



## **CHAYAT HASHAVUA: MOUSE**

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

- It's *achbar* (עכבר).
- The English word “mouse” comes from a Sanskrit word meaning “thief.”
- Why might that be a good description for mice?

### **DID YOU KNOW THAT THE MOUSE IS MENTIONED IN THE BIBLE? (1 Samuel 6:4, 5, 11)**

- The Ark of the Lord had been captured by the Philistines but they weren't sure what to do with it because, apparently, it had caused plagues among them.
- So they called their priests and asked them, What shall we do with the Ark of the Lord?
- Their priests said, If you send the Ark back, don't send it empty but include an offering—then you will be cured of the plague.
- And they said, What offering shall we send back to the God of Israel?
- And their priests said, Make golden images of the swelling of your lymph glands and images of the *mice* that bring the plagues, and you will honor the God of Israel. Perhaps then the God of Israel will remove the plagues.
- They made a cart and hitched two cows to it, and sent the Ark of the Lord and the golden objects they had made back to God as an offering.
- The cows went straight to Beth-shemesh.
- The people were harvesting wheat and rejoiced when they saw the Ark.
- They split the wood from the cart, made a fire, and sacrificed the cows as an offering to the Lord.
- The Levites took the Ark of the Lord and the box with the golden objects and put them on a huge stone where they made the sacrifice to God.
- The lords of the Philistines had followed the cart and seen all this and returned to their place.
- The Bible doesn't say, but we can probably assume safely that the plagues ended with the return of the Ark of the Lord.

### **DO MICE THREATEN US IN ANY WAY?**

- Because of their small size, we tend to think of them at best as “cute” and at worst as a “nuisance.”
- But the Bible tells us that, in large numbers, mice can seriously damage or destroy crops of stored foods like grain. (1 Samuel 10:10)
- Mice and the fleas they carry spread disease.

- And since the mouse is not a kosher animal, there are cases where the rabbis decided that big containers of beer and vinegar had to be thrown away because mice got into them.

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

- The mouse is a “first-cousin” to what other animal? (rat)
- How often does a female mouse give birth and how many young does she have? (Every 20 to 30 days she has four to seven young at a time.)
- Where do most mice in the United States live? (In houses, garages, and barns.)
- How long is the average house mouse, including its tail? (6.5 inches)
- What do mice eat? (Almost anything we do.)
- Why does a mouse have whiskers (like a cat!)? (To help feel its way in the dark.)
- Can a mouse bite hurt you? (Yes! They have strong, sharp front teeth.)

### **THERE IS A STORY ABOUT A MOUSE WHO LEARNED A VERY VALUABLE LESSON.**

- This story was told by a famous Rabbi (the Kobriner) when he was teaching about one of the Psalms (10:10) that says, “He crouches, he bows down, and the helpless fall into his mighty claws.”
- A mother mouse sent out her son to search for food, but warned him to be careful of the enemy.
- The mouse met up with a rooster and ran home terrified.
- He described the rooster as a stuck-up being with a high, kingly red comb on its head.
- “He is no enemy of ours,” cried his mother, and she sent her son out again to look for food.
- This time he met a turkey and was even more terrified.
- “He is also not our enemy,” said his mother when he got home.
- And she added: “Our enemy keeps his head down like a very humble person. He is smooth and speaks softly, and he looks friendly and seems to be very kind—but if you meet him, beware!”
- What animal do you think the mouse’s mother was describing?
- What do you think we can learn from this story?



**Gather the People**

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