

# TORAH – THE MARK OF THE MAN

## Background

This *posuk* is at the tail end of the Megillah, after we have been saved from our enemies and are enjoying great prestige and freedom in the Persian dynasty. Mordechai's newly found position of power is certainly a great boom for the Jewish nation. In fact, the Gemara tells us that his being in that position was considered "saving lives."

### ספר אסתר פרק י

ג) כִּי מְרַדְכֵי הַיְהוּדִי מְשָׁנָה לְמֶלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ וְגָדוֹל לַיְהוּדִים וְרָצוּי לְרַב אַחֲיוּ דָרַשׁ טוֹב לַעֲמוֹ וְדָבַר שְׁלוֹם לְכָל זֶרְעוֹ

*For Mordechai the Jew was second to King Achashverosh, great to the Jews, welcomed by most of his brothers, sought good for his nation, and spoke peace to all of his kin.*

### רש"י אסתר פרק י פסוק ג

ג) לְרֹב אַחֲיוּ - וְלֹא לְכָל אַחֲיוּ מִלְּמַד שֶׁפִּירְשׁוּ מִמֶּנּוּ מִקְצַת סְנֵהדְרִין לְפִי שֶׁנֶּעֱשָׂה קְרוֹב לְמַלְכוּת וְהָיָה בְּטַל מִתְלַמְּדוֹ

*To most of his brothers — and not to all of his brothers. This teaches us that some of the Sanhedrin separated from him because he became close to the monarch and interrupted his Torah study.*

### תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה דף טז/ב

כִּי מְרַדְכֵי הַיְהוּדִי מְשָׁנָה לְמֶלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ וְגָדוֹל לַיְהוּדִים וְרָצוּי לְרֹב אַחֲיוּ לְרֹב אַחֲיוּ מִלְּמַד שֶׁפִּירְשׁוּ מִמֶּנּוּ מִקְצַת סְנֵהדְרִין אָמַר רַב יוֹסֵף גָּדוֹל תְּלַמּוּד תּוֹרָה יוֹתֵר מֵהַצִּלַּת נַפְשׁוֹת דְּמַעֲיָקְרָא חֲשִׁיב לִיהּ לְמִרְדְּכֵי בְּתַר אַרְבַּעַה וּלְבַסּוּף בְּתַר חֲמִשָּׁה

*Some of the Sanhedrin separated from him... Rav Yosef says, "Greater is Torah study than saving lives. For originally, Mordechai was counted as the fifth of the great Jews, but now he was counted as the sixth."*

## Questions

Wasn't Moredechai doing the right thing when he accepted the position of second to the king? Wasn't he in fact doing the great deed of saving Jewish lives? How then can we understand why some of the great sages of his day separated from him? And even more, why did the Navi count him on a lower level than before when he clearly was doing the right thing?