

# Pesach Sheini – David’s Tomb

14 Iyar, 5774

(Unedited notes taken by Moshe Genuth during class, not reviewed nor edited by Harav Ginsburgh)

## 1. *The House of David and Pesach Sheini*

### **Lechatchila Aribber**

Lechaim lechaim.

The nigun we just sang is called *Lechatchila Aribber*, from the Rebbe Moharash. The title means “Above, to start with.” The idea is that if you encounter an obstacle you should leap over it. Likewise in this holy place, we should merit that all the darkness flee and that God be King here in merit of King David the Mashiach and it should all be Lechatchila Aribber, with the obstacle not even presenting a reality.

### **The Moral of Pesach Sheini**

Today is Pesach Sheini whose lesson is that nothing is ever absolutely lost; every situation can be rectified, regardless of the current state of affairs. In Breslov, this same idea is expressed with the well-known saying that “there is never any despair” (אין שום (איאוש קלל). If you believe that something can be broken, believe that it can be fixed, that is the moral of Pesach Sheini. Of course, this idea is relevant all year long, and is true on every day of the year, but just as the year in general has one day that is designated the New Year, literally, the Head of the Year, so there is a New Year’s day, a day that is the Head of the Year for this particular idea and stance—and that day is today.

### **Pesach Sheini on the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> days of the Omer**

Pesach Sheini is the 14<sup>th</sup> of Iyar, the 29<sup>th</sup> day of the Omer and now we have already counted the 30<sup>th</sup> day of the Omer. There is a very strong connection to David. It says that David was anointed king by Samuel when he was 29 years old, but he did not become the king in practice until he was 30. Meaning that these two days of the 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of the Omer—which together are Pesach Sheini, because the sacrifice is done on the 29<sup>th</sup> and eaten on the 30<sup>th</sup>—are connected to David. The moment that he was anointed, he received the spirit of God, as the verse says, “Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed

him [David] among his brothers; and from that day on, the spirit of Havayah imbued David..."<sup>1</sup> (ויקח שמואל את קרן השמן וימשח אתו בקרב אחיו ותנצלח רוח הוי' אל דוד מהיום ההוא ומעלה). The Targum says that the spirit of Havayah here is the spirit of prophecy. The Radak adds that the spirit of prophecy is also the spirit of Divine might, which granted David the strength to fight and win against the lion and the bear and Goliath, the Philistine who blasphemed God's Name in the war with the Jewish people. All this was when he was 29. The first 7 years of his kingdom, he ruled his tribe, the tribe of Judah alone, in Hebron. And again, these years began when he was 30. So this is certainly an essential connection between Second Pesach and King David. We have the merit of being here in David's Tomb and this place should forever remain an eternal house for the House of David. The anointment was in his 29<sup>th</sup> year (potential) and the actual rule began when he was 30.

### **"She is in hod" – The kingdom of David and the first two days of hod**

In *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers), the sages state that the *malchut*, kingdom, is attained through 30 levels or attributes. David attained these when he was 30 and he then became the heir to Judah, the son of Jacob. Just as Judah confessed of his act with Tamar, David also confessed his sin with Batsheva. All this is connected to the week of *hod* in *Sefirat Ha'omer*, which means "to confess." Pesach Sheini begins with the first and second days of *Hod*. The building of *malchut* is dependent on *Hod*. Especially with David who is a soul from the world of the feminine. The most important *sefirot* in *Hod*, the essence of each of the emotions of the heart as well, are the first two days, corresponding to *chessed* and *gevurah*.

### **Pesach Sheini and the Manna in the desert – Confidence both physically and spiritually**

Today, the 30<sup>th</sup> day of the Omer, was also the first day that the manna began falling in the desert. The sages tell us that the Torah could only be given to those who ate manna. The manna healed everyone and there was no one left blind or deaf, or maimed in any way. By performing the second Pesach, by entering the mindset that nothing is ever lost, immediately the manna begins to fall. Indeed, it is customary to read the

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<sup>1</sup>. 1 Samuel 16:13.

parahsah of the manna every day as a *segulah* for a good livelihood. The moral is that on any day, regardless of one's state, one can do *teshuvah* and rectify one's state.

David too is related to this message. Regardless of whatever has happened, one can always get up and rectify it.

### **The three Festivals and the sefirot**

There are three festivals in the Torah: Pesach, Shavu'ot and Sukkot. On each of these we are commanded to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to the Temple. When David brought the Holy Ark to Jerusalem, he danced and made merriment before it. There are many ways in which the correspondence between the festivals and the *sefirot* is explained. One of the explanations is that Pesach is *malchut*, Shavu'ot is *tiferet* (the middle axis), while Sukkot corresponds to *binah*. The rectification of the *malchut* of the Jewish people begins on Pesach. Sukkot, the time of our Joy is related naturally to *binah*, whose inner experience is joy.

In the early Kabbalah before the Arizal, these three levels were given a verse from Proverbs, "He who walks with sincerity, walks with confidence"<sup>2</sup> (הוֹלֵךְ בְּתָם יֵלֶךְ בְּטָח), the word **בתם** is an acronym for *binah*, *tiferet*, *malchut*. One should ascend to Jerusalem with *temimut*, with sincerity and then the whole year he can walk with confidence.

### **A second chance as related to kingdom**

Now, why is it that for Pesach we get a second chance? Apparently, this is something essentially related to *malchut* (and not to *binah* and to *tiferet*). This is like the kingdom of the Jewish people, where there is the first kingdom, Saul's and then the second kingdom, David's kingdom. David's is a second chance at having a kingdom. We see that the first instance of kingdom in the Bible is relatively unrectified. About the *malchut* it explicitly says, that in the beginning it is darkness, and then light appears. And that is what we said before, that we should merit that all the darkness in this place should flee and be replaced with a great deal of light. Again, *malchut* begins with darkness. Therefore, even though Pesach is a holy and pure holiday, the Torah explicitly mentions how those who are impure or on a long journey—meaning that either they are impure in relation to the *malchut*, or they are distant from the concept of *malchut*—how they should be given a

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<sup>2</sup>. Proverbs 10:9.

second chance to celebrate the Passover, or in our context, they should be given a second chance at kingdom, at *malchut*. And that is exactly what King David represents, a second chance at having a Jewish kingdom after the first one, led by Saul is not rectified.

### **The Torah begins with a *beit* – there is always a second chance**

The sages say that the Torah begins with a letter *beit* because if it would have begun with a letter *alef* it would have been “cursed” (אָרוּר). The letter *beit* is the first letter of “blessed” (בְּרֻכָּה). Wherever else the Torah’s first word, “In the beginning” (בראשית) appears, it is in relation to a kingdom. Likewise, kingdom is related to the letter *beit*, to the second chance at having a kingdom. David is described as a *ba'al teshuvah*. It is from him that we learn that it is never too late to do *teshuvah*, that there is nothing lost.

## **2. “A prayer for David” – Psalms chapter 86**

### **The importance of reciting Tehillim at David’s Tomb**

King David’s Tomb is the best place to say *Tehilim*, for David was the one who composed the book based on the songs sung by 10 elders. He is considered their author. It is known that great *tzadikim* came to David’s Tomb, where we are right now, to say *Tehilim*. In Chabad, it is well-known that the previous Rebbe founded a regular *minyan* of men that recited between them the entire *Tehilim* here every day. The Lubavitcher Rebbe restarted this *minyan* after 1967.

There were other great elders of Jerusalem who came here to say *Tehillim*. The previous Rebbe said that someone who says *Tehillim* here is a representative for the entire Jewish people. One should say *Tehillim* wherever one is, but this is the most important place.

### **The two chapters that begin with “A prayer for David”**

Of all the 150 chapters of *Tehillim*, there are only two that begin with the words, “A prayer for David” (תְּפִלָּה לְדָוִד): chapters 17 and 86. There is another chapter that begins with, “A prayer for the pauper” (תְּפִלָּה לְעֵנִי), which the sages say, refers to David, but it is not explicit.

## David's 18 wars and wives

The first thing we would like to do this evening is meditate on chapter 86. God's Name, *Elokim* is equal to 86 and this is chapter 86. The sages say that altogether, David fought 18 (יח) wars. The sages say that out of these, 13 (the number of the Measures of Mercy) were for the people and 5 were for his own sake. It sounds like a dispute at first between one opinion who says that he fought 18 and one who says that he fought 13. But the Talmud explains that 13 were for the sake of the people and 5 more were personal.

There is another instance of 18 related to David—he had 18 wives. First he was married to 6 and then after he was forgiven by God for his sin with Batsheva, the prophet Nathan told him that he could add up to twice as many wives, for a total of 18. Indeed, when at the end of his life, he was brought Avishag, he couldn't be with her intimately because he already had 18 wives. We might say that 18 battles refers to having 18 wives, that each of David's wives was a battle in and of itself, as it says, that if a man does not merit and lacks purification, his wife acts against him (in order to rectify him). But, in truth, each of David's wives provided the support he needed in order to engage in one of which wars. His "helpmate" here is the one who helps him to win his battles. Just as the young women sang about him after he killed Goliath.

So King David is **יח ונקים**, he has 18 wives and fights 18 wars. Now the Arizal explains that each time he went to war, the Name *Elokim* would enclothe him. At the beginning of his history, he is described as, "A mighty warrior, and a man of war"<sup>3</sup> (**וְגִבּוֹר חַיִל וְאִישׁ**) (מְלִחָמָה)—this was even before he killed Goliath. It was the Name *Elokim* that gave him the strength to win.

## Elokim and David

Now, in reduced number, the Name *Elokim* (**אֱלֹהִים**) equals 14, the value of David (**דָּוִד**) in normative numbering. How can we understand what the Name *Elokim* represents in reduced numbering? The Magid of Mezritch once walked into the *Beit Hamidrash* when his students were already asleep and he went and looked at each student. When he saw the Alter Rebbe, who was a young boy then, he said, How can such a great God be enclothed in such a small body? Reduced numbering of *Elokim* thus

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<sup>3</sup> 1 Samuel 16:18.

represents the enclothement of God, and here we see that when Elokim is enclothed it is exactly equal to David. But, the reduced numbering is not just an equality, in this case. If we take a closer look we will see that the letters of Elokim in reduced numbering exactly allude to the letters of “David.” The first two letters of Elokim, אֵל, equal 4, which is the value of *dalet* (ד). The next two letters are hei yud (הי)—they are considered the *mochin*, or the lifeforce in *Elokim* (without which it becomes the word meaning “mute,” אֵלִם). They equal 6, which is the value of David’s vav (ו). The final letter of Elokim is ם, whose value in reduced numbering is 4, equal to the final dalet (ד) in David.

### Meditating on chapter 86 of Psalms

Turning from the chapter number, 86, let’s look at its first 5 verses in this chapter read:

תַּפְּלָה לְדוֹד הַטָּה הוּא אֶזְנֶה עֲנִי בִּי עֲנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן אָנִי:  
 שָׁמְרָה נַפְשִׁי בִּי חֲסִיד אָנִי הוֹשַׁע עַבְדְּךָ אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי הַבּוֹטָח אֱלֹהֵיךָ:  
 חֲנֻנֵי אֲדֹנָי בִּי אֱלֹהֵי אֶקְרָא כָּל הַיּוֹם:  
 שָׁמַח נַפְשׁ עַבְדְּךָ בִּי אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנָי נַפְשִׁי אֲשָׂא:  
 בִּי אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי טוֹב וְסִלַּח וְרַב חֶסֶד לְכָל קְרֹאֶיךָ:

In the first two verses, David describes himself with two adjectives, one who is poor (*עֲנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן*) and as a *chassid* (*חֲסִיד*). The sages ask, since the word “poor” (*עֲנִי*) is cognate with “humble” (*עָנָו*), how can David seemingly aggrandize himself that he is also a *chassid*, a very high spiritual level, as understood from the sages.

### Drawing down the Divine measures of mercy

First of all David is in a state of absolute submission, describing himself as “poor and desolate” (*עֲנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן*). This pair of words appears exactly 13 times in the Bible. The literal interpretation of the difference between them (though both are considered synonymous with being poor) is that the “desolate” (*אֶבְיוֹן*) craves everything, i.e., he has nothing at all and is therefore poorer than the “poor” (*עֲנִי*). One time in the Pentateuch (in Deuteronomy) and 12 more times in the rest of the Tanach. The commentaries say this explicitly (without apparently knowing that this phrase appears 13 times in the Tanach): that with these words, King David awakens God’s mercy. The main unification, specifically of the *ba’al teshuvah*, is that one’s submission and lowliness awaken God’s mercy). In Hebrew this is the unification between *שְׁפִלוּת* and *רַחֲמִים*.

In the Book of Chronicles, there appears the complete lineage of King David and his royal house. Among the people mentioned, the last one in the lineage is a person whose name is Anani (עֲנַנִּי). He is described as the son of Elyoeinai (אֱלִיּוֹעִינַי),<sup>4</sup> whom the sages say is an allusion to Eliyahu the Prophet who heralds the coming of Mashiach, and thus they conclude that Aneini is the King Mashiach himself. His name alludes both to the verse describing the Mashiach as “coming with clouds of heaven”<sup>5</sup> (וְאָרוּ עִם עֲנַנֵי שָׁמַיָא) and to the word “עֲנַנִּי” in this chapter. So this is how David begins his service, out of submission and lowliness. We too, when we come to pray at his tomb, we should immediately feel the same feelings of submission and lowliness before God.

The phrase “poor and desolate” (עָנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן) appears 7 times in *Tehillim*. 3 of the times it says, “And I am poor and desolate” (וְאֲנִי עָנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן). The first time is in the last verse of chapter 40. (Let’s just mention that it’s a good idea whenever one says *Tehillim* at David’s Tomb, to specifically recite all the chapters we are mentioning now). Clearly the chapters that begin with “A prayer for David” are especially related to David). There in chapter 40 he says, “And I am poor and desolate, God” (וְאֲנִי עָנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן אֲדֹנָי). There is a similar phrase in the final verse of chapter 70 (King David lived for 70 years), which reads, “And I am poor and desolate, Elokim” (וְאֲנִי עָנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן אֱלֹהִים). And then as we said in our chapter, chapter 86, at the end of the first verse David says, “And I am poor and desolate, I am” (וְאֲנִי עָנִי וְאֶבְיוֹן אֲנִי). The value of these 4 words is 358, the value of Mashiach (מְשִׁיחַ).

### 3. *David’s Five Ascents in Chapter 86*

#### The meaning of “I am a chassid”

In chapter 86, David says, “Keep me, for I am a chassid” (שְׁמֹרָה נַפְשִׁי כִּי חָסִיד אֲנִי). How can David say this about himself? The only other place where this phrase, “for I am a chassid” (כִּי חָסִיד אֲנִי) appears in the Tanach is in Jeremiah and there, it is God describing Himself as a chassid, because He doesn’t hold a grudge.

The reason David can say this too is because of what the sages say about him: that he hears his own admonishment (חֲרָפָתוֹ) but remains silent. Not only does he remain silent

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<sup>4</sup>. 1 Chronicles 3:24.

<sup>5</sup>. Daniel 7:13.

and not reply, he even acts with good-will towards the one's pursuing him. He is therefore worthy of being called a chassid. Indeed, if a person knows this to be true about himself, he can call himself a chassid. This explanation for what it means to be a chassid is the closest to the pshat, the most literal explanation of the word.

But, the Talmud brings a different explanation for how David is a chassid. It says that is because all the Kings of east and west sleep until 9am, but David gets up at midnight to praise God. That is what makes him a chassid. A second opinion is that all the kings of East and West are unwilling to get their hands dirty. But King David is thinks nothing of himself and is always willing to do everything he can to ensure that a woman is ritually clean for her husband. As a metaphor the husband and his wife here are the Almighty and the Jewish people. David's is constantly engaged in helping the every Jew attain a level of purity so that he or she can connect with the Almighty, even in times when they are not worthy. This requires self-sacrifice on David's part, just as much as going to war does.

So we have here three explanations for what it means to be a chassid. Either it is a person who does not respond to those who chastise him, or it is someone who wakes up at midnight to sing God's praise, or it is serving God by bringing the Jewish people closer to the Almighty (i.e., David not only has the self-sacrifice needed to dirty his hands with the bloodshed of war, but he also has the self-sacrifice needed to engage in ruling in *Taharat Hamishpachah*, in order to purify a woman for her husband). All three of these qualities are present in King David, **חַי וְקַיִם!**

### **Strengthening trust**

Just as in the first verse of chapter 86, David was awakening God's compassion and mercy, so in the second verse he awakens God's measure of loving-kindness, since a chassid literally translates as "one who acts with loving-kindness." By acting in a certain way, we awaken God to act similarly towards us. This is particularly true of loving-kindness, as the verse says, "with a chassid you should act with loving-kindness" ( **עִם חַסִּיד תִּתְחַסְדוּ** )

The next verse reads, "Save your servant, for You are God whom I trust in" ( **הוֹשֵׁעַ עַבְדְּךָ אֱתָהּ אֱלֹהֵי הַבּוֹטָחַ אֵלַי** ). The commentaries say that here too David professes his trust in God in order to awaken God to relate to him. It is explained in Chassidut that true confidence or trust is when there is no natural way in which a person can be saved. To

trust that you can always rectify things, the lesson of second Pesach, is the essence of trust—even when there is not even a thread of hope (חוט של תקווה). Confidence, or trust, is the inner experience of the *sefirah* of victory (ניצח). It is the first quality from which kingdom (malchut) is built (as explained in the Arizal, that the netzach of Ze'er Anpin becomes the chochmah of Nukva, and as Rebbe Nachman said that despair is stupid and that anyone who is truly wise—has the wisdom, the chochmah of malchut—never despairs). One who trusts even in these cases, will certainly be victorious. Rebbe Nachman said about himself that he is was victorious and will be victorious. Why? Not only because his name itself equals “victory” (ניצח = נחמן), but because he has trust in God. So again, David asks God to save him, to make him victorious. In merit of what? In merit of his trust in God.

The order of the development in these verses is from below to above. First one must be “poor and desolate” (עני ואביון), then one must be a chassid, then one must have trust and confidence in God.

### **Continuous prayer**

The next verse is, “Give me grace God, for it is You that I call all day long” (חנני הוי' כי). (אליך אקרא כל היום). This doesn't refer to davening three times a day, but rather to continuous prayer, the continuous never-ending prayer of the soul's essence (תפלה מתמדת). Rabbi Yochanan says in the Talmud describes this prayer with the words, “Were it so that a person would pray all day long” (הלואי ויתפלל אדם כל היום כולו). To daven all day long doesn't mean having to move your lips all the time, but rather that prayer is the service of the heart and thus the heart continually calls out to God.

So now we have David asking for grace (חן). In the previous verses he asks for salvation (הושע) and before that safekeeping (שמירה) and before that he asks for God to hear him (ענני). And why does he deserve grace, because he constantly prays, as he says about himself “I am prayer” (ואני תפלה). We have a whole article on this topic of continuous prayer.

### **Positive despair from the world of falsehood**

The next verse is, “Rejoice the heart of your servant, for to You God I carry myself” (שמח נפש עבדך כי אליך א-דני נפשי אשא). Now David asks for joy, and this time it is in the merit of his “carrying himself to God.” What does this refer to? In chapter 25, which

starts with similar words, אֵלֶיךָ ה' נִפְשִׁי אֲשָׂא, the meaning is that of self-sacrifice. It means that a person has nothing else in the world, nothing other than God. He has given up on everything but the Almighty. In Chassidut, this is referred to as being “aus world,” outside the world. So David says that he has nothing in his life, but God.

In the book *Mivchar Peninim* (Select Pearls), a book with many beautiful aphorisms, there is a section titled the “Gate of Despair” (שַׁעַר הַיְאֹשׁ). It is very surprising that a Torah book would contain a gate of despair. The explanation is that a Jew should feel despair from everything in this world. He should realize that this entire world is a false world, everything passes and therefore one should simply despair from this world of deceit. Instead, a Jew must reach the conclusion that the only thing that can be trusted in this world is God. One who merits completely despairing of everything in this world, except for God, His Torah, and His commandments, merits joy. To truly not have despair (as Rebbe Nachman says), one has to first despair from everything but God. One who is not aus the world, outside the world in this sense, cannot be in it, instead his life is full of pain and difficulty.

We said earlier that Pesach Sheini is about nothing being a lost cause, that everything can be redeemed. Rebbe Nachman says we should never despair, because despair is stupidity. What he means is that we should never despair of what is true, but apparently in order to recognize that, one first has to despair of everything else but the truth. (The rectification of despair is linked to the King Yo'ash of Judah, a descendant of king David, as explained elsewhere).

### **The five ascents in the verses**

The state of self-sacrifice here is greater than even the Amidah (as the Arizal explains about chapter 25 that we say during Tachanun, which corresponds to Adam Kadmon). A person can reach a state where he can even depart the world when saying this.

So altogether in chapter 86, the first 5 levels are: submission and lowliness, which corresponds to malchut. The next level is chassidut, which is loving-kindness. Above that is trust and confidence whose source is in Imah, in binah. The next higher level is the eternal prayer, which comes from selflessness, or Abbah. Finally the highest level is the self-sacrifice which corresponds to keter, to the yechidah of the soul.

## 4. Analysis of the Five Verses

### The third, fourth, and fifth verses

Let's look at the next verse and then start analyzing the structure of the first 5 verses in our chapter, chapter 86 of Psalms. '

The next verse reads, "For You God and good and forgiving, and of great loving-kindness to all who call out to You" (כי אתה א-דני טוב וסלח ורב חסד לכל קראיך). In the 3 verses 3, 4, and 5, there is a special phenomenon that the only other place that I know of a similar phenomenon is in the Priestly Blessing. The three verses of the Priestly Blessing contain 15, 20, and 25 letters, each and 3, 5, and 7 words. Here these verses have a similar phenomenon:

חנני אדני כי אליך אקרא כל היום – 7 words and 24 letters.

שמח נפש עבדך כי אליך אדני נפשי אשא – 8 words and 27 letters.

כי אתה אדני טוב וסלח ורב חסד לכל קראיך – 9 words and 30 letters.

Why were the first sages called Sofrim (literally: counters)? Because they counted all the letters of the Torah. Altogether there are 81 letters, which is the square of 9 (this phenomenon does not happen even in the Priestly Blessing).

### The triangle of the words

Now let's look backwards, it follows that we should look at the 6 words before the first verse, they form an exact phrase. Before that the 5 words also form a phrase and the previous 4 words are also a phrase. Finally, the first verse contains 6 words and 6 is the sum of 1, 2, and 3. So in terms of words, we have here 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 words, together forming the triangle of 9—45 words.

תפלה  
לדוד הטה  
יהוה אונד ענני  
כי עני ואביון אני  
שמרה נפשי כי חסיד אני  
הושע עבדך אתה אלהי הבורח אליך  
חנני אדני כי אליך אקרא כל היום  
שמח נפש עבדך כי אליך אדני נפשי אשא  
כי אתה אדני טוב וסלח ורב חסד לכל קראיך

### **“I” and “nothingness” in the verse**

Many times in Chassidut it is explained that the “I” (אני) must be transformed into “nothingness” (אין). Now in the words, “Safekeep me, for I am a chassid” (שמרה נפשי כי (אין), the word אין appears in reverse letter skipping, נפשי כי חסיד אני. The skip is of 5 letters in reverse, beginning with the *alef* of “I” (אני).

### **Inspirational numbers in the verse**

These four words together equal 613, alluding of course to the 613 commandments. 613 is also an inspirational number, the sum of 17 squared and 18 squared. 613 is thus what we call the 18<sup>th</sup> inspirational number. The word before these four, the word that begins the phrase is “Safekeep” (שמרה), whose value is 545. But, 545 is also an inspirational number. Not just any inspirational number, it is the inspiration of 17 (i.e., 17 squared plus 16 squared). So, there is a unification here of two consecutive inspirational numbers. There is a mathematical principle that when you add two consecutive inspirational numbers you get 2 more than the square of half the first inspirational number’s index. In this case there sum is 613 plus 454 is equal to 1158, which is 2 more than 1156, or 34 squared, where 34 is 2 times 17, double the index of 545 (again 545 is 17 squared plus 16 squared)—since 545 is the 17<sup>th</sup> inspirational number (or one might say, it is the inspiration of 17).

We can state this rule algebraically as:

$$n^2 + 2(n + 1)^2 + (n + 2)^2 = (2n)^2 + 2$$

Now, is there an entire verse in Tehillim that equals 1158? Indeed, there is. Amazingly, it is the value of the first verse in our chapter, תפלה לדוד הטה הוי' אונך ענני כי עני, ואבין אני. All this is to show that when King David feels himself to be so submissive and lowly before God, it reflects itself in everything he says subsequently. Now, 1158 is the sum of the inspiration of 17 and 18, "good" (טוב) and "alive" (חי). Everything that we said, the main point was to speak about being a *chassid*. This is the main thing that the sages talk about in the Talmud. He is silent, he wakes up at midnight, and he dirties his hands with bringing the Jewish people close to their father in Heaven.

## 5. A Model of David's Characteristics – Loving-kindness

### David trustworthy loving-kindness

Earlier, we mentioned three different explanations for what it means that David is a *chassid*. But, there is another verse that connects David with loving-kindness.

There is a famous book in Kabbalah called חסדי דוד הנאמנים. The simplest explanation of what it means to be a *chassid* is that a *chassid* is one who performs acts of loving-kindness for others. David is constantly doing *chessed* with everyone, with the entire Jewish people. This was actually the third explanation we gave earlier.

Thus, God promises to do *chessed* with David, just as he did so much *chessed* with the Jewish people, and these are חסדי דוד הנאמנים. So what we've begun with is David's trait of being a *chassid*.

## 6. David's Characteristics – Might

### Might and judgment

Let's continue with one more characteristic of King David. *Gevurah* connects with all the wars that David fought. The building of *malchut* is from the *gevurot*. In *Sanhedrin* there is a *mishnah* that says that a High Priest can be tried and can be a judge. However, the kings of Israel (the Northern kingdom) cannot be tried (because they would take revenge on the judges). But, about the kings of the House of David it says that they can be tried, because they respect the laws of the Torah. With all the power that David has, he still feels that he is bound by the Torah. As it says, "Should a king sin" (אשר נשיא (יחטא)).

Now looking at this phrase, “He [a king from the House of David] can be a judge and can be judged” (דן ודנין אותו), we see that it itself contains the name David (דן ודנין אותו). The one who judges and can be judged is only King David.

### **Why David is so endeared**

This is the rectification of *gevurah*, the strength and might of the king. Just as the king can say about himself that he is a chassid, he is always willing to be tried. He trusts God constantly, and not all of his actions are like walking over an iron bridge, they have a lot of risk in them.

The Arizal explains that his soul is now for the first time, departed from the *kelipot*, he does things that are wrong (his soul comes from Cain’s soul-root; in the future, Cain will be revealed to be Adam’s true firstborn son, even greater than his brother Abel). He does a sin, and he regrets it. Because this is his first time out of the *kelipot*, he has only the level of *nefesh* (psyche) in holiness, and as a result he also has a very large evil inclination, causing him to do things that don’t sound very good (beginning with his proclivity to bloodshed). But, David admits his sins, and he truly regrets them. It is this, his ability to do *teshuvah* that endears him so much on us, perhaps even more than Moshe Rabbeinu. The proof is that his name appears more than 1000 times in the Bible. There is no other name that appears even close to this number of times.

### **The uniqueness of the Torah’s constitutional monarchy**

There are books that write that this *chiddush*, that David can be a judge and he can be judged, means that his monarchy was a “constitutional monarchy.” He is a king, but there is a constitution, and he is under it. How is a constitutional monarchy defined in Political Science? Apparently, they don’t understand things fully. They say, there are two types of monarchy, an absolute monarchy, where the king is not under anyone, he is like God and can do anything he wants. Of course he cannot be tried. And the other type is constitutional monarchy.

It is interesting to see how things work today. There are still some states in the world, like in Saudi Arabia, where the monarchy is still absolute. But, there are many enlightened nations that still have a monarch, but they are constitutional monarchies, the most well-known is the United Kingdom. There is a queen, but she is like the Israeli President. She has little power and the country is run by a parliament. So again, these

are the only two options that appear in political science today. Either the king has absolute power, or he is like a plaything (what today is known as a constitutional monarchy). Now, obviously David is nothing like that. He has a very complex relationship with the Sanhedrin, but the Sanhedrin doesn't rule the people. We are mentioning this to understand that the Torah's form of monarchy is unique. This is the only true form of monarchy. Any other partial monarchy is false.

Yet, still, David can be tried, he accepts the rule of the Torah and is bound by its laws, as he himself says, *חטאתי לה'*, when confronted with his sin.

## ***7. David's Transgressions***

### **David's first two sins**

There is an explicit statement made by the sages that shows how David is essentially related to the number 2 and not to the number 1. The sages say, "Saul with one [transgression] and it cost him [the monarchy], David with two [transgressions] and it did not cost him [the monarchy]"<sup>6</sup> (*שאול באחת ועלתה לו ודוד בשנים ולא עלתה לו*). Saul sinned once and lost the kingship. David sinned twice, and still did not lose the kingship. The first time David transgressed was with Uriyah (and Batsheva). The second time was at the end of his life, when he decided to take a census of the Jewish people. The sages call this second sin, *הסתה*, because it was God Himself who *הסית*, God as it were pushed David to take a census. In the end, 70,000 Jews died because of this census. The Angel of Death made it all the way to the threshing floor of Aravnah, the future location of the Temple, and there David was able to stop the calamity.

### **David's third transgression**

The Talmud states that there was another sin, the sin of accepting the evil words about the field of Mefiboshet (the son of Yonatan, Saul's grandson) from Tziva, his servant. Tziva said that Mefiboshet had been on Absalom's side during his rebellion against David. But, this was not true. When David returned to Jerusalem, he learnt that it was all a lie, but when he came back he said to Mefiboshet, "I said, you and Tziva should split the field between you." This was his way of making amends. But, Rav in the Talmud says that at that moment a voice decreed in Heaven—your offspring Rechavam

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<sup>6</sup>. *Yoma* 22b.

and Yeravam will split the Jewish kingdom. He says that were it not for this sin, there would be no idolatry in the world. All the idolatry that is now claiming David's Tomb all stems from the Jewish people. Christianity would not have come out of Judaism, and finally there would never have been an exile. This is truly a terrible sin. Now, why is this sin not counted among David's sin.

### **David's fourth transgression**

The *Tosafot* asks that seemingly there is another 4<sup>th</sup> sin that King David committed. There is a chapter of Tehillim that begins, שגיין לדוד. This chapter is a song of praise after Saul was killed and the kingdom went to David. David was very careful not to say anything negative against Saul. When Saul and Yonatan were killed, David mourned, but at the end he also said a song of praise. Why is this not counted as a sin? The *Tosafot* answer that the reason is that a person is not to be held accountable when he is grieving, and David had suffered a great deal at the hands of Saul, and so we can't hold him accountable for going crazy, שגיין לדוד, for having sung a song of praise when the State fell.

### **"He is judged" – Understanding David's transgressions**

So now there are 4 sins, yet the Talmud said that there are only 2 (and implies that there was a sin of *lashon hara*). Why are we saying all this? Because we want to explain something different about the statement, "He judges and is judged" (דן ודנין אותו). We said that David is constantly falling. He is a *ba'al teshuvah*, as the Arizal says, because this is the first time that his soul came out of the kelipot. He has self sacrifice for the Jewish people, which is what endears him for the Jewish people. We said that "He judges and is judged" (דן ודנין אותו) is his quality of *gevurah*. It means that he first of all asks God for forgiveness. Then he asks that his sin not be mentioned in the Tanach, but God did not accept that. Why? God doesn't love him? He said to David: Don't you understand that your greatness is that you make mistakes, the you sin. דן means that he is can be a judge. And דנים אותו, means that David gives himself to everyone to judge, we are all allowed to criticize him. That is the source of his endearment. That is why he is mentioned 1000 times and more.

## Curbing our criticism

No one is like David. The Arizal says something incredible about King David. He says that just as Moshe Rabbeinu is the father of all prophets, King David is the father of all those who have holy spirit, ru'ach hakodesh (רוח הקדש). Prophecy comes from above and Ru'ach Hakodesh comes from below. He is the father of all Ru'ach Hakodesh because he allows himself to be criticized by all. Because he can be judged without fear.

There are those who don't understand how someone who performed these sins can be the Mashiach. He is not a good role model. But, the truth is that that is too much criticism, may God help these people do *teshuvah*. That is why his name is found in the phrase "He judges and is judged" (דן ודנין אותו), as we saw earlier.

## David's four transgressions correspond to the Four Worlds

Now, returning to the sins themselves. About Batsheva it says that he was too impulsive, he took her before he was allowed to, or in the language coined by the sages, "He at her prematurely" (אכלה פניה). The initials of this phrase spell the word "even" (אף), which hints at a sin in the World of Action (which follows the word "even," in the famous verse describing the Four Worlds). The worst thing that David did here was that he allowed Uriyah, her husband do be killed by the sword of Amon, which gave them a source of holiness for their idolatry which is the Molech (which as we explained a few days ago, is improper submission to the establishment, ממלכת יית, where such submission goes against Torah).

In any case, he was judged for this. And this sin corresponds to the world of Action. The world of Action is the world of *pshat*. Indeed, as the sages say, anyone who says that David sinned (in this sin) is mistaken, yet still, after all the excuses (that Uriyah had divorced his wife before going to battle) the sages say that the sin was in the desecration of God's Name, because the people felt that there was adultery here, and there was murder. In the end, what counts when it comes to God's Name is how people perceive things, how the people perceive the reality.

The Four Worlds correspond to possession, construction, enumeration, and issues (קנין בנין מנין ענין), from above to below. The World of enumeration (מנין) is the World of *Yetzirah*, of Formation. That was David's second sin, the sin of taking a census. It is hard to understand his reasoning for deciding to do this. One explanation is that he wanted to know the numbers of Judah compared to the other tribes, sensing that there might be a

civil war between them. Another opinion was that until that time, conscription to the army was entirely voluntary. But, after Absalom's rebellion, David wanted conscription to be mandatory and that was why he decided to take a census. In any case, these are the two lower sins.

The third sin, which was his accepting the lies about Mefiboshet corresponds to a sin in thought, corresponding to the World of Creation, *binah*.

The fourth sin, singing a song of praise about Saul dying, is a type of sin that fits the *kelipah* of the World of Emanation.

### **David's soul continues to ascend through the generations**

There's a lot more to say about this. But, the point is that when his soul first appears in the world, it is still rough around the edges. In his subsequent reincarnations, he comes back more rounded. One of the signs of Mashiach is that he is unwilling to hear lashon hara (there are stories about the Alter Rebbe that people tried to give him lashon hara and he wouldn't listen to it, saying he didn't want to commit the same sin as David).

Now apparently, all of King David's might, his ability to kill Goliath and to fight 18 wars, all this might comes in merit of his ability to judge and to be judged.

From this strength that he has, let us ask King David, that he arise soon and organize things here—the way that he sees that things should be.