

"Yehudah, you, shall your brethren praise, your hand (shall be) on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons will bow down before you." (49:8)

The name "*Yehudi*," which is a term applied to all Jews, is taken from the name Yehudah. The qualities which gave Yehudah pre-eminence should be found within the Jewish nation. This is an inherent component of their national personality, fulfilling their mandate as "*Yehudim*." What does the name Yehudah signify?

Horav Mordechai Ilan z.l., suggests that Yehudah implies two perspectives. The essence of Yehudah is *malchus*, sovereignty and kingship. Every Jew's demeanor should carry an air of *malchus*. This is consistent with *Chazal's* statement in the *Talmud, Shabbos 111a*, "All Jews are the sons of kings." A certain refinement within the Jewish personality is reflected as a presence of splendor and majesty. This quality is not merely a part of a Jew's external appearance, but is his mandate and mission. This attribute should be noticed by everyone who comes in contact with him. Indeed, the aura of royalty and dignity should be reflected in the Jew's overall persona.

Another aspect of Yehudah must be manifest by the Jewish personality. Yehudah was the one who stood up against his brothers and secured Yosef's safety. Yehudah did not permit a wrong to be done. Nothing would stand in the way of his rescuing another Jew. We elevate this sense of *mesiras nefesh*, self sacrifice, to an ideal. Yehudah's descendants, Nachshon and the rest of *Shevet Yehudah*, later demonstrated this trait when they stood by the Red Sea. They were the first individuals to enter into the waters, thereby publicly sanctifying Hashem's Name.

Thus, the name "*Yehudi*" implies two distinct strands: the ability to stand at the forefront of challenge and to fight with determination for the sake of *Klal Yisrael* and the glory of Hashem's Name; and the lofty concepts of dignity, nobility and royalty. These qualities are found within the essence of each of us. We have only to develop these inherent characteristics.