

What animal has the largest ears? – A Spiritual Insight

By MATSATI - March 13, 2021



In the Mongolian Gobi Desert, China, there is an endangered species of animal known as the long-eared Jerboa. Very little is known about the long-eared Jerboas including how many are left. Nobody really has any idea how many remain and this is why the field of conservation at the Zoological Society is working hard to preserve these animals and learn more about them. Researchers discovered that the animal species is threatened by habitat disturbances, agriculture, and the introduction of predators (cats), illegal mining, etc. These practices are altering the natural landscape and habitats of these rodents, for example, one cat can catch and kill up to 20 Jerboa in a single night.

References

1. Nicola Jones, "**News – Spotlight on Mongolian animals, Expedition launches projects and returns rare video footage,**" Published online 10 December 2007 | *Nature* | doi:10.1038/news.2007.364, <https://www.nature.com/news/2007/071210/full/news.2007.364.html>

What is noticeably different about the long-eared Jerboa is its unusually big ears relative to its body size which is the motivation for its name. Each ear is 1.3X the length of its head. So if we ask the question, which animal has the largest ears, naturally we would think of the elephant. The truth is however, when looking at the ear to body ratio, it is the long-eared Jerboa that has the longest ears (relative to its size). The body of the Jerboa measures 4 inches (10 cm) from head to butt in body length, and its ears measure 1.5 to 2 inches (3.8 – 5 cm) long which makes its ears 40 – 50% the length of its body. This causes the long-eared Jerboa to have the longest ears relative to its body size in all of the animal kingdom. Note for the elephant, its ears can measure on average 4 feet (1.2 m) which makes the ear to body ratio only 17% of its body, whereas the Jerboa is 40 to 50%. We

note how these animals, the elephant, and the Jerboa live in arid and dry environments. Their ears help them to thermal-regulate their body temperature as their ears are highly vascularized. These animals ears are large and function to allow for maximum heat transfer as the blood is pumped to the ear and circulated keeping the animal cool. Researchers say that when the animal is hot, the blood vessels in the ears expand to allow for a higher blood flow rate and greater heat transfer. When the temperature is cold, these blood vessels contract (shrink) restricting the flow of blood, during the cool of the night. As far as the engineering principles related to this heat regulation of the animal body, we are able to see how God used this strategy to help these animals remain cool in their desert environment. This functionality is an alternative to sweating which would lead to the loss of water, where in a desert environment water retention is critical. Scientists also believe since these rodents eat insects, the larger ears may also help to detect low-frequency sounds coming from insect prey and predators.

The Spiritual Insights that we receive from this type of research is related to the something both the Torah and Yeshua discuss concerning the ears. The specific phrase that Yeshua says that I like the most is, *מי שאזנים לו, שישמע לו*, "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*" This was a solemn exhortation, often spoken by Yeshua at the close of a parable or speaking some truth. (see *Matthew 13:9* equivalent to *Mark 4:9*, and *Mark 4:23*, *Luke 14:35* comp. *Mark 8:18*, *Luke 9:44*, *Revelation 3:9*). This phrase is used frequently and it means that we were all formed to understand truth, to learn God's commands, to be able to reason and answer, and live our lives obeying the Lord and His Word. The ears are one of the most significant parts of our body as is revealed to us by the greatest command in the Torah. Our ears are spoken of with great importance according to the Torah, as helping us to know what it is that God requires of us and what is the purpose of our lives and how we can fulfill that purpose. Yeshua began answering these questions by speaking of the greatest command in the Torah known as the Shema.

ספר דברים פרק ו

ד שִׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה / אֶחָד: ה וְאֶהְבֶּתְ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְּךָ
 וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ: ו וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם עַל-לִבְּךָ: ז
 וְשָׁנַנְתָּם לְבְנֶיךָ וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִקְתְּךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ: ח
 וְקִשְׁרָתָם לְאוֹת עַל-יָדְךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ: ט וְכָתַבְתָּם עַל-מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ
 וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ: ס י וְהָיָה כִּי-יְבִיאֲךָ / יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נָשָׁבַע לְאַבְתָּיִךָ
 לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב לֵאמֹר לֵךְ עִרְאֵל וְנָשָׂא אִשָּׁר לֹא בְנֵי

DEVARIM / DEUTERONOMY 6:4-10

6:4 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD IS OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE! 6:5
 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART
 AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL YOUR MIGHT. 6:6
 'THESE WORDS, WHICH I AM COMMANDING YOU TODAY, SHALL
 BE ON YOUR HEART. 6:7 YOU SHALL TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY TO
 YOUR SONS AND SHALL TALK OF THEM WHEN YOU SIT IN YOUR

HOUSE AND WHEN YOU WALK BY THE WAY AND WHEN YOU LIE DOWN AND WHEN YOU RISE UP. 6:8 'YOU SHALL BIND THEM AS A SIGN ON YOUR HAND AND THEY SHALL BE AS FRONTALS ON YOUR FOREHEAD. 6:9 'YOU SHALL WRITE THEM ON THE DOORPOSTS OF YOUR HOUSE AND ON YOUR GATES. 6:10 'THEN IT SHALL COME ABOUT WHEN THE LORD YOUR GOD BRINGS YOU INTO THE LAND WHICH HE SWORE TO YOUR FATHERS, ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB, TO GIVE YOU, GREAT AND SPLENDID CITIES WHICH YOU DID NOT BUILD, (NASB)

Yeshua spoke of this text from the Torah as being the greatest command, which is connected to listening (שמע). Here the word שמע (shema) is often translated as hear, but the word shema has a much deeper and broader meaning than to simply be translated as "to hear" or "to perceive sound." This word also includes the idea of listening, taking heed, obeying, and responding with action to what one has heard. Here in *Devarim / Deuteronomy 6:4* we read Moshe writing אָחַד | שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה : as a call to obedience to God's Word, if we continue the text speaks to this saying, וְאָהַבְתָּ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, *6:5 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6:6 'These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. (NASB)* We can validate this assumption on the word shema by searching through the Scriptures for "obey" and in almost every case, the Hebrew word translated for obey is the word שמע (shema). For example, according to *Shemot / Exodus 24:7* we read וַיִּקְרָא סֵפֶר הַבְּרִית וַיִּקְרָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם *24:7 Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, 'All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!' (NASB)* Here the root word שמע is used to translate being obedient.

The point of these Scriptures, and the significance of these things can be understood from the sense of our children when we ask them to do something and they do not listen. This provides insight into this Hebrew word שמע (shema) from the sense that children hear the words of their parents but nothing happens, no action is taken, there is a deafness to the Word, or being disinterested in what is being said because they are busy playing or doing something else, etc. There may be any number of reasons why the child does not listen to his/her parent. These things speak to us as warning us not to treat God's Word in this same way and how there is the necessity for our taking action, and not just hearing God's Words and then doing nothing in response. Yeshua said *"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear"* and the idea here is that it would be strange for a person not to be born with ears. This would be an unnatural occurrence as everyone is born, from humans to the animal kingdom (mammals) have ears. So again, this word שמע (shema) is about hearing, listening, obeying, and speaks to our needing to receive God's Word and not reject the word for worldly pleasures, comforts, etc. An interesting comment is made in the Hebrew bible concerning Israel not listening. Notice how the text is written according to *2 Kings 17:7-9*, *וַיְהִי כִּי-חִטְּאוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם הַמַּעֲלָה אֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִתַּחַת יַד פַּרְעֹה מֶלֶךְ-מִצְרַיִם וַיִּרְאוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים: ח וַיִּלְכּוּ בְחַקֹּת הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הוֹרִישׁ יְהוָה מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמִלְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ: ט וַיִּחְפְּאוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל דְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר *17:7 Now this came about because the sons of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God, who had brought them up from the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and they had feared**

other gods 17:8 and walked in the customs of the nations whom the Lord had driven out before the sons of Israel, and in the customs of the kings of Israel which they had introduced. 17:9 The sons of Israel did things secretly which were not right against the Lord their God. Moreover, they built for themselves high places in all their towns, from watchtower to fortified city. (NASB) What is interesting is this phrase וַיֵּלְכוּ בְחֻקֹת הַגּוֹיִם *"And they walked in the statutes of the nations."* This idea of the statutes of the nations is a strange phrase. Do the nations have statutes or commands similar to the way the Lord God Almighty gave to Israel at the mountain of Sinai? This seems strange because the nations do not have any clearly defined statutes or commands as we have in the Torah. The NASB translated this word as "customs." We see the Torah also speaks of this according to Vayikra / Leviticus 20:22-24, כִּי וַיִּמְרְתוּ אֶת-כָּל-חֻקֹּתַי וְאֶת-כָּל-מִשְׁפָּטַי וְעָשִׂיתֶם אִתְּם וְלֹא-תִקְיָא אֶתְכֶם הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אָנִי מְבִיא אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה לְשִׁבְתָּ בָּהּ: [שְׁבִיעִי] כִּי וְלֹא תֵלְכוּ בְחֻקֹת הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר-אָנִי מְשַׁלֵּחַ מִפְּנֵיכֶם כִּי אֶת-כָּל-אֵלֵהָ עָשׂוּ וְאָקְצוּ בָם: כִּד וְאָמַר לְכֶם אֲתָם תִּירְשׁוּ אֶת-אֲדָמָתָם וְאָנִי אֶתְנַנְנֶה לְכֶם לְרִשְׁתָּ אֹתָהּ אֶרֶץ זָבֹת חֵלֶב וְדָבַשׁ אָנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם 20:22 'You are therefore to keep all My statutes and all My ordinances and do them, so that the land to which I am bringing you to live will not spew you out. 20:23 'Moreover, you shall not follow the customs of the nation which I will drive out before you, for they did all these things, and therefore I have abhorred them. 20:24 'Hence I have said to you, 'You are to possess their land, and I Myself will give it to you to possess it, a land flowing with milk and honey.' I am the Lord your God, who has separated you from the peoples. (NASB) Here the Lord warns of walking in the way of the nations paralleling this to the statutes, commands, and judgements of God. We are to be a faithful people as compared to the nations who are disobedient to God and His Word. What the Lord God of Israel is look for in our lives, and what Yeshua is looking for in our lives, is according to what we read in Devarim / Deuteronomy 4:6, וַיִּמְרְתוּ וְעָשִׂיתֶם כִּי הוּא חֻקְמֹתְכֶם וּבִינְתֶכֶם לְעֵינַי, וְשָׁמְעוּ אֶת-כָּל-הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה וְאָמְרוּ רַק עִם-חֵכֶם וְנִבְּוֹן הַגּוֹי הַגְּדוֹל הַזֶּה לְשִׁמְעָה וְיִשְׁבְּיָהּ לְשִׁרְקָהּ וְחָרְפַת עַמִּי תִשָּׂאוּ: (*Keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.*)

We read the following according to Micah 6:16 which states:

MICAH 6:16

וְיִשְׁתַּמְּרוּ חֻקֹת עֹמְרֵי וְכָל מַעֲשֵׂה בֵּית-אֲחָאָב וְתִלְכוּ בְּמַעֲצוֹתֵם לְמַעַן תִּתִּי אֶתְךָ לְשִׁמְעָה וְיִשְׁבְּיָהּ לְשִׁרְקָהּ וְחָרְפַת עַמִּי תִשָּׂאוּ:

6:16 'THE STATUTES OF OMRI AND ALL THE WORKS OF THE HOUSE OF AHAH ARE OBSERVED; AND IN THEIR DEVICES YOU WALK. THEREFORE I WILL GIVE YOU UP FOR DESTRUCTION AND YOUR INHABITANTS FOR DERISION, AND YOU WILL BEAR THE REPROACH OF MY PEOPLE.' (NASB)

Micah speaks of the people having observed the statutes of Omri and all the practices of Ahab's house; and following their traditions. Therefore the Lord says He will give one who does these things over to ruin and the people to derision; such persons will bear the scorn of the nations. We note the consistency of how the Lord wants us to follow His ways as

opposed to the sinful way of the nations. Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord and the Scriptures say that he acted more wickedly than all who went before him. (1 Kings 16:25)

The idea of walking in the way of the nations parallels the scientific research discussion on the animal with the biggest ears and to our study here on our being given two ears and only one mouth, indicating the need for us to listen more than we speak. The warning we are being given is to listen to God and obey His Word, and not follow the stubborn and sinful inclinations of our evil hearts. (Jeremiah 7:24) If we follow the inclinations of our heart, the yetzer hara, we are told all throughout the Scriptures that our land will become desolate (Jeremiah 18:16), our enemies will gain the advantage over us (Vayikra / Leviticus 26), and we will become an object of scorn (Jeremiah 19:8).

When we lay the Scientific research down alongside the Scriptures, these things are drawn out from the Hebrew Bible as the importance of listening (שמע), and the phrase שמע ישראל | אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה. Understanding this word shema (שמע) also helps us see why Yeshua so often concluded his teaching with the words, *מי שמעני לי, ששמע* "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." What he really meant was, "You have heard the Word of God, and you have heard my teaching, now take it to heart and obey it!" This is also why James said what he did saying that God wants us to be doers of his words, not hearers only. (James 1:22) Notice how James says that only hearing the word and not putting it into action leads to deceiving one's self. It is interesting too when we think about the חוקות הגוים (chukot hagoyim), there is this overtone that we don't know the reasons for them (directly). This provides us with an explanation on Shaatnetz, שעטנץ which refers to wearing clothing of mixed threads, cloth that contains both wool and linen, which derived from the Torah, prohibits wearing. This is appropriate calling these ways as חוקות הגוים (chukot hagoyim) as the chukot is not well understood as the reason it is given as compared to a mitzvot (command). The chukot is the command without a reason, and when applied to the nations, as being the reason they do what they do without proper cause meaning this is something that is not from HaShem. All the more reason why we are commanded to listen and obey using the same word שמע (shema), which is to keep it simple, to be both hearers and doers of the Word of God. Paul is consistent with these things when he said, "For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but it is the doers of the law who will be declared righteous." (Romans 2:13) Paul goes on to argue how difficult it is to live a perfect life as we are weak in the body, but we can be made strong in the Spirit by the power of God and His presence in our lives. This is the good news that Yeshua brought, that gospel message that was taught to the people in the wilderness, the power of the presence of God in our midst, in our hearts and in our lives to overcome sin! It is the Lord God almighty who gives us faith, who gives us ears to hear, and helps us to remain faithful throughout all of our days. We must however submit our lives to the Lord! We must turn from the evil inclinations of our heart (yetzer hara) and seek God in heaven for help to sanctify our lives before Him for His glory! We note that the NT scriptures state that Yeshua sanctifies us in His blood. (Hebrews 13:12) This is true as his having sanctified us before our Father God in heaven. We are however talking about living in this world and sanctifying our lives, setting our lives apart for the Lord, meaning we do are not to avoid the ways of the world (חוקות הגוים). By this word Shema (שמע) we are called to live holy and righteous lives, and it is the Word of God that teaches us what our lives should look like as not walking in the ways of the nations, but walking in God's ways! Again, the Scientific research draws out these truths, as having ears to hear (מי שמעני לי, ששמע) to listen of which the outcome of listening

and hearing God's Word is to produce something tangible in our lives as bringing Glory to God!

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