

# ***What Do You Do With A Stubborn Mule***

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Question: How do you get a stubborn mule to move forward?

Answer: You smack him hard in the behind and yell move!

Question: What happens if the stubborn mule still refuses to move?

Answer: You drag him by the neck, smack his rear and yell move all at the same time.

Question: What happens if he still refuses to move?

Answer: Keep tightening the rope around his neck, continue smacking his rear and keep yelling, if this doesn't kill the stubborn mule, eventually your efforts will be rewarded.

Question: What does this example have to do with us and getting ready for Rosh HaShana?

Answer: It all depends whether or not you are a decent human being or just a stubborn mule.

The moral of all this is simple. Human beings, as stubborn as we may sometimes be, still move when we must and go to where we belong. Mules, on the other hand, cannot think clearly like human beings, and are only concerned about their immediate environment.

Human beings can see beyond the immediate and recognize the need for change regardless of how unpleasant it may be. Mules are animals; they cannot see beyond that which is right in front of their eyes and they have no interests other than in immediate instant gratification.

Human beings think and control their feelings. Mules only feel and have no real deep sense of thinking at all.

Human beings work hard to attain a goal. Mules work hard because they are coerced. Left to their own devices, mules would simply rather graze in the fields. Left to their own devices, human beings would still work hard to strive for accomplishment. Human beings care; mules do not.

Does any of this sound familiar?



How many of us have ever seen a mule walking on two legs? Maybe we have seen any of them but have a hard time recognizing them. Then again, maybe it is not hard at all.

Far be it for me to suggest that anyone is more a mule than a human being. Yet, actions speak louder than words. If one acts more like a mule than a person, then it is not me saying anything; on the contrary such a person is making a statement about themselves. Their behavior defines their identity and no words from me are necessary.

Only human beings can stand before G-d, change their ways and seek forgiveness for their errors. Animals frankly do not care about changing their ways or seeking forgiveness. Just give the mule his feed and leave him alone and he is happy.

G-d created us to be human beings and not animals. As long we as behave like animals we stand the chance of Heaven treating us like one. Yet, the desire of Heaven is not to force us to move like a stubborn mule; rather Heaven's desire is to awaken us to the reality that we are not mules at all.

We are human beings and although we may share some physical traits with certain members of the animal kingdom; still we are not animals. We are special creatures, created in the Image of G-d.

With such a great pedigree comes an equally great responsibility. If we choose to act like a mule in contradiction to our humanity, then indeed, Heaven will treat us like stubborn mules and pull us by the necks and smack us on our behinds. Yet, if we act like the human beings we are born to be, then Heaven treats us as human and not like an animal.

When we do the right things, the right things are in turn done for us. When we act human, we are treated human. On the contrary, when we act like animals we are treated as such.

On Rosh HaShana, all stand before the Heavenly cosmic force that will decide our fates for the coming year. Both man and animal will pass through the mighty scales and be subject to the influence of their balancing. Human beings may be told where they have to go in order to prosper. Wise people will move and go and prosper. Stubborn mules, on the other hand, refuse to budge. They have to be beaten, even if just to remove them from harm's way.

I do not believe that mules like to be beaten. Yet, they bring it on themselves with their behavior. What is one to do? Two legged mules do however have a choice. They can after all, choose to act human.