorrow he will have a go at me!
- So, both dogs went at the wolf and killed him.
- What do you think we can learn from this story?



**Gather the People**

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