

## ~OWL (136)

[Hebrew, *tach-mas'*, *kohs*, little owl, *yan-shuph'*, long-eared owl, *'o'ach*, eagle owl]

- A night bird of prey mentioned several times in the Bible account. Once thought to be related to the hawk family, **owls** are now generally associated with other night feeders, such as the whippoorwill and the nightjar.

- The **owl** has a short, hooked beak and powerful viselike talons resembling the hawks, but differs by having a broad head, large eyes and ears, as well as by having a reversible toe on each foot so that, while the other toes point forward, this outer toe can be turned outward or even backward, thereby enabling the bird to get a firm grip on a variety of objects.

- The large eyes with their expanding irises make the greatest possible use of the dim light at night, and unlike most other birds, the **owls** eyes both face forward, enabling it to view an object with both eyes at once.

- Its soft plumage is in mottled shades of brown, gray, black, and white with an intricate feather pattern and generally gives an impression of exaggerated bulk to the birds body. According to an article in *Scientific American* (April 1962, p. 78), the **owls** wings are ultrasonically quiet, the soft down on the upper surfaces and the feathery fringes on the leading and trailing edges of the wings apparently serve to reduce the turbulence of the air flow.

- Thus the owl noiselessly swoops through the darkness and silently drops down on its unsuspecting prey, primarily killing rodents, though some also eat smaller birds and insects. The cries of **owls** range from a shrill screech to a booming hooting sound.

- The Hebrew *tach-mas'* denotes a species of **owl** and is included in the list of unclean birds.

- And these are what you will loathe among the flying creatures. They should not be eaten. They are a loathsome thing: the eagle and the osprey and the black vulture. (*Leviticus 11:13*)

- And the ostrich and the **owl** and the gull and the falcon according

to its kind. (Leviticus 11:16)

- And the ostrich and the **owl** and the gull and the falcon according to its kind. (Deuteronomy 14:15)
- This Hebrew word, being related to a verb meaning, **do violence**, is appropriate to the **owl**, which lives by preying on small rodents and birds. This kind of owl has been identified with the striated scops **owl**, *Otus brucei*.
- Also included among the unclean birds is the Hebrew *kohs*, rendered by some as the **little owl** and designated as *Athene noctua*. KJ, NW, Rs see also Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros, by L. Koehler and W. Baumgartner, Leiden, 1958, p. 428) The little owl, about 25 centimeters (10 inches)
- The little **owl** and the **long-eared owl** and the swan. (Deuteronomy 14:16)
- In length, is one of the most widely distributed **owls** in Palestine, found in thickets, olive groves, and desolate ruins. The psalmist in his lonely affliction felt like a **little owl** of desolated places.
- I do resemble the pelican of the wilderness. I have become like a little **owl** of desolated places. (Psalms 102:6)
- Appropriately, the **Arabic** name for this variety of **owl** means the **mother of ruins**.
- Another bird listed in the Mosaic Law as unclean is the Hebrew *yan-shuph'*, a name thought by some to indicate a **snorting** or **harsh blowing** sound, the **Hebrew** word for **blow** being *na-shaph'*. Others connect it with the **twilight**, **Hebrew**, *ne'sheph*, as indicating simply a **nocturnal bird**.
- And the little **owl** and the cormorant and the **long-eared owl**. (Leviticus 11:17)
- The **little owl** and the **long-eared owl** and the swan. (Deuteronomy 14:16)
- Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros [p. 386] identifies this bird as the **long-eared owl**, *Asio otus*. A bird about 38 centimeters (15 inches) in length, the **long-eared owl** is so called from the earlike erectile tufts on

the sides of its broad head. It frequents wooded and desolate areas and is depicted as one of the creatures to inhabit the ruins of Edom.

- And the pelican and the porcupine must take possession of her, and **long-eared owls** and ravens themselves will reside in her, and he must stretch out over her the measuring line of emptiness and the stones of wasteness. (**Isaiah 34:11**)
- The abandoned houses in Babylon's ruins were foretold to be filled with **eagle owls** plural form of *'o'ach*.
- And there the haunters of waterless regions will certainly lie down, and their houses must be filled with **eagle owls**. And there the ostriches must reside, and goat-shaped demons themselves will go skipping about there. (**Isaiah 13:21**)
- These circumstances and the **Hebrew** name, understood to denote a creature that **howls** with a doleful cry, well fit the **eagle owl**. Some would identify *'o'ach* with *Bubo bubo aharonii*, a variety of **eagle owl** inhabiting the desert regions of Palestine.
- However, the identification as the Egyptian, or **dark desert eagle owl**, *Bubo bubo ascalaphus*, found from Morocco to Iraq, harmonizes well with the locale of the prophecy recorded in (**Isaiah Chapter 13**).
- The **eagle owl** is the largest and most powerful of the **owls** of these regions. Its cry is a loud, prolonged, powerful hoot. Like other **owls**, at night its large eyes have a luminescent reddish-yellow glow when reflecting light, and together with its mournful cry, this characteristic doubtless contributed toward its being a symbol of evil portent among superstitious pagan peoples.
- Some scholars believe the term *li-lith'*, used at;
- And haunters of waterless regions must meet up with howling animals, and even the goat-shaped demon will call to its companion. Yes, there the nightjar will certainly take its ease and find for itself a resting-place. (**Isaiah 34:14**)
- As among the creatures haunting Edom's ruins, applies to some type of **owl**. The name is said to be used today for *Strix*, the **tawny owl**. [The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, edited by G. A. Buttrick, 1962, Vol. 2, p. 252]

**See Also NIGHTJAR**

