

"Yehudah, your brothers shall praise (elevate) you." (49:8)

Despite the fact that he was the fourth son, Yehudah spoke up to save Yosef's life. He was also the valiant spokesman for Binyamin. Hashem rewarded him for his valor, promising that the future leadership of *Am Yisrael* was to be his. Yaakov's prophesy applied not only to royalty, but also to the full name of nationhood which eventually was derived from Yehudah's name: "*Yehudim*". *Horav Avigdor Miller Shlita* explains that the word "Yehudah" in its noun form, is derived from "*hod*" which denotes elevation, splendor, or majesty. As a verb it acquires the meaning of praising or elevating. It is therefore used for thanking, because the recipient thanks the benefactor by praising and elevating him. We may suggest that only a secure and elevated person acknowledges another's contribution and, consequently praises and thanks him. These attributes of dignity and pride in the elevated status of a Jew are reflected by our name: "*Yehudim*". These traits must be reflected not only in our name, but in our personality as well. They must always characterize our aspirations for Judaism. It is not enough for us to be satisfied with Jewish survival, we must nurture Judaism so that it will flourish and thrive. These same goals should be instilled in our children. When Torah scholarship is secondary to other "pursuits," then children receive a message that Torah observance is archaic and no longer a source of pride. To be a *kingdom of priests* we must maintain a spiritual aristocracy, an eminent sense of pride in our spirituality and Jewishness.