



## **CHAYAT HASHAVUA: GOOSE**

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

- Actually, the goose is not mentioned by name in the Bible.
- In one place in that section of the Bible called the Writings, *Ketuvim* in Hebrew, we read about *barburim avusim* (ברברים אבוסים), which means “fatted fowl.”
- These included domestic geese that were fattened up for King Solomon’s dinner table.
- But the real Hebrew name for the goose is *avaz* (אוז).

### **WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT GEESE?**

- They beautiful to watch when flying in formation.
- They have water-repellant feathers that make great pillow stuffing and insulation for parkas and sleeping bags.
- Their meat is delicious to eat.

### **WHAT DO YOU DISLIKE ABOUT GEESE?**

- They hiss and bite when angry or defending themselves.
- Although maybe that’s a good thing, because the rabbis said they make enough noise to be as good as a dog for guard duty. (Ketubot 27a)

### **WHAT HAS THE GOOSE GOT TO DO WITH PASSOVER?**

- On the evening *before* the night of the first Passover seder (i.e., the 13<sup>th</sup> of the month of Nisan, or the 12<sup>th</sup> if the 13<sup>th</sup> should be on a Friday), we have a tradition to search for leaven in our homes—it’s called *bedikat chametz*.
- Who can teach us what leaven is? (*Chametz* is leavened bread, the new dough to which the leavening agent [called *se’or*] has been added, and it is called *lechem chametz*, i.e., “leavened bread” [Lev. 7: 13].)
- Can anyone teach us why we get rid of all the leaven and avoid eating anything with leaven during the week of Passover? (*Chametz* represents our desire to do the wrong thing, to forget what Torah teaches us. So when we search out the *chametz* in our home before Passover, we’re also searching within ourselves to get rid of anything that keeps us from doing what God wants us to do.)
- The idea is to make sure that not even the smallest bit of *chametz* remains in the house during Passover.

- So during Passover we're only to eat matzah, no regular bread.
- By the light of a wax candle, with a wooden spoon and a whisk made of goose feathers tied together, every corner in the house is searched for stray crumbs.

### **IT'S TIME FOR THE GOOSE QUIZ?**

- What two other birds are geese closely related to: (Duck and swan.)
- How many different kinds of wild geese live in the world? (About 40.)
- How long does it take for goose eggs to hatch? (From 28 to 32 days.)
- When do young geese begin to swim and fly? (Begin to swim a few days after birth; begin to fly at about two months.)
- How long does a domestic goose live? (Up to 30 years.)
- How far can a goose fly without stopping to rest? (More than 1000 miles.)

### **ONE OF OUR OLDEST MYSTICAL BOOKS, CALLED THE CHAPTER OF SONG (Perek Shira), TEACHES US ABOUT HOW THE ANIMALS PRAISE GOD.**

- The domestic goose says: "Praise Adonai; call on God's name. Proclaim God's deeds among all the nations. Sing praises to God and speak of all God's wondrous acts." (Psalm 105:1-2)
- What do you think the domestic goose is teaching us?
- The goose that lives in the desert, when he sees Israel studying Torah, says: "Make way in the desert a road for God. Make a highway in the wilderness for our God." (Isaiah 40:3)
- What do you think the wild goose is teaching us?

### **THERE'S A SAYING IN THE TALMUD, LIKE A PROVERB, ABOUT THE GOOSE:**

- "The goose stoops [i.e., bends over to watch the ground] as it goes along, but its eyes see far away." (Megilah 14b)
- What do you think that means to teach us? (Maybe it means that by watching for the little things that make us stumble in our day-to-day life, we may avoid far bigger problems in the future.)



**Gather the People**

© 2003-2022 Moshe ben Asher & Khulda Bat Sarah