

The Sea Lion's Question

by Rabbi Shefa Gold

מִי-הָאִישׁ הֶחֱפֵץ חַיִּים אֲהֵב יָמִים לְרֹאוֹת טוֹב

Mi ha-ish hechafetz Chayyim, Ohev yomim lirot tov? (Psalm 34:13)

Who is the one that has a passion for Life, loving every day, seeing the Good?

During my pilgrimage to the Galapagos, I communed with a variety of animals who amazed me with their forthright presence, beauty and intelligence. Many of the animals I saw exist nowhere else. Marine Iguanas, Galapagos Penguins and Blue-footed Boobies astounded me. Everywhere were the reminders of the humor and creative genius of The Creator.

The climax of my Galapagos adventure was the opportunity to swim with the Sea Lions. We hiked across Floreana Island to their secret cove and jumped into the clear swirling tide. The sea lions immediately surrounded us, excited to play. All afternoon we frolicked in delighted abandon with these sweet and bold teachers of the sea. When I got back on the boat, I was inspired to sing this line from Psalm 34:

“Who is the one with a passion for Life, loving each day, seeing the Good?”

I imagined that through their play, the sea lions were asking me this question. And I answered without hesitation, “I will be that one. I promise.”