

~MOLE RAT (31)

[Hebrew, *cho'ledh*]

- A rodent measuring 15 to 30 centimeters (6 to 12 inches) in length. The **mole** rat, *Spalax ehrenbergi*, resembles a short-legged, tailless, and neck-less cylindrical lump of soft, thick fur, generally a yellowish gray-brown color.
- The head is recognizable by the furless muzzle and two pairs of large protruding teeth. Under the Law, the **mole rat** was unclean for food.
- And this is what is unclean to you among the swarming creatures that swarm upon the earth, the **mole rat** and the jerboa and the lizard according to its kind. (Leviticus 11:29)
- Although numerous translations render *cho'ledh* as **weasel**, **AS**, **KJ**, **RS**, there is a basis for preferring, **mole rat**. In **Arabic**, a language related to **Hebrew**, a very similar word, *khuld*, means, **mole rat**.
- Also, *cho'ledh* may be related to a post-Biblical **Hebrew** term signifying **dig** or **hollow out**. This would harmonize with the **mole rats** **characteristic digging**.
- **Mole rats** live in underground communities and dig subterranean sleeping quarters and large storage chambers. These creatures subsist on vegetable matter, primarily on roots and bulbs. Thus they differ from true **moles**, which feed on insects and earthworms and are not considered native to Palestine.