Rabbi Ginsburgh and Reb David Refael Feinshel Ben-Ami

On Hoshanah Rabbah (Sukkot) this year (5781), Rabbi Ginsburgh’s close friend and student, Reb David Refael Feinshel Ben-Ami, passed away. Dadi, as he was affectionately known, was one of the first famous Israeli ba’alei teshuvah — making the spiritual journey from the agricultural village of Nahalal in northern Israel to devout observance. While very connected to Chabad, Reb Dadi eventually became a Breslov chassid. In the last disk of songs he put out, Reb Dadi sang Rabbi Ginsburgh’s soul melodies. About that album, he exclaimed that it was “the song of my life.” The following are Rabbi Ginsburgh’s words of comfort to Reb Dadi’s family after his passing and a beautiful story about the connection between them.

Dadi and I have had a soul connection for decades—almost fifty years—since he began to come closer to religious observance, to God and to Chassidut. We have always had a brotherly connection, also with regard to his music.

Something that speaks to me very much is the date on which he passed away, Hoshanah Rabah, which is the ushpizin day of King David. There are a number of things that connect your father to King David. So much so, that I think that he is a spark of King David, “the pleasant singer of Israel.” First of all, your father’s name was David. King David lived seventy years, as did your father, and the date of his passing is King David’s ushpizin day in the sukkah.

The main thing, of course, is his song. The entire holiday of Sukkot is full of joyous singing. It is known as, “the time of our joy.” On Hoshanah Rabah, beside the joy, there is also seriousness, as this is when the judgements of Yom Kippur are sent for implementation (pitkah tavah), the final seal of all the Days of Awe and the holidays of the month of Tishrei. It is known that Chassidic song is both joy and longing, a pouring out of the soul. Dadi was expert at both, particularly at pouring out his soul. He literally knew how to bring out the inner point of truth from his heart.

The trait at which he excelled was the trait of truth. He searched for the truth. Nothing else was important to him, just to find the truth. He loved everyone, but he searched for the path of truth, the path of his own truth, according to his soul root. And he found it.

It it written, “And the living shall take it to heart.” The main thing that we can learn from him is to go with the truth and not to give in; and doing this, like Reb Dadi, with a sincere love of Israel, literally, for everyone. We are all brothers, and there is truth, as the verse connects the two together, “Love truth and peace.”

1 2 Samuel 23:1.
2 Ecclesiastes 7:2.
3 Zechariah 8:19.
There is another matter, which is also very important: our story. During the Yom Kippur War (1973) Reb Dadi and I journeyed down to the front lines in the Sinai desert to encourage the soldiers. I joined him as his helper. He was part of the IDF music corps, so he had permission to go all the way to the front lines.

We arrived at the front lines on the eve of the decisive battle of the Yom Kippur War. We brought a portable **sukkah** and the Four Species. On the night before the battle, we sat with Arik Sharon (later to become Israel’s Defense Minister and then Prime Minister) in his bunker, deep underground. We came as messengers of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, whom Sharon admired very much. He even cried when he heard the Rebbe’s name. Following the great, decisive victory in the war, when Sharon first lifted his head up out of his tank, we brought him the Four Species and he made the blessing. All of this was in Reb Dadi’s merit.

It is written, “There is no person who does not have his hour.”4 Every person has a special time in his life. For many people, this is early on, when they are young. After that, the impression of that time remains with them their entire life. For Reb Dadi, because I took part in it, I see his special time as the holiday of Sukkot, when we went down to Sinai together. He acted out of total love of Israel. “How could it be that our brothers are in battle, and many have died, and I am not there? I have to be there together with them!” I had the merit to join him.

There are so many things that are connected here—the holiday, the ushpizin day and in his song there is such an outpouring of the soul and joy, and his name and his age—that we can literally see here a spark of David, the King Mashiach. May we learn from him, from his attribute of truth, and may we soon merit to see the fulfillment of the prophecy, “Awaken and rejoice, dwellers of dust,”5 and may he be among them. May we merit David, the King Mashiach. May he continue to live within us, and may he receive serene joy from all his descendants, may they increase and multiply until the coming of our righteous Mashiach, may it be speedily in our days.

May God Almighty comfort you among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem and from here on out may you be pursued by only goodness and kindness throughout your days. I will be happy to hear good news from you. Reb Dadi is now looking down on his family and on the entire people of Israel, from above. May he join all the tzaddikim above to bring the Mashiach.

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4 [Avot 4:3](#).
5 [Isaiah 26:19](#).
Rabbi Ginsburgh’s words on the insert of the disk of Reb David Refael Feinshel Ben Ami singing Rabbi Ginsburgh’s melodies, Bokei’ah Chalonei Rakee’a:

“‘And now bring me a minstrel.’ And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of God came upon him.” (2 Kings 3:15).

Music accompanies song, “All the masters of song go out in song and are drawn with song” — song with a perpetual “run and return.” “Run” of longing of the soul, with an outpouring to its Father in Heaven, and “return” with joy and a happy heart that we have the merit to be “Israel, His close people” and to walk in the light of God’s Torah and mitzvot.

And now: “Now” means repentance. Music brings one to repent, “from the inner recesses of man and a deep heart.” Repentance brings redemption to the world.

Music is a vessel for inspiration of the Holy Spirit. “And your sons and daughters shall prophesize” is one of the signs of the generation of redemption.

When a person truly plays music, God’s hand, as it were, is playing music above him. When [God above played,] the minstrel played. The Hand of God is enclothed in the hand of the person, just as the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the chariot of God’s Divine Presence.

When the minstrel played: True music, inspired, almost plays by itself, with flowing natural consciousness, the consciousness of redemption.

The value of the full verse, “And now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of God came upon him” (וְעַתָּה קְחוּ לִי מְנַגֵּן וְהָיָה כְּנַגֵּן הַמְנַגֵּן וַתְּהִי עָלָיו יַד יְהוָה) is 1652, or 14 times 118, where 14 is the value of “hand” (יַד) and 188 is the value of “playing music” (נְגִינָה).

The melodies in this album flow from the heart of my soul-friend Reb David Refael. It is known that that which flows from the heart enters the heart and makes an impression, to awaken the heart of Israel to return with longing and joy to the embrace of its Father in Heaven; and by doing so, to merit the true and complete redemption in the very near future, by our righteous Mashiach, amen, may it be God’s will.