

RIISING TO THE OCCASION

UNDERSTANDING WHAT IT MEANS TO
BE A JEW, THROUGH THE PURIM STORY



QUESTION

#1

HELLO

my name is

There are A LOT of different names for the Jewish People....

אברהם ה' וזו
ט"כ למוצאי
סעודה ז' ק
רשת

Hebrews...

- Because our original language and the language of the Torah is Hebrew



Israelites...

- Because the father of the 12 tribes was called Israel



Israelites (Reason #2)

- Our national homeland is the land of Israel



But why are we called Jews???...



QUESTION

#2

Unlike ANY other book in Tanach (Torah, Prophets, Writings) throughout Megilas Esther the Jewish people are referred to by one name and one name only:

Yehudim - Jews

Esther 8:16

לַיְהוּדִים, הָיְתָה אוֹרָה וְשִׂמְחָה, וְשָׁשׂוֹן, וִיקָר

The Jews (Yehudim) had light and gladness and joy and honor.

Why specifically throughout the Megilah are we, for the first time, referred to *exclusively* as Jews?

ETYMOLOGY OF THE WORD "JEW"

- ❖ The word Jew derives from the word "Yehudah" which when translated the "Y" was changed to a "J" like in the name Judah.



- ❖ The name Yehudah was one of the 12 tribes. His descendants were promised to be rulers of the Jewish kingdom.

❖ בראשית פרק מט

❖ (י) לא יסור שבט מיהודה ומחקה מבין רגליו עד כי יבא שילו ולו יקחת עמים:

❖ The scepter shall not depart from Judah...

→ *So if Yehudah was just ONE of the tribes-why are ALL current Jews names after Yehudah?*

- ❖ On a simple level we may have started being called Yehudim since once the 10 Lost Tribes were exiled the Jewish Kingdom came to be known as the Kingdom of Yehudah. But that's still DOESN'T explain:
 - **WHY** Yehudah merited to be synonymous with Kingship and the Jewish people
 - **WHY** this name became universal for the Jewish people in the Purim story...



UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHARACTER AND NAME YEHUDAH

BEREISHIS 29:35 -THE DEFINITION OF THE NAME YEHUDAH

וַתֵּהֶר עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן, וַתֹּאמֶר הַפַּעַם אוֹדָה אֶת-יְהוָה--עַל-כֵּן קָרָאתָ שְׁמוֹ, יְהוּדָה; וַתַּעֲמֵד, מִלְּדָתָהּ.

And she (Leah) conceived again, and bore a son a declared, "This time my let me *gratefully* praise God;" therefore she called his name Yehudah (Judah)...

BEREISHIS - YEHUDAH EMBODIES HIS NAME AND ADMITS HIS MISTAKES



Background to the Yehudah Story:

Yehuda's son Er had been married to a woman named Tamar. Er died young, and his brother Onan married Tamar in his stead. Tamar soon found herself widowed again with Onan's untimely death, but remained determined to cling to the family of Yehuda. Her father in law promised her that when his younger son Sheila came of age, he too would marry Tamar. Yet as the years passed and Sheila matured, Tamar began to suspect that no wedding was planned. She tenaciously clung to her conviction to bear children to Yehuda's tribe, and had a prophetic inclination that someone great would descend from her.

Resorting to other means to attain her goals, she disguised herself, and met Yehuda at a crossroads while dressed as a prostitute. She successfully tempted Yehuda, who did not recognize her. He soon discovered he had no money to pay her wages. Promising to return with payment, he gave her his signet ring and staff as collateral. Yet when he returned to pay her, the woman he sought was nowhere to be found, and nobody had heard of her.

Some time later, it became evident that Tamar, who was a member of his household, was pregnant. Yehuda was outraged at her obvious promiscuity and publicly challenged her. At that critical moment, Tamar could have in front of everyone accused Yehuda of fathering the child she carried. Instead, she let only him know, and offered him the choice as to whether he would admit his mistake. She declared that the owner of the staff and signet ring she held was the father -- a message only Yehuda could understand. ..

This is what happened next:

כו וַיִּכַּר יְהוּדָה, וַיֹּאמֶר צְדָקָה מִמֶּנִּי, כִּי-עַל-כֵּן ל'א-נִתְּתִיהָ, לְשִׁלָּה בְּנִי; וְלֹא-יָסַף עוֹד, לְדַעְתָּהּ

And Yehudah recognized and admitted. And he said, "She is right; it is from me."

MEDRASH SHEMOS - FROM THIS STORY YEHUDAH IS REWARDED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY OF LEADERSHIP

שמות רבה (וילנא) פרשה ל"ד"ה יט א"ר אלעזר

ולמה נתן הקב"ה כתר ליהודה והלא לא לבדו הוא גבור מכל אחיו והלא שמעון ולוי גבורים והאחרים, אלא שדן דין אמת לתמר לכן נעשה דיין העולם

Why did God give the crown of Leadership to Yehudah? Certainly he was not the only warrior among his brothers....rather the reason is because he admitted and dealt honestly with Tamar so he was appointed as an honest judge for the entire world.

ROOT OF THE WORD JEW...

להתודות

Admit

הודאה

Appreciate

יהודה

Yehudah

So HOW does this relate to the Purim story? How do the traits of Yehudah relate to the essence of the Purim story?

THE MAJOR TURNING POINT IN THE PURIM STORY...

Mordechai learned of all that has been done against the Jews by Haman; and Mordechai tore his clothes and donned sackcloth and ashes...	א ומרדכי, ידע את-כל-אשר נעשה, ויקרע מרדכי את- בגדיו, וילבש שק ואפר; ויצא בתוך העיר, ויזעק ויעקה גדולה ומרה....
...Esther summoned Hathach, one of the king's chamberlains who assisted her, and ordered him to go to Mordechai, to learn what his actions were all about.	ה. ותקרא אסתר להתך מסריסי המלך, אשר העמיד לפניה, ותצוהו, על-מרדכי--לדעת מה-זה, ועל-מה-זה....
And Mordechai told him of all that had happened to him, and all about the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay in order to annihilate the Jews.	ז. ויגד-לו מרדכי, את כל-אשר קרהו; ואת פרשת הכסף, אשר אמר המן לשקול על-גנזי המלך ביהודיים (ביהודים)--לאבדם
Mordechai also gave a copy of the text of the decree that was distributed in Shushan for their destruction, in order to show Esther and inform her, and beg her to go to the king, to implore him of him, and to plead with him for her people.	ח. ואת-פתשגן כתב-הדת אשר-נתן בשושן להשמידם, נתן לו--להראות את-אסתר, ולהגיד לה; ולצוות עליה, לבוא אל-המלך להתחנן-לו ולבקש מלפניו--על-עמה
So Esther's assistant went to Esther to inform her of everything Mordechai had told her.	ט ויבוא, התך; ויגד לאסתר, את דברי מרדכי.
Then Esther told her assistant to go tell Mordechai the following:	י. ות אמר אסתר להתך, ותצוהו אל-מרדכי.
All the king's servants and all the people in kingdom know that any man or woman who approaches the king in the inner court, who is not summoned, his law is one-to be put to death; except for the one to whom the king shall extend the gold scepter so that he may live. Now I, I have not been summoned to come before the king in thirty days!	יא. כל-עבדי המלך ועם-מדינות המלך ידעים, אשר כל-איש ואשה אשר יבוא-אל-המלך אל-התצר הפנימית אשר ל'א-יקרא אחת דתו להמית, לבד מאשר יושיט-לו המלך את-שרביט הזהב, וחייה; ואני, ל'א נקראתי לבוא אל-המלך--זה, שלוש יום.
They related Esther's words to Mordechai.	יב. ויגידו למרדכי, את דברי אסתר.
Then Mordechai said to reply to Esther:	יג. וי אמר מרדכי, להשיב אל-אסתר:
"DO not imagine in your soul that you will be able to escape the king's decree any more than the rest of the Jews. For if you persist in keeping silent at a time like this, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another place, while you and your father's house will perish. AND WHO KNOWS WHETHER IT WAS JUST FOR THIS MOMENT THAT YOU REACHED THE PALACE?!	יד. כי אם-תחפש תחרישי, בעת הזאת--רוח והצללה יעמוד ליהודים ממקום אחר, ואת ובית-אביך תאבדו; ומי יודע--אם-לעת כזאת, הגעת למלכות
And Esther replied to Mordechai:	טו. ות אמר אסתר, להשיב אל-מרדכי.
Go, assemble all the Jews that are to be found in Shushan, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, night or day...and I will approach the king unlawfully; and if I perish, I perish.	טז. לך כנוס את-כל-היהודים הנמצאים בשושן, וצומו עלי ואל-תאכלו ואל-תשתו שלש ימים לילה ויום-- גם-אני ונערי תי, אצום כן; ובכן אבוא אל-המלך, אשר ל'א-כדת, וכאשר אבדתי, אבדתי

WRAP-UP

- ❖ WHAT WERE THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE STORY AND CHARACTERISTICS OF YEHUDAH AND THE PURIM STORY?
- ❖ HOW DID ESTHER SHOW A UNIQUE APPRECIATION (הודאה) FOR THE MOMENT AND CIRCUMSTANCE SHE WAS PLACED?
- ❖ IN WHAT WAYS ARE APPRECIATION AND ADMITTING RELATED?
- ❖ HOW HAVE JEWS THROUGHOUT HISTORY EXEMPLIFIED THE QUALITIES OF APPRECIATION AND ADMITTING?
- ❖ WHAT SITUATIONS IN YOUR OWN LIFE HAVE BEEN REQUIRED TO RISE TO THE OCCASION? WHAT QUALITIES DID YOU USE IN ORDER TO MOTIVATE YOURSELF TO STEP FORWARD AND DELIVER?



You better lose yourself in the music, the moment
You own it, you better never let it go
You only get one shot, do not miss your chance to
blow
This opportunity comes once in a lifetime

ומי יודע--אם-לעת כזאת, הגעת למלכות.

**AND WHO KNOWS WHETHER IT WAS JUST FOR THIS MOMENT THAT YOU
REACHED THE PALACE?!**