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Chamor - Donkey

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The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word Chamor, usually translated as an ass or donkey, is used frequently in the Tanach.[[1]](#footnote-1) This common animal is found in several very uncommon circumstances. We have [Avraham](avraham.html) and Moshe using the Chamor to carry things and to carry their family, and we have the [Mashiach](mashiach.html)[[2]](#footnote-2) actually riding a Chamor. In this [study](study.html) I would like to examine this animal and try to understand why this animal is used in such exceptional circumstances.

The [Zohar](orallaw.html) explains that a donkey is “bad on the outside and good on the inside”,[[3]](#footnote-3) very “material” but loving and loyal.[[4]](#footnote-4) The [Mashiach](mashiach.html) “takes a ride” on a [generation](toldot.html) comparable to a donkey (a [generation](toldot.html) steeped in materialism).

The [first](one.html) use of the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for *donkey*, *Chamor*, is found in the following passage:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 12:16*** *And he entreated* [*Abram*](avraham.html) *well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.*

Strong’s defines *chamor* as:

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2543 chamowr, kham-ore’; or (short.) Chamor, kham-ore; from 2560; a [male](male+female.html) as (from its dun red):-(he) ass.

--------------- Dictionary Trace --------------

2560 chamar, khaw-mar’; a prim. root; prop. to boil up; hence to ferment (with scum); to glow (with redness); as denom. (from 2564) to smear with pitch:-daub, foul, be red, trouble.

We [know](daat.html) that the Torah’s [first](one.html) use of a word defines its meaning. In a sense, it creates the meaning. In this [first](one.html) usage we see Pharaoh taking Sarai from [Avraham](avraham.html). At the same [time](time.html), the Torah tells us that [Avraham](avraham.html) had donkeys and other animals. Why are we told this at this point? It appears the Torah is telling us that [Avraham](avraham.html) had other material possessions that were not taken by Pharaoh.

His Eminence Hakham Dr. [Yosef](joseph.html) ben Haggai has [taught](teacher.html) that the Chamor is a picture of the [Gentiles](gen-jew.html). His Eminence has pointed out that the only unclean animal that [needs](needs.html) to be [redeemed](redemption.html) is the Chamor. This was the beast of burden that brought the treasures [out of Egypt](thebirth.html). If we keep this understanding in mind, then many of the following ideas will come into sharp focus.

With this in mind, let us return to [Avraham](avraham.html). When the pasuk tells us that he had these various animals it is telling us that he possessed more than animals, he possessed what the animals represent. The donkeys that he had represent [Gentiles](gen-jew.html) that belonged to him. The Maharal concurs and makes the designation more interesting. The Maharal says that the donkey is a symbol ofMitzrayim, Egypt.

In [Hebrew](hebrew.html), the [name](name.html) of something reveals its essential characteristic. The [Midrash](orallaw.html) tells us that the [first](one.html) man, [Adam](adam.html), looked into the essence of every animal and named it accordingly. The donkey, for example, is characterized by carrying heavy, [physical](physical.html) burdens:

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis XVII:4*** *R. Aha said: When the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, came to create* [*Adam*](adam.html)*, He took counsel with the ministering* [*angels*](angels.html)*, saying to them, ‘Let us make man’ (I, 26). ‘What will be the nature of this man?’ they inquired. ‘His wisdom will exceed yours,’ He answered. What did the Lord do? He brought the animals, beasts, and birds before them and asked them, ‘What should be the* [*name*](name.html) *of this? ‘but they did not* [*know*](daat.html)*;’ of this? ‘and they did not* [*know*](daat.html)*. Then He paraded them before* [*Adam*](adam.html)*, and asked him, ‘What is the* [*name*](name.html) *of this?’ ‘An ox.’ ‘And of this?’ ‘A camel.’ ‘And of this?’ ‘An ass.’ ‘And of this?’ ‘A horse.’ Thus, it is written, AND THE MAN GAVE NAMES TO ALL CATTLE, etc. (II, 20).*

The Ba’al Shem Tov explains[[5]](#footnote-5) that Chamor, from the root *Chomer* “material” and *chumriut* “materialism”, refers to a person’s [physical](physical.html) [body](body.html).

The word “chomer” means [*physicality*](physical.html) or *material*. “Chomer” can be thought of as raw material, which [needs](needs.html) to be fashioned in to some functional object. Doing so requires imposing a certain structure, purpose and direction on this material, something which, conceptually, raw material resists. It would rather remain “undisciplined”, leaving all possibilities open. The animal “Chamor” - donkey, is most representative of this concept of “chomer”. Another dimension of “chomer” is that it can be viewed as [physical](physical.html) “matter,” the substance which composes the entire [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html).

A Chamor, a donkey, represents [physicality](physical.html), materialism, and the very word for a completely [physical](physical.html) entity is the word ‘*chomer*’. The donkey is a beast of burden that exists for little reason other than to function in this way, and thus symbolize materialism.

Remembering that the donkey represents [Gentiles](gen-jew.html), we can understand that the role of the [Gentile](gen-jew.html) is to function as a beast of burden in this [world](worlds.html). They are the ones who bear the burden of building this [world](worlds.html) of [physicality](physical.html). The [Zohar](orallaw.html) reinforces this idea:

***Soncino*** [***Zohar***](orallaw.html)***, Bereshit, Section 1, Page 238a*** *BINDING HIS FOAL UNTO THE VINE. The vine is the* [*Community*](community.html) *of* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*, so called also in the verse: “Thou didst remove a vine* [*from Egypt*](thebirth.html) *“(Ps. LXXX, 9). By “his foal” is meant the* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html)*,[[6]](#footnote-6) who is destined to rule over all the hosts of the peoples, that is to say, the heavenly hosts who have charge of the* [*Gentiles*](gen-jew.html)*, and from whom they derive their strength. The* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html) *will prevail over them, because this vine dominates all those lower crowns through which the* [*Gentiles*](gen-jew.html) *have dominion. This will be the victory above.* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*, who are “a choice vine”, will conquer and destroy other hosts below; and the* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html) *will prevail over all. Hence it is written of him that he will be “poor and riding on an ass and on a young ass’s colt” (Zech. IX, 9). “Colt” and “ass” are* [*two*](two.html) *crowns by virtue of which the* [*Gentiles*](gen-jew.html) *have dominion, and they are from the left side, the side of uncleanness. It is strange that the* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html) *should be called “poor”. R. Simeon explained that it is because he has nothing of his own, and he is compared to the holy* [*moon*](chodesh.html) *above, which has no light* [*save*](salvation.html) *from the* [*sun*](hachama.html)*. This* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html) *will have dominion and will be established in his* [*place*](place.html)*. Below he is “poor”, because he is of the side of the* [*moon*](chodesh.html)*, and above he is poor, being a “mirror which does not radiate”, “the bread of poverty”. Yet withal he “rides upon an ass and upon a colt”, to overthrow the strength of the* [*Gentiles*](gen-jew.html)*; and God will keep him firm.*

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) also gives us a glimpse into the meaning behind the Chamor:

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis LXXV:6*** *AND I HAVE AN OX, AND AN ASS, etc. (XXXII, 6). R. Judah said: From* [*one*](one.html) *ox many oxen came forth, and from* [*one*](one.html) *ass many asses came forth.’ R. Nehemiah said: This is the common idiom: an ass, a camel. The Rabbis maintained: OX is an allusion to the* [*one*](one.html) *anointed for battle, as it says, His firstling bullock, majesty is his (Deut. XXXIII, 17)3; ASS refers to the royal* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html)*, for it says of him, Lowly, and riding upon an ass (Zech. IX, 9); FLOCKS refers to* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*, as it says, And ye are My sheep, the sheep of My pasture (Ezek. XXXIV, 31); AND MEN-SERVANTS AND MAID-SERVANTS [likewise alludes to* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*, as it says], Behold, as the* [*eyes*](body.html) *of the servants unto the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of their master (Ps. CXXIII, 2).THAT I MAY FIND FAVOUR [*[*GRACE*](grace.html)*]-as it says, Be gracious unto us (ib. 3).*

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) and the [Zohar](orallaw.html) are both telling us that the royal [Messiah](mashiach.html) is associated with a donkey! His association, however, is from the standpoint of dominion and control. He is “riding” the donkey.

Chamor is not arbitrary moniker. The donkey was seen as an animal of all brawn, and no brains. If Chazal were around today, they would undoubtedly question how many Chamorim[[7]](#footnote-7) there were under the hood of a Chevy truck. It represented brute [physical](physical.html) power. Its [name](name.html) is directly related to the words for substance (chomer), mortar, and clay. As such, it makes a good symbol, argues Maharal, for the purely [physical](physical.html) side of Man.

# “The” Chamor

Chazal [teach](teacher.html) that Bilaam’s donkey, the [one](one.html) that [spoke](mashal.html) to Bilaam, was no ordinary donkey. It had an incredible pedigree. In fact, according to the Tanna in Pirke Avot 5:6, it was [one](one.html) of the [ten](ten.html) things that were [created](bara.html) on Erev [Shabbat](sabbath.html), at twilight, on the [sixth](six.html) day of [Creation](bara.html).

The [Mishna](orallaw.html) (Avot 5:8) reads: [Ten](ten.html) things were [created](bara.html) at twilight:

1. the [mouth](body.html) of the earth [that swallowed [Korach](qorach.html)]
2. the [mouth](body.html) of the well [that provided water for the Israelites in the wilderness]
3. the [mouth](body.html) of the donkey [that [spoke](mashal.html) to Balaam]
4. and the rainbow
5. and the manna
6. and the [staff](staff.html)
7. and the *shamir*
8. and the writing
9. and the inscription
10. and the tablets.

This suggests that there is something special about [one](one.html) particular donkey. It was [created](bara.html) at a special [time](time.html) which was the [sixth](six.html) day of [creation](bara.html), yet is was not the [sixth](six.html) day. It was [created](bara.html) on the [seventh](seven.html) day, yet it was not the [seventh](seven.html) day. Twilight is a special transition period between days which has some of the characteristics of both days. To put it another way: The [mouth](body.html) of Bilaam’s donkey was [created](bara.html) during the messianic age!

The meaning of this is debated by the commentators. The Rav, R' Ovadiah m'Bartenura, writes that on Erev [Shabbat](sabbath.html), the decree was issued that the donkey would [speak](mashal.html) to Bilaam.

Pirke D’Rav Eliezer, chapter 31*,* notes that the Chamor used by [Avraham](avraham.html) is the same Chamor mentioned by Moses, and will be the same Chamor ridden by [Mashiach](mashiach.html)!

**Pirke D’Rabbi Eliezer**: This donkey was born to the famous donkey formed on the [first](one.html) Friday of [creation](bara.html), after sunset.[[8]](#footnote-8) It is the donkey on which Moshe rode when [coming](coming.html) to Egypt. And it is the donkey which the son of [David](fathers.html)[[9]](#footnote-9) will ride upon.

Pirke D’Rabbi Eliezer [teaches](teacher.html) us that the donkey which accompanied [Avraham](avraham.html) Abinu to the Aleida was none other than the son of the original donkey that was [created](bara.html) on the Erev [Shabbat](sabbath.html) of [creation](bara.html). This donkey later served Moshe Rabbenu, his wife and sons, when they returned to Egypt to take part in [Hashem](hashem.html)'s plan for liberating the [Jews](gen-jew.html) [from Egypt](thebirth.html). This is the donkey that [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [David](fathers.html) will ride as he heralds the [future](future.html) [Redemption](redemption.html). We see from here that the she-donkey that [spoke](mashal.html) with Bilaam was [created](bara.html) on the Erev [Shabbat](sabbath.html) of [creation](bara.html).

Hmmm, our chamor is the offspring of the MOST famous donkey ever [created](bara.html):

***Ethics of the*** [***Fathers***](fathers.html) ***5:6***[*Ten*](ten.html) *things were* [*created*](bara.html) *on the eve of* [*Shabbat*](sabbath.html) *at twilight. These are: the* [*mouth*](body.html) *of the earth (where it swallowed* [*Korach*](qorach.html)*) the* [*mouth*](body.html) *of the well (of Miriam, that provided water for the Israelites in the desert);* ***the*** [***mouth***](body.html) ***of the (Bilaam’s)******ass****; the rainbow; the manna; (Moses’)* [*staff*](staff.html)*; the shamir (that cut the stones of the Altar in the Holy* [*Temple*](temple.html)*); and the writing, the inscription, and the tablets [of the* [*Ten*](ten.html)[*Commandments*](cmds613.html)*].*

[Mashiach](mashiach.html)’s donkey makes its [first](one.html) appears in the year 2084 from [creation](bara.html) (1677 BCE):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 22:3*** *And* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took* [*two*](two.html) *of his young men with him, and* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *his son, and clave the wood for the* [*burnt offering*](korbanot.html)*, and rose up, and went unto the* [*place*](place.html) *of which God had told him.*

The Chamor is used for many things involving the carrying of burdens. What did [Avraham](avraham.html) use his Chamor for? [Avraham](avraham.html) used the Chamor to carry the bundles of wood and the knife. In other words, the Chamor didn’t carry [Avraham](avraham.html) or [Yitzchak](isaac.html). It carried only the items which [Avraham](avraham.html) was planning to use for the Aleida.

[Avraham](avraham.html)’s [journey](stages.html) was only the [first](one.html) [time](time.html) in history that this [type](types.html) of service was performed. That’s why so very little was put on top of the Chamor, only the items he needed for the Aleida.

What was [Avraham](avraham.html)’s Chamor trip for? [Avraham](avraham.html) was going to [redeem](redemption.html) his son, and by redeeming his son he would be redeeming all of the Children of [Israel](gen-jew.html), because, at that [time](time.html), all of the Children of [Israel](gen-jew.html) were in the loins of [Yitzchak](isaac.html). This was a [redemption](redemption.html) [journey](stages.html) using the Chamor for transportation.

In Shemot***,*** we see a pasuk that describes how Moshe used THE Chamor to carry his wife and children to their destination:

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 4:20*** *And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon the ass, and he returned to the land of Egypt: and Moses took the* [*rod*](staff.html) *of God in his* [*hand*](fourteen.html)*.*

Rashi says the following about this ass (donkey):

**mounted them upon the donkey -** The designated donkey. That is the donkey that [Abraham](avraham.html) saddled for the binding of [Isaac](isaac.html), and that is the [one](one.html) upon whom the King [Messiah](mashiach.html) is destined to appear, as it is said: “humble, and riding a donkey”.[[10]](#footnote-10)

Rabbi Yechiel Michel of Zlotchov in ***Be’er Mayim Chayim*** said:

Rashi is troubled why the verse says that he “mounted them upon *the donkey*” rather than merely “a donkey”. Therefore, he concluded that the Torah must be hinting that it is a famous donkey.

Moshe placed his wife and children atop the Chamor. People who are close to you are much more important than tools. This shows that in the many years that had passed since [Avraham](avraham.html), a lot had been accomplished in the task of using [physicality](physical.html) to serve [HaShem](hashem.html). By then, it was people who were on the Chamor, not items. Still, we were talking about Moshe’s family, not Moshe himself.

What was Moshe’s Chamor trip for? Moshe was going to [redeem](redemption.html) all of the Children of [Israel](gen-jew.html). This was a [redemption](redemption.html) [journey](stages.html) using the Chamor for transportation.

In describing the advent of [Mashiach](mashiach.html), the Prophet states,

***Zechariah 9:9*** *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he [is] just, and having* [*salvation*](salvation.html)*; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.*

This is the Chamor who carries not the belongings or the wife and children, but the person himself, this is the Chamor of [Mashiach](mashiach.html)![[11]](#footnote-11)

When describing the [exile](galuyot.html), our sages tell us that [Mashiach](mashiach.html) himself will ride atop the Chamor. Then the [physicality](physical.html) of our [world](worlds.html) will be fully used for spirituality.

[Mashiach](mashiach.html) will ride the same Chamor that was used by [Avraham](avraham.html) and by Moshe. The [Mashiach](mashiach.html) will be [one](one.html) who has conquered the material aspects of Himself, and he will ride them, and it will be a Chamor, because it will provide him with the material as a means to His ends.

What was [Mashiach](mashiach.html)’s Chamor trip for? [Mashiach](mashiach.html) was going to [redeem](redemption.html) the [Gentiles](gen-jew.html). This was a [redemption](redemption.html) [journey](stages.html) using the Chamor for transportation. Matityahu tells us the Midrashic perspective of this Chamor and the carrying of [Mashiach](mashiach.html):

***Matityahu (Matthew) 21:1-9*** *And when they drew nigh unto* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, and were come to* [*Bethphage*](bethphag.html)*, unto the* [*mount of Olives*](east.html)*, then sent* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)[*two*](two.html) *disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose [them], and bring [them] unto me. And if any [man] say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and* [*sitting*](mashal.html) *upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *commanded them, And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set [him] thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed [them] in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of* [*David*](fathers.html)*: Blessed [is] he that cometh in the* [*name*](name.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*; Hosanna in the highest.*

Yochanan tells us the [Sod](sod.html) level perspective of this Chamor and the carrying of [Mashiach](mashiach.html):

***Yochanan (John) 12:12-16*** *On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *was* [*coming*](coming.html) *to* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed [is] the King of* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html) *that cometh in the* [*name*](name.html) *of the Lord. And* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)*, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,* [*Fear*](fear.html) *not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh,* [*sitting*](mashal.html) *on an ass’s colt. These things understood not his disciples at the* [*first*](one.html)*: but when* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and [that] they had done these things unto him.*

Apparently, this donkey alludes to a higher [spiritual](physical.html) dimension than the simple animal itself. The purpose of using and riding a donkey is to enable the person and his belongings to reach such a [place](place.html) which, due to its height or distance, would be unreachable without the donkey.

The same is true in the [spiritual](physical.html) act of “riding on a donkey.” Chamor is linked with chomer*,* materialism. The purpose of a [Jew](gen-jew.html), and every human being, is to refine the coarseness of this materialistic [world](worlds.html), [one](one.html)’s [body](body.html), [household](househld.html), etc. through the [study](study.html) of Torah and observance of [mitzvot](cmds613.html). In so doing [one](one.html) is elevated to such a level that the soul, in and by itself, is unable to attain. Only when the soul enters the corporeal, [physical](physical.html) [body](body.html) (at [birth](birth.html)) does it have the challenge - and [HaShem](hashem.html) given ability to refine the [body](body.html) and all materialistic aspects through a life devoted to [HaShem](hashem.html) and His Torah.

Why do our Sages go to such great lengths to [teach](teacher.html) us that [Avraham](avraham.html), Moshe, and [Mashiach](mashiach.html) all rode the same Chamor? What difference does it make?

***Sanhedrin 98a*** *Rebi Alexandri said: Rebi Yehoshua ben Levi raised the following contradiction: It says, “Behold like the clouds of* [*Heaven*](heaven.html) *came* [*one*](one.html) *like the son of man” (Daniel 7:13). It is also written, “Lowly and riding upon a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9). If they* [*merit*](merit.html) *it, he will come with the clouds of* [*Heaven*](heaven.html)*, but if they do not* [*merit*](merit.html) *it, he will come upon a donkey.*

The great and holy scholar, Rabbi Chiam Midini, in his work Sdei Chemed,[[12]](#footnote-12) [connects](connection.html) this [Talmudic](orallaw.html) statement referring to the prophecy of Daniel: “If the [generation](toldot.html) is fortunate the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) will come from the dead, i.e. on “clouds of [heaven](heaven.html),” and then everyone will accept him with no reservations. But if not, he will come from the living, i.e. riding on a Chamor.

And so agrees the Holy Hakham [Yosef](joseph.html) Chaim[[13]](#footnote-13) in his commentary on Sanhedrin 98, in his book “Ben Yehoyada”, that the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) can come from the dead. (He also explains the topic there of [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html) and how he can also be [Mashiach](mashiach.html).)

# The Process

[Mashiach](mashiach.html)’s donkey represents the essence of the Messianic process: a process that began before [creation](bara.html) and which constitutes the very soul of history. In the beginning, when [HaShem](hashem.html) [created](bara.html) the [heavens](heaven.html) and the earth, when the [world](worlds.html) was still void, unformed, and shrouded in darkness, the spirit of Elohim hovered above the emerging existence. Says the [Midrash](orallaw.html):

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis II:4*** *R. Simeon b. Lakish applied the passage to the [foreign] Powers. NOW THE EARTH WAS TOHU (E.V. ‘UNFORMED’) symbolizes Babylonia: I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was tohu-E.V. ‘waste’ (Jer. IV, 23); AND BOHU (E.V. ‘VOID’) symbolizes Media: They hastened (wa-yabhillu) to bring* [*Haman*](esther.html) *(Est. VI, 14). AND DARKNESS symbolizes Greece, which darkened the* [*eyes*](body.html) *of* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html) *with its decrees, ordering* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*, ‘Write on the* [*horn*](shofar.html) *of an ox that ye have no portion in the God of* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*.’ UPON THE* [*FACE*](body.html) *OF THE DEEP-this* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *State: just as the great deep cannot be plumbed, so* [*one*](one.html) *cannot plumb [the depths of iniquity of] this* [*wicked*](wicked.html) *State. AND THE SPIRIT OF GOD HOVERED: this alludes to the spirit of* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html)*, as you read, And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him (Isa. XI, 2). In the* [*merit*](merit.html) *of what will [this spirit] eventually come? [For the sake of that which] HOVERED OVER THE* [*FACE*](body.html) *OF THE WATERS, i.e. in the* [*merit*](merit.html) *of repentance which is likened to water, as it is written, Pour out thy* [*heart*](body.html) *like water (Lam. II, 19). R. Haggai said in the* [*name*](name.html) *of R. Pedath: A* [*covenant*](covenant.html) *was made with water that even in the hot season a breeze stirs over it.*

“‘The spirit of Elohim hovered’, this is the spirit of [Mashiach](mashiach.html)”. For [Mashiach](mashiach.html) represents the divine spirit of [creation](bara.html), the vision of the perfected [world](worlds.html) that is Elohim’s purpose in [creating](bara.html) it and populating it with willful, thinking and achieving beings.

[Mashiach](mashiach.html)’s donkey has a long, prestigious history. [Time](time.html) and again it makes its appearance through the [generations](toldot.html), surfacing at key junctures of the messianic [redemptive](redemption.html) process. Each [time](time.html) we see it fulfilling the same function, but in a slightly different manner; reflecting the changes in our [world](worlds.html).

When [Yaaqov](jacob.html) approached the land, he sent messengers to tell [Esav](edom.html), “I have oxen and mules” or, literally, “an ox and a mule.” These animals represent the [two](two.html) Meshichim: [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Yosef](joseph.html) and [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [David](fathers.html). Each [one](one.html) has a different [mission](mission.html). [Yosef](joseph.html), the ox, can overturn the power of negativity that is [Esav](edom.html). The other [Mashiach](mashiach.html), ben [David](fathers.html), rides a Chamor, and stands for the power to raise up the seductions of Ishmael who is called Am Chamor, Donkey [Nation](nations.html). Chamor is the symbol of “chumriut,” [physicality](physical.html) and Ishmael have to do with taking the light of spirituality and sinking it into worldly lust, stealing from the longing for [HaShem](hashem.html) by directing it into worldly appetites where it doesn’t belong. Thus, the [midrash](orallaw.html) says that when [HaShem](hashem.html) offered the Torah to Ishmael he refused it because of the prohibition of stealing.

According to the [Talmud](orallaw.html), the animal that symbolizes Ishmael and his descendants is the ‘*Chamor*’ - the donkey:

***Yevamot 62a*** *Rab said: All agree that a slave has no legally recognized relatives, since it is written, Abide ye here with the ass[[14]](#footnote-14), people who are like the ass.*

However, it is not the [Talmud](orallaw.html)’s way to take pot shots at [nations](nations.html) of the [world](worlds.html), especially by playing on a word in the Torah. There is a message to the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people in this comparison of Ishmael to the Chamor, [one](one.html) that takes on added importance at this late and troubling stage of [world](worlds.html) history, for, if [*Mashiach*](mashiach.html) is [coming](coming.html), he seems to be ‘arriving’ on a ‘*Chamor*.’

# The King

Now it is not the accepted thing for a King or Queen to ride on a donkey. Majesty rides on a horse as it is written:

***Habakkuk 3:8*** *“You rode on Your horses, your* [*chariots*](merkava.html) *of* [*salvation*](salvation.html)*“.*

[One](one.html) does not degrade a Queen by putting her on a donkey and certainly not the King himself. It is more proper for the king’s servant to ride a donkey and this is the reason it is written about the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) that he is:

***Zechariah 9:9*** *He is just and victorious; humble and riding on a donkey*

The servant is not called King until he rides on his horse that is called the Assembly of [Israel](gen-jew.html). When the King is outside his residence, and not united with his Queen, he is not in his full majesty. In the [future](future.html), when He returns to His residence, then

***Zechariah 14:9*** *The Lord shall be King over all the earth; on that day the Lord will be* [*one*](one.html)*, and his* [*name*](name.html)[*one*](one.html)*.*

All [Israel](gen-jew.html) are called the sons of the King. Their relationship is like father and son, but not like the sons of the King until they return to the [land of Israel](city.html). When they return to the [land of Israel](city.html) the full majesty of their relationship will be revealed.

# Chamor in Torah:

We are getting ahead of ourselves a bit, so let’s return back to the beginnings:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 22:5*** *And* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.*

This scene seems common on the surface, but the [Midrash](orallaw.html) reveals that which is not seen:

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis LVI:2*** *He then said to him [*[*Isaac*](isaac.html)*]: ‘*[*Isaac*](isaac.html)*, my son, seest thou what I see?’ ‘Yes,’ he replied. Said he to his* [*two*](two.html) *servants: ‘See ye what I see?’ ‘No,’ they answered. Since ye do not see it, ABIDE YE HERE WITH THE ASS,’ (XXII, 5), he bade them, for ye are like the ass, whence it follows that slaves are like an ass The Rabbis proved [it from this verse spoken at] the Revelation:* [*Six*](six.html) *days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work... thou, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle (Ex. XX, 10). R.* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *said: This* [*place*](place.html) *shall* [*one*](one.html) *day be alienated from its Owner forever? [No], for it is stated, This is My resting-*[*place*](place.html) *forever; here will I* [*dwell*](dwelling.html) *for I have desired it; (Ps. CXXXII, 14)-when he comes of whom it is written, Lowly, and riding upon an ass (Zech. I, 9).*

Our Sages tell us that when [Avraham](avraham.html) approached Har HaMoriah, mount Moriah, he saw an aura of holiness suspended in a [cloud](important.html) over the mountain. He turned to his beloved son and asked him, “what do you see?” [Yitzchak](isaac.html) replied that he, too, saw a holy [cloud](important.html) hovering over the mountain.” Then [Avraham](avraham.html) turned to his son Ishmael and his servant Eliezer and asked them if they too saw a [cloud](important.html). They did not. And so [Avraham](avraham.html) responded, “Remain here with the Chamor”.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 24:35*** *And* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great: and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 30:43*** *And the man increased exceedingly, and had much cattle, and maidservants, and menservants, and camels, and asses.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 32:5*** *And I have oxen, and asses, flocks, and menservants, and women servants: and I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find* [*grace*](grace.html) *in thy sight.*

In the above pasuk, [Jacob](israelja.html) recounts his years in Laban’s [household](househld.html). Among other things he states, “I have ox(en) and donkey(s)” (the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) has both in the singular). According to the [Midrash](orallaw.html), this is an allusion to the Chamor of [Mashiach](mashiach.html), whom the Torah describes as “humble and riding upon a Chamor”:

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis LXXV:6*** *AND I HAVE AN OX, AND AN ASS, etc. (XXXII, 6). R. Judah said: From* [*one*](one.html) *ox many oxen came forth, and from* [*one*](one.html) *ass many asses came forth.’ R. Nehemiah said: This is the common idiom: an ass, a camel. The Rabbis maintained: OX is an allusion to the* [*one*](one.html) *anointed for battle, as it says, His firstling bullock, majesty is his (Deut. XXXIII, 17); ASS (Chamor) refers to the royal* [*Messiah*](mashiach.html)*, for it says of him, Lowly, and riding upon an ass (Zech. IX, 9); FLOCKS refers to* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*, as it says, And ye are My sheep, the sheep of My pasture (Ezek. XXXIV, 31); AND MEN-SERVANTS AND MAID-SERVANTS [likewise alludes to* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*, as it says], Behold, as the* [*eyes*](body.html) *of the servants unto the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of their master (Ps. CXXIII, 2). THAT I MAY FIND FAVOUR [*[*GRACE*](grace.html)*]-as it says, Be gracious unto us (ib. 3).*

A question is asked: Why did [Jacob](israelja.html) choose to allude to the final [redemption](redemption.html) in precisely this way?

[Abraham](avraham.html) and his servants walked by [foot](heel.html), employing the donkey only to carry their belongings: the pieces of wood and the knife. Neither did Moses ride upon the donkey himself, but only mounted his wife and son on the animal’s back. [Mashiach](mashiach.html),[[15]](#footnote-15) by contrast, will actually ride the donkey.

In the times of [Abraham](avraham.html), before the Torah was given at Mt. [Sinai](stages.html), the [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html) was not yet sanctified. When the Patriarchs performed [mitzvot](cmds613.html) with [physical](physical.html) objects, the [physical](physical.html) objects remained unchanged. Materiality did not yet have the power to [spiritually](physical.html) elevate. [Abraham](avraham.html) thus utilized the donkey only for carrying, as the holiness in the objects was limited to the actual [time](time.html) he used them for sanctified purposes.

In Moses’ [time](time.html), the ability to transform materiality into spirituality (through the performance of [mitzvot](cmds613.html)) was granted. The lowest levels of human existence could thus be elevated. This partial conquest of the [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html) is symbolized by Moses’ mounting his wife and son upon the donkey.

It is only in the era of [Mashiach](mashiach.html) that the superiority of the [body](body.html) over the soul will be fully revealed. At that [time](time.html), even the highest levels of the soul will be elevated through the refinement of [physicality](physical.html). For this reason, [Mashiach](mashiach.html) will actually ride upon the donkey.

[Jacob](israelja.html)’s declaration thus alludes to his successful refinement of the [physical](physical.html) plane of reality during his sojourn with Laban. Indeed, it indicated his readiness for the next step up, the elevation of the soul that follows such refinement.

***Bereshit (Genesis) 34:28*** *They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which [was] in the* [*city*](city.html)*, and that which [was] in the* [*field*](field.html)*,*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 36:24*** *And these [are] the children of Zibeon; both Ajah, and Anah: this [was that] Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 42:26*** *And they laded their asses with the corn, and departed thence.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 42:27*** *And as* [*one*](one.html) *of them opened his sack to give his ass provender in the inn, he espied his money; for, behold, it [was] in his sack’s* [*mouth*](body.html)*.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 43:18*** *And the men were afraid, because they were brought into* [*Joseph*](joseph.html)*’s house; and they said, Because of the money that was returned in our sacks at the* [*first*](one.html)[*time*](time.html) *are we brought in; that he may seek occasion against us, and fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 43:24*** *And the man brought the men into* [*Joseph*](joseph.html)*’s house, and gave [them] water, and they washed their* [*feet*](heel.html)*; and he gave their asses provender.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 44:3*** *As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away, they and their asses.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 44:13*** *Then they rent their clothes, and laded every man his ass, and returned to the* [*city*](city.html)*.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 45:23*** *And to his father he sent after this [manner];* [*ten*](ten.html) *asses laden with the good things of Egypt, and* [*ten*](ten.html) *she asses laden with corn and bread and meat for his father by the way.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 47:17*** *And they brought their cattle unto* [*Joseph*](joseph.html)*: and* [*Joseph*](joseph.html) *gave them bread [in exchange] for horses, and for the flocks, and for the cattle of the herds, and for the asses: and he fed them with bread for all their cattle for that year.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 49:14*** *Issachar [is] a strong ass couching down between* [*two*](two.html) *burdens:*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis XCVII*** *Let us now commence with ISSACHAR IS A LARGE BONED ASS (XLIX, 14). As an ass breaks the bone of the skeleton, so does the* [*tribe*](tribes.html) *of Issachar break* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html) *in* [*halacha*](walking.html)*, for it says, And of the children of Issachar, men that had understanding of the times... the heads of them were* [*two*](two.html) *hundred (I Chron. XII, 33): this means that his* [*tribe*](tribes.html) *produced* [*two*](two.html) *hundred Sanhedrin.*

[***Midrash***](orallaw.html) ***Rabbah - Genesis LXXV:12*** *Another interpretation of AND I HAVE AN OX, AND AN ASS. OX alludes to* [*Joseph*](joseph.html)*, as it says, His firstling bullock, majesty is his’ (Deut. XXXIII, 17); Ass, to Issachar, for it is written, Issachar is a large-boned ass (Gen. XLIX, 14). Now the grandson of* [*Joseph*](joseph.html) *is destined to destroy* [*Amalek*](amalek.html)*, as it says, And Joshua discomfited* [*Amalek*](amalek.html) *and his people with the edge of the sword (Ex. XVII, 13); while the sons [descendants] of Issachar* [*know*](daat.html) *what the Holy* [*One*](one.html)*, blessed be He, does in His* [*world*](worlds.html)*, as it says, And of the children of Issachar, men that had understanding of the times, to* [*know*](daat.html) *what* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html) *ought to do (I Chron. XII, 33). AND FLOCKS refers to* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*, as it says, ‘And ye are My sheep, and the sheep of My pasture ‘(Ezek. XXXIV, 31); AND A MAN-SERVANT alludes to* [*David*](fathers.html)*: I am Thy servant, the son of thy handmaid (Ps. CXVI, 16). AND A MAID-SERVANT, to Abigail, as it says, Behold, thy handmaid is a servant (I Sam. XXV, 41).*

Reb Chaim of Volozhin z’tl cites the [Zohar](orallaw.html), which explains that the reason [Yaakov](israelja.html) identifies the [tribe](tribes.html) of Yissachar as the Chamor is to indicate and allow us to understand that although the make-up of Yissachar is material (chomer), the Torah has the ability to spiritualize that [physicality](physical.html) and elevate it to a [new](new.html) level. According to this understanding, the verse, “He saw tranquility that it was good, and the land that it was pleasant, yet he bent his shoulder to bear the burden and he became an indentured laborer,” means that despite the fact that Yissachar saw that he had tremendous bounty and material success, he nevertheless chose to remain unaffected by it. Rather, he “bent his shoulder...” to assume the yoke of Torah. Yissachar took the “Chamor / chomer” and spiritualized it. Thus, we can understand why Meam Loez, in the commentary on Yehoshua, that the Chamor represents the Torah scholar.

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 9:3*** *Behold, the* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *is upon thy cattle which [is] in the* [*field*](field.html)*, upon the horses, upon the asses, upon the camels, upon the oxen, and upon the sheep: [there shall be] a very grievous murrain.*

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 13:13*** *And every firstling of an ass thou shalt* [*redeem*](redemption.html) *with a lamb; and if thou wilt not* [*redeem*](redemption.html) *it, then thou shalt break his* [*neck*](body.html)*: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou* [*redeem*](redemption.html)*.*

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 20:17*** *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that [is] thy neighbor’s.*

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 21:33*** *And if a man shall open a pit, or if a man shall dig a pit, and not cover it, and an ox or an ass fall therein;*

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 22:4*** *If the theft be certainly found in his* [*hand*](fourteen.html) *alive, whether it be ox, or ass, or sheep; he shall restore double.*

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 22:9*** *For all manner of trespass, [whether it be] for ox, for ass, for sheep, for raiment, [or] for any manner of lost thing, which [another] challengeth to be his, the cause of both parties shall come before the judges; [and] whom the judges shall condemn, he shall pay double unto his neighbour.*

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 22:10*** *If a man deliver unto his neighbour an ass, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast, to keep; and it die, or be hurt, or driven away, no man seeing [it]:*

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 23:4*** *If thou meet thine enemy’s ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.*

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 23:5*** *If thou see the ass of him that hates thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him.*

The Baal Shem Tov applied this instruction to the [body](body.html) and the material self (Chamor, “donkey”, also means “materiality”). Initially, the Torah is saying that you may see your [body](body.html) as your enemy, resisting your soul’s objectives, collapsing under the “burden” of the [mitzvot](cmds613.html). You may therefore be inclined to fight the [body](body.html) by denying its [needs](needs.html) and mortifying it. Says the Torah: You must aid your soul’s “enemy”. [Purify](purity.html) the [body](body.html), refine it, do not break it.

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 23:12***[*Six*](six.html) *days thou shalt do thy work, and on the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *day thou shalt rest: that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed.*

***Shemot (***[***Exodus***](exodus.html)***) 34:20*** *But the firstling of an ass thou shalt* [*redeem*](redemption.html) *with a lamb: and if thou* [*redeem*](redemption.html) *[him] not, then shalt thou break his* [*neck*](body.html)*. All the firstborn of thy sons thou shalt* [*redeem*](redemption.html)*. And none shall appear before me empty.*

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 16:15*** *And Moses was very wroth, and said unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*, Respect not thou their* [*offering*](korbanot.html)*: I have not taken* [*one*](one.html) *ass from them, neither have I hurt* [*one*](one.html) *of them.*

Since the Chamor represents [physicality](physical.html), we can understand why Moshe said, “I didn’t take a Chamor from them”. Moshe was being accused of all sorts of things, so he says to [HaShem](hashem.html), what basis do they have to accuse me of these things? Not [one](one.html) [physical](physical.html), material anything did I ever take from them! Moshe doesn’t mean that he never stole a donkey, he means he never took a [physical](physical.html), material object. His language could not have been more exact.

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 31:28*** *And levy a tribute unto* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *of the men of war which went out to battle:* [*one*](one.html) *soul of* [*five*](five.html) *hundred, [both] of the persons, and of the beeves, and of the asses, and of the sheep:*

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 31:30*** *And of the children of* [*Israel*](gen-jew.html)*’s half, thou shalt take* [*one*](one.html) *portion of fifty, of the persons, of the beeves, of the asses, and of the flocks, of all manner of beasts, and give them unto the Levites, which keep the charge of the* [*tabernacle*](mikdash.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*.*

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 31:34*** *And threescore and* [*one*](one.html) *thousand asses,*

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 31:39*** *And the asses [were]* [*thirty*](thirty.html) *thousand and* [*five*](five.html) *hundred; of which* [*HaShem*](hashem.html)*’s tribute [was] threescore and* [*one*](one.html)*.*

***Bamidbar (***[***Numbers***](nchart.html)***) 31:45*** *And* [*thirty*](thirty.html) *thousand asses and* [*five*](five.html) *hundred,*

***Debarim (Deuteronomy) 5:14*** *But the* [*seventh*](seven.html) *day [is] the* [*sabbath*](sabbath.html) *of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *thy God: [in it] thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that [is] within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.*

***Debarim (Deuteronomy) 5:21*** *Neither shalt thou* [*desire*](needs.html) *thy neighbor’s wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor’s house, his* [*field*](field.html)*, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any [thing] that [is] thy neighbor’s.*

***Debarim (Deuteronomy) 22:3*** *In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost thing of thy brother’s, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: thou mayest not hide thyself.*

***Debarim (Deuteronomy) 22:4*** *Thou shalt not see thy brother’s ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt surely help him to lift [them] up again.*

***Debarim (Deuteronomy) 22:10*** *Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together.*

***Debarim (Deuteronomy) 28:31*** *Thine ox [shall be] slain before thine* [*eyes*](body.html)*, and thou shalt not* [*eat*](eating.html) *thereof: thine ass [shall be] violently taken away from before thy* [*face*](body.html)*, and shall not be restored to thee: thy sheep [shall be] given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue [them].*

\* \* \*

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) cites a pasuk that refers to [Yaakov](israelja.html) as the “sheep” (*seh*) and the [Jews](gen-jew.html) are the “sheep among the wolves”. There is a pasuk in Yehezchel, which identifies the Egyptians as donkeys (*Chamorim*):

***Yehezchel (Ezekiel) 23:19-21*** *Yet she multiplied her whoredoms, in calling to remembrance the days of her youth, wherein she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt. For she doted upon their paramours, their flesh [is as] the flesh of asses, and whose issue [is like] the issue of horses. Thus, thou calledst to remembrance the lewdness of thy youth, in bruising thy teats by the Egyptians for the paps of thy youth.*

**“Their flesh is the flesh of asses (*Chamorim)*.”** The Maharal of Prague explains that the word *Chamor* comes from *chomeir* that connotes materialism. The Egyptians had the lowest degree of spirituality of any [nation](nations.html) in the [world](worlds.html). Because of this, the Egyptians had sunk to lowest depths of depravity such as incest, adultery, witchcraft, and [idol](idolatry.html) worship.

\* \* \*

Rashi says that “The” Chamor that Moshe used to bring his family to Egypt was the same [one](one.html) that [Avraham](avraham.html) took to the Aleida and the [one](one.html) that the [Mashiach](mashiach.html) will ride upon. Why not a regular Chamor? Why must we have a miraculous Chamor? We have a miraculous Chamor to tell us that these significant [events](feasts.html) were not haphazard, but rather, this Chamor was specifically prepared as a part of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s master plan for the [redemption](redemption.html) of His [world](worlds.html):

***Matityahu (Matthew) 21:1-7*** *And when they drew nigh unto* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*, and were come to* [*Bethphage*](bethphag.html)*, unto the* [*mount of Olives*](east.html)*, then sent* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html)[*two*](two.html) *disciples, Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose [them], and bring [them] unto me. And if any [man] say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them. All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and* [*sitting*](mashal.html) *upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass. And the disciples went, and did as* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *commanded them, And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set [him] thereon.*

Thus, we see [Mashiach](mashiach.html) ben [Joseph](joseph.html) riding the chamor as He prepares for His ultimate [redemptive](redemption.html) act. Thus, we can see that when [Avraham](avraham.html) went to the Aleida for the [redemption](redemption.html) of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people, he too uses The chamor. When Moshe went to [redeem](redemption.html) the peoples [from Egypt](thebirth.html), he went riding The chamor.

# [Shechem](city.html) ben Chamor

***Bereshit (Genesis) 34:13-15*** *“*[*Jacob*](israelja.html)*’s sons answered* [*Shechem*](city.html) *and Chamor, his father, cleverly, and they* [*spoke*](mashal.html) *because he had defiled Dina their sister. And they said to them, “we cannot do this thing, to give our sister to a man who remains uncircumcised, for it is a disgrace for us. Only on this [condition] can we agree with you, if you will be like us, to* [*circumcise*](circumcz.html) *every* [*male*](male+female.html)*.”*

After [Shechem](city.html)’s assault upon and kidnapping of Dina, the brothers set out to rescue her. A straightforward interpretation of these verses is that the brothers, recognizing that they were not strong enough to rescue her through military might, tricked Chamor and his son into weakening themselves. They never intended to permit the attackers to marry their sister, but the deception was justified in order to [save](salvation.html) her (and as we see, Shimon and Levi felt that the people of [Shechem](city.html) were subject to the death penalty for participating in the kidnapping).

The Ba’al Aleida, however, takes a different approach. He says that the offer was genuine, but [Shechem](city.html) and Chamor didn’t fully understand what they were being asked to do. The brothers said that they would consent, “if you will be like us,” meaning truly like they were. Not only on the outside, but on the inside. The people of [Shechem](city.html) would need to become like the children of [Yaakov](israelja.html), joining the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people. The brothers were not just asking them to perform the [physical](physical.html) act of [circumcision](circumcz.html), but that they join the [covenant](covenant.html) of [circumcision](circumcz.html), the [covenant](covenant.html) [HaShem](hashem.html) made with [Abraham](avraham.html). If they did so, then to have [Shechem](city.html) marry their sister would be no disgrace at all.

That was the fundamental point, the key issue. But [Shechem](city.html) and Chamor didn’t get it. They thought that if the outer trappings were OK, that’s all that was needed.

\* \* \*

***Luqas (***[***Luke***](luke.html)***) 14:3-6*** *And* [*Yeshua*](yeshua.html) *answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the* [*sabbath*](sabbath.html) *day? And they held their peace. And he took [him], and healed him, and let him go; And answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the* [*sabbath*](sabbath.html) *day? And they could not answer him again to these things.*

\* \* \*

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1. Tanakh is a Hebrew acronym formed from the initial Hebrew letters of the Masoretic Text’s three traditional subdivisions: The **T**orah (“Teaching”, also known as the Five Books of Moses), **N**eviim (Prophets) and **K**etuvim (Writings)—hence **T**a**N**a**K**h. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. I am using Mashiach without further qualification, to apply to Mashiach ben Joseph, which is *not the normal* Jewish way. The normal Jewish way is to that ‘mashiach’ without qualification always applies to Mashiach ben David only. See Rambam’s *Hilchot Melachim*. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Tikunei Zohar 60 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Igrot Re’iya no. 555 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. HaYom Yom, Shvat 28; Keser Shem Tov (Kehot) addendum, sec. 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The normal Jewish way is that ‘Mashiach - Messiah’, without qualification, always applies to Mashiach ben David only. See Rambam’s *Hilchot Melachim*. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Plural of chamor – lit. donkeys. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Avot 5:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Mashiach [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Zech. 9:9).-[from Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 31] [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. This time, *Mashiach* applies to both Mashiach ben David and Mashiach ben Joseph. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Peyas HaSadeh, Maareches “Alef”, os Eyin [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. The Ben Ish Chai [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Bereshit 22:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Mashiach here applies to both Mashiach ben Joseph and Mashiach ben David. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)