

MONY ALMALECH

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About the Author

MONY ALMALECH is a professor at the New Bulgarian University and a guest professor at the Institute for Bulgarian Language with Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. Over the years, taught at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, Bulgarian Evangelical Theological Institute, Sofia Technical University. His development was influenced by a two-year specialization with Professor Dimitri Segal at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (1993-94).



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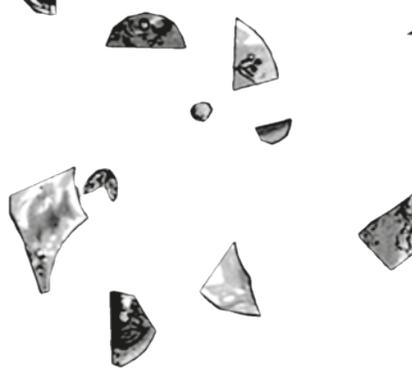
Biblical donkey was published first in Bulgarian in 2011.

About the Book

The abundant literature dedicated to the donkey and used by the compilers of BibleWorks 98, indicates biblical facts regarding this animal: the donkey is forbidden food; the donkey and the ox have to rest on Saturday; the first donkey is not subject to destruction in the Egyptian punishments. In addition to these general data, the donkey is charged with a rich, important biblical symbolism.

Usually the kings choose a strong and combatant animal for ceremonies – a thoroughbred horse, an imposing elephant or even a camel. Christ enters Jerusalem on “the foal of a she-*ass*”, as the king of the Jews. This is to fulfil the tradition – David has a “royal she-*ass*” and Solomon is anointed as king on a “wild donkey”. It is either wisdom or stupidity for a king to ride an animal symbolizing love of peace and sexuality. According to other interpretations, the male donkey is related to the material domain with its flesh and strength whereas those who ride it in ceremonies have mastered this aspect of the human being and society... However, how do we account for the fact that in Hebrew the ass’s foal is not a diminutive of the word ‘donkey’, as well as the fact that the she-*ass* signifies ‘slow pace’ and has nothing in common with the jackass? And what does Solomon’s wild donkey signify?

The book replies to these curious questions and to the riddle as to why the king of the Jews rides “the foal of a she-*ass*” and the king is of the tribe of Judah, of whom Jacob/Israel prophesies that he will untie his donkey, just as the apostles set free the ass’s foal for which Jesus Christ sent them...



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After Marc Chagall, Stained glass windows for the synagogue of Hebrew University's Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem.

Mony Almalech

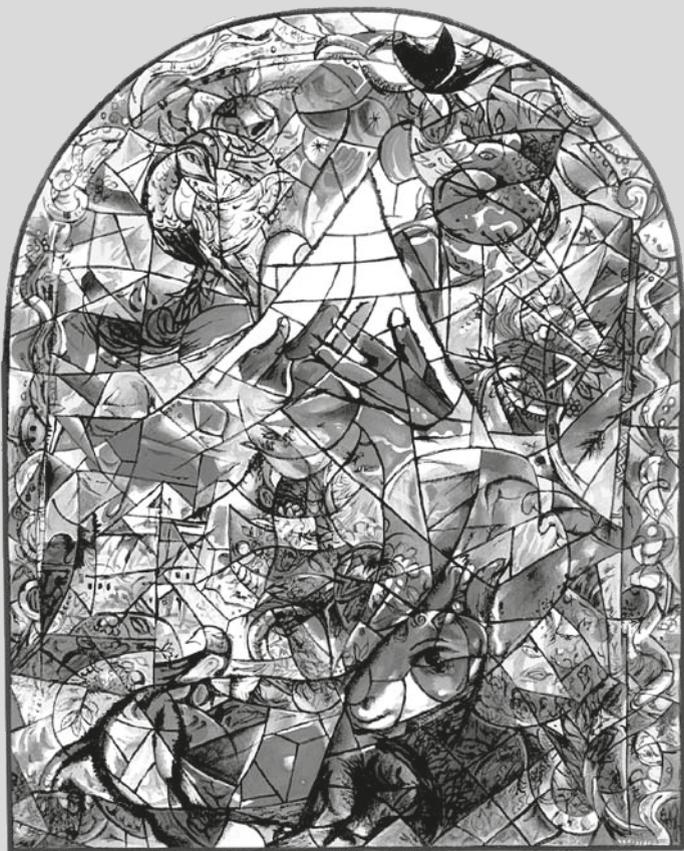
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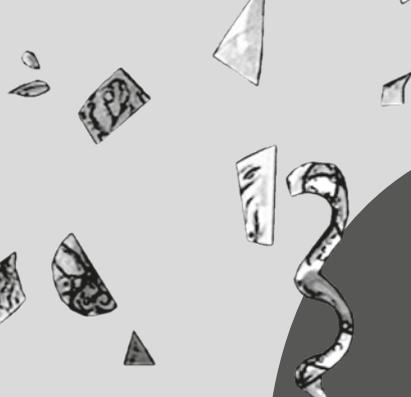


*... it is a mystery why David and Solomon
choose asses, “children of ass” for the royal
animal but not a horse, an elephant ...*

*... to ride donkey or ass expresses wealth,
power, influence ...*

... and a tradition in monotheistic Israelite culture.

*... and we came to the entry
of Jesus in Jerusalem.*



Biblical facts

regarding this animal:

The donkey is forbidden food;

The donkey and the ox
have to rest on Saturday;

The firstborn donkey is not subject to
destruction in the Egyptian punishments.

In addition to these general data, the donkey is
charged with a rich,
important biblical symbolism.

... The Messiah is gentle, peaceful, and for the
people remains a personal choice behavior:

*“...if they are meritorious, he will come
with the clouds of heaven;
if not, lowly and riding upon an ass.”*

[R. Alexandri. Babylonian Talmud: Sanhedrin 98a]

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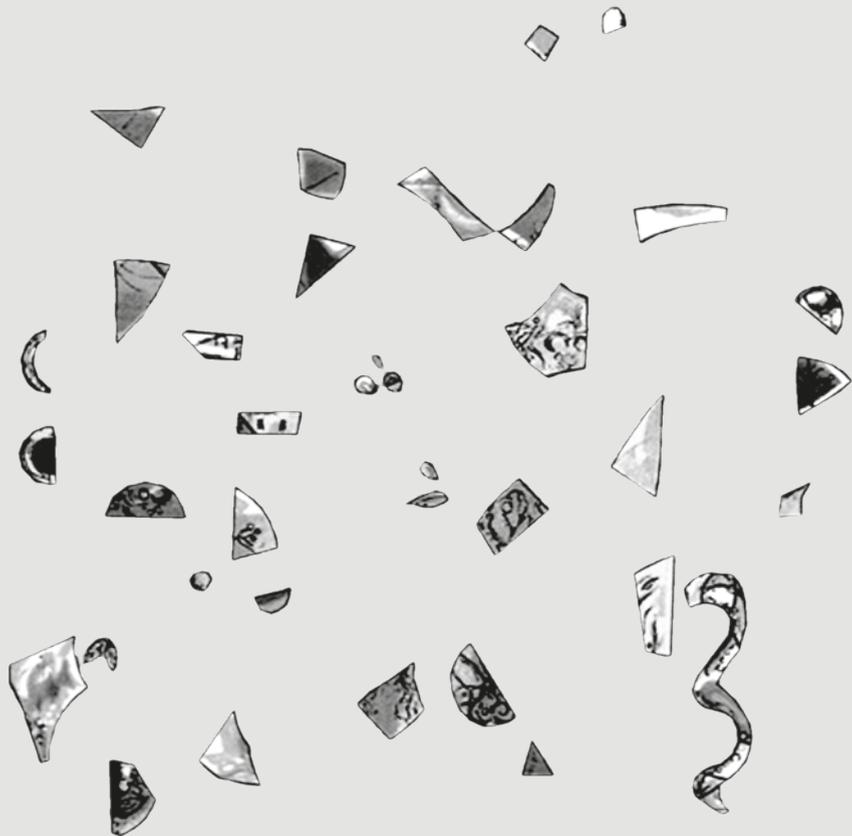
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THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY ABOUT THE ASS'S FOAL OF THE MESSIAH AND DONKEY-TERMINOLOGY

The prophet Zechariah foresees that the Messiah is a Jewish king who arrives, riding a donkey, “the ass’s foal”. In Christianity this is the standard explanation why Jesus Christ enters Jerusalem on a donkey which, in Judaism, is the king’s ritual animal for ceremonial events.

Zechariah 9:9

גִּילִי מְאֹד בַּת־צִיּוֹן הָרִיעִי בַת יְרוּשָׁלַם הִנֵּה מֶלֶכְךָ יָבוֹא לְךָ צָדִיק
וְנוֹשָׁע הוּא אֶעֱנִי וְרֹכֵב עַל־חֲמֹר וְעַל־עֵיר בְּיַאֲחֲזֹת: (WTT)

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

„Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He *is* just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a **donkey**, A **colt, the foal of a donkey**. (NKJ)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a **donkey**, Even on a **colt, the foal of a donkey**. (NAS)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout *in triumph*, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, Humble, and mounted on a **donkey**, Even on a **colt, the foal of a donkey**. (NAU)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a **colt, the foal of a donkey**. (NRS)



Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice heartily, O daughter Zion, shout for joy, O daughter Jerusalem! See, your king shall come to you; a just savior is he, Meek, and riding on an **ass**, on a **colt**, **the foal of an ass**. (NAB)

Радвай се много синова дъщерьо; Възклицавай, ерусалимска дъщерьо; Ето, твоят цар иде при тебе; Той е праведен, и спасява, Кротък, и възседнал на **осел**, Да! На **осле**, **рожба на ослица**. (Библия, 1940)

Ликувай от радост, дъще Сионова, тържествуйвай, дъще Иерусалимова: ето, твоят Цар иде при тебе, праведен и спасяващ, кротък, възседнал на **ослица** и на **младо осле**, **син на подяремница**. (Библия, 1992)

In Zechariah 9:9 the terms are:

male donkey/male ass חֲמוֹר [hamòr]

colt עֵיר [àir]

pl. female donkey/female ass אֲתוֹנוֹת [atonòt]

donkey's foal, lit. son of female donkey בֶּן-אֲתוֹנוֹת [ben atonòt]

The Messiah's foal is situated in the context of the particularly well-developed terminology in the Old Testament:

male donkey חֲמוֹר [hamòr]

female donkey אֲתוֹן [atòn]

colt/foal עֵיר [àir]

male mule/he-wild ass/wild donkey פָּרָד [pèred]

(female form) mule/she-wild ass/wild donkey פִּרְדָּה [pirdà]

king's she-mule פִּרְדַּת מֶלֶךְ [pirdàt mèleh]

wild ass/wild donkey פָּרָה [père]

wild ass/wild donkey פָּרָא [père]

wild ass/wild donkey עָרוֹד [aròd]



In this perfectly developed terminology, every denotation has its specificities in terms of word formation history, as well as associations and suggestions of colors. Some of these denotations go beyond the paradigm of the macro-white, i.e. light and are part of conscious and sub-conscious suggestions of the color red. Consider the example of the denotation *male donkey* חָמוֹר [hamòr], from the root of which the following words are formed: *be red* חָמַר [hamàr]; *smear with asphalt, ferment, boil, foam* חָמַר [hamàr]; *roeibuck* יַחְמוֹר [iahmùr]; *bitumen, asphalt* חֶמָר [hemàr]; *cement, mortar, clay* חֹמֶר [hòmer]; *wine* חֶמֶר [hèmer].

This chain is macro-red which is macro-dark.

On the other hand, the word *colt, wild ass* עֵיר [àir] is an element of the paradigm of macro-red which is macro-light. According to Gesenius, 1996 *to be hot, ardent, rouse oneself, awake, incite* עָרַר [ur]; *to make hot, to heat* הֵעִיר [heir]; *excitement* עִיר [ir]. A wild ass, so called from its rapid unrestrained running.

Besides the additional meanings derived from the common root, each of these denotations receives a separate semantization from the context in which it is used. For example *male donkey* חָמוֹר [hamòr] is an immutable element of the divine commandments, as well as a marker of significant historical events. The *king's mule* מִלְּךְ פָּרְדַּת מֵלֵךְ [pirdàt mèleh] is not only a curious historical fact, but is unequivocally associated with King David – the founder of this tradition.

The donkey's signs for the first time enter the biblical text in Jacob's legacy to the tribe of Judah (Genesis, 49:11). Here key-words are used which are inherited by the New Testament:





his foal his ass's colt בְּנֵי אֲתוֹנוֹ [bnèi atonò];
ties his foal binding his foal אֲסָרֵי עֵירוֹ [osrì atonò];
ties his donkey's colt binding his ass's colt אֲסָר בְּנֵי אֲתוֹנוֹ [osrì bnèi atonò]

Besides the semantization through kindred words formed by one root, there is a semantization from context. Contextual use of different terms presents different structures in the fabric of the entire Bible – they are cognitive and mnemonic.

All denotations of the donkey's kin in the Old Testament (with the complete semantization 'peace' and 'peace-loving') form a particularly complex structure – from a lexical, textual, cognitive and mnemonic viewpoint – in the framework of which the Messiah's white foal has a special significance. The entirety formed by the lexical, textual and cognitive structures allows for the Bible to be considered not only as a "library", i.e. different books written by different people at different times, but as a remarkable scientific proof of the Bible's wholeness. This case has a bearing on the polemic about the originality of the text, as well as on the question as to whether the Bible is "dictated" to prophets and apostles and is the divine word, or whether it is a compilation of clumsy human interventions – authors' and editors'.

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