



CHAYAT HASHAVUA: RAVEN

CAN ANYONE TEACH US THE HEBREW NAME FOR THE RAVEN, WHICH SOUNDS VERY SIMILAR TO “RAVEN”?

- The Hebrew word for raven is *orev* (עורב), which probably comes from the same root letters as *arvit* (ערבית) or “evening.”
- The root letters are ערב, which mean evening, at the time of sunset, to grow dark, or be black.
- Why might the raven have a name with that meaning?

IN THE BIBLE, RAVEN IS A TERM USED TO DESCRIBE SEVERAL SPECIES OF BIRDS.

- Can anyone teach us what they might be? (Crows, rooks, jackdaws, and jays.)
- Most of the birds that are called ravens in the Bible are of the crow family.

IS THE RAVEN KOSHER?

- Why not? (Because it’s a “predator.”)
- Who can teach us what a predator is? (A predator survives by eating other animals.)
- Why might the Torah teach us that we shouldn’t eat predators?

IT’S TIME FOR THE RAVEN QUIZ!

- How do we often discover that there is a raven nearby? (They can be very noisy, making raucous cries; they were such a problem in ancient Israel that spikes were placed on the roof of the Temple to keep them away.)
- What do ravens eat? (Ravens are omnivores—they eat both plants and animals: seeds, fruit, small birds, and mammals.)
- How big is the biggest raven—end to end? (Two feet.)
- How do ravens differ from many other birds in the way they care for their young? (Both parents feed their young.)
- How might a sailor use a raven? (They have a highly developed sense of orientation or direction, and in some countries, sailors used them to help find dry land.)

ONE OF OUR ANCIENT STORIES TEACHES THAT IT WAS FROM THE RAVEN THAT HUMAN BEINGS FIRST LEARNED TO BURY THEIR DEAD.

- The Bible tells us that Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel, and that Cain murdered his brother.
- But Abel's body remained unburied because Adam and Eve didn't know what to do with it.
- Then one morning they saw how a raven "scratched the earth away in one spot, and then hid a dead bird of his own kind in the ground."
- Adam then followed the bird's example and buried his son Abel in the ground. (Legends of the Jews)
- It is said that God rewarded the raven by feeding its young who, because they are born with white feathers, are rejected by their parents (until their plumage turns black).
- Why do you think it's important to bury the dead?
- Why might Judaism teach us that it's a great *kindness* to help bury the dead? (Because the person we bury cannot repay our kindness and because those who loved the person and are in mourning are least able to do it.)



Gather the People

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