Yehudah—you, your brothers shall acknowledge… He crouches, lies down like a lion, and like an awesome lion, who dares rouse him. (Bereishit 49:8-9)

Yehudah was the acknowledged king of the *shevatim*. He is compared to a lion, the king of beasts. This was Yaakov *Avinu's* vision of Yehudah for the future. *Horav Shalom Yosef Zevin, zl,* expounds on these two terms: crouches; and lies down. Both are characteristics associated with the lion. A person's emotional state affects both his physical and ethical/moral conduct and his demeanor. One who feels down or discouraged can easily fall into a state of despair, which not only affects his motivation and drive, but can also lead to ethical compromises. He simply does not care. When one feels hopeless, he is less inclined to adhere to his principles and values. In contrast, the individual who is filled with strength, confidence, and a positive outlook is more likely to push forward through difficulties, maintaining his ethical/moral principles.

A flip side exists to all the positivity and depression. One who believes in himself and his ability to overcome the most difficult challenges can fall prey to arrogance. After all, everyone is falling behind, while he is the leader of the pack. He might lend himself to believe that *Kochi v'otzem yadi asah li es ha'chayil hazeh;* "My strength and the might of my hand made me all this wealth." (Devarim 8:17)

Conversely, is the individual who understands and acknowledges that his good fortune and positive mood are Heavenly gifts. He is forever grateful to Hashem for all of his benefaction.

This does not apply only in the physical arena, but in the ethical/moral sphere as well. A person senses when his ethical/moral state is on the downswing; his values have plummeted; his principles have capitulated. This can cause a lesser person to fall into the abyss of depression. He feels that he has no hope to extricate himself from this abyss. In contrast is the one who, although he has experienced instances during which he has compromised his principles and acted in an indecorous manner; he is capable of performing t*eshuvah*, repenting, and returning to Hashem. The Almighty keeps the light on for everyone. While, at times, we may give up on ourselves, Hashem never gives up on us. After all, we are His children.

Likewise, the individual who feels that he is on an elevated ethical level may let it go to his head and cause him to think that he is better than everyone. True, he may not be as successful in the material world, but he assumes that he is way ahead of others in the realm of the spirit. This is also arrogance. Allowing one's spiritual successes to go to his head undermines what spirituality is all about. He is compared is one who, because he excelled in the ethical/moral sphere, understands that it is all a drop in a bucket compared to what he can achieve and that which is expected of him. The greater he becomes, the more acutely aware he is that his work has just begun and the journey to the top of the ladder is far from complete. He does not condescend to others because he realizes that his success is due in part to the special gifts with which Hashem has endowed him.

Kora, rovatz k'aryeh u'klavi, "He crouches, lies down like a lion," has dual connotations. Even when the lion crouches, lies down, he descends to a low-level unbecoming him, he does not despair. Even then he is a lion and will rise from the bottom, stronger than before. As the *aryeh* and *lavi*, the king of beasts, he acts with a sense of *kora, rovatz-* crouching, laying down.

Yehudah achieves the epitome of monarchy because he synthesizes strength with modesty, aristocracy, and nobility with feelings for every man. He has never seen himself as better, as a representative of all men. Thus, we are called *Yehudim.* We do not despair, but we do not act in a high and mighty manner. We never forget who we are and Whom we represent. Nor do we forget the Source of all that we have achieved.