



King David to FokusIsrael.ch: “Sometimes I shouted at God, sometimes I praised Him”

About the person:

King David lived from about 1040 to 970 B.C. He was from Bethlehem in Judah and was the youngest son of Jesse. David worked as a shepherd boy before the prophet Samuel anointed him as the future king—while King Saul was still reigning. As a young man, David killed the Philistine Goliath with a sling and thus became a hero. After years of fleeing from the jealous Saul, he became king of Judah and later of all Israel. He conquered Jerusalem, made it the capital, and, thanks to many military victories, established a strong, united kingdom. At the same time, David was a musician and poet: many Psalms are attributed to him. He was a complex figure: courageous, passionate, deeply devout, and charismatic, but also prone to error and at times reckless. His gravest transgression was his adultery with Bathsheba and his order to have her husband, Uriah, killed. Despite this sin, David remained “the man after God’s own heart.” His legacy includes the dynasty he founded, the preparations for the construction of the First Temple (which was later built by his son, King Solomon), Jerusalem as the religious center of Judaism, and a wealth of Psalms that are still read today. In Judaism and Christianity, he is regarded as a central ancestor and role model—with all his strengths and weaknesses. With the help of AI, FokusIsrael.ch spoke with King David about his life, his achievements, his transgressions, and his beliefs.

My Lord King, you were born a poor shepherd boy and became king—a rags-to-riches story. Did you ever imagine that?

King David: No, not at all. I was tending sheep and thought that’s how it would always be. Then Samuel came with the oil, and suddenly everything changed. It never felt like I had planned it. It felt more like someone else had set the course, and I just went along for the ride.

How did you feel when, as a young shepherd boy, you faced the giant Goliath?

King David: To be honest, I was totally nervous, but I thought to myself: If God has already kept lions and bears from attacking me, then He can handle that guy up there, too. I only had a sling and five stones, but that was enough. It wasn’t some heroic stunt—it was simply trusting that God is greater than any fear.

What did your victory over Goliath teach you? What did you tell your people about it?



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King David: The victory over Goliath showed me that size and weapons aren’t everything. I told the people: “That wasn’t my victory—it was God’s victory.” We shouldn’t trust in our own strength, but in Him—even when the enemy seems enormous.

What was the war against the Philistines really about?

King David: It was about our homeland and survival. The Philistines wanted our land and our freedom. For us, it was a struggle to survive as a people and not be constantly threatened. At the same time, for me it was always also a question of whether we would stick together as a community and not lose sight of God.

On unity within the community: In today’s Israel, most deeply religious Jews refuse to perform military service. Was that also the case in your day?

King David: No, that’s not how it was. Anyone who was able to fight took part in the battle—that went without saying, because our survival depended on it. There were exceptions for newlyweds or those who were afraid, but no blanket exemption for the particularly devout. Anyone who can protect the land and the people should do so. Faith and responsibility are not mutually exclusive.

You went from being a shepherd to a king. How did that feel?

King David: Suddenly, I was responsible for an entire nation instead of just a few sheep. People looked to me, and I constantly had to make decisions with far-reaching consequences. Sometimes I longed for the quiet hours in the fields. But at the same time, I knew: This is the job God has given me—and I’m doing it as best I can.

Apart from the victory over Goliath, what was the most important aspect of your life?

King David: My friendship with Jonathan (King Saul’s son and David’s closest friend, who protected him from his own father—Ed.). Later, the years spent fleeing from King Saul, who tried to kill me out of jealousy. That’s when I learned what loyalty really means—and how quickly power can change people. And then there are the Psalms: they helped me process everything that happened to me.

You’ve written many Psalms. How did that come about?



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King David: I simply wrote down whatever was on my mind: joy, fear, anger, gratitude. Sometimes I shouted at God, sometimes I praised Him. It was like a diary, except that I knew God was reading along. That helped me see more clearly what really matters.

What is most important when it comes to ruling?

King David: It's important not to put yourself at the center of everything. It's about taking responsibility for the people entrusted to you. It's about remaining just—even when it's uncomfortable. Anyone who thinks only of power and their own interests will eventually lose their footing. I wanted justice to be done, not just for the powerful to win.

But when you committed adultery with Bathsheba and the orchestrated killing of her husband Uriah so that you could marry her, however, you did exactly the opposite.

King David: That was one of the biggest mistakes of my life. I abused my power and caused others great harm. It destroyed me until I finally realized it and prayed. God forgave me, but the consequences remained.

What did you learn from this?

King David: That power is dangerous and can blind you. It taught me that even those at the very top make mistakes and must take responsibility. Honesty and confessing my sins to God were the only way for me to deal with it.

What would you say to today's rulers?

King David: I tell you: Do not forget that you are servants of the people, and not the other way around. Listen to the voices of the weak and remain true to yourselves. Power can quickly lead to poor decisions. Those who are willing to admit mistakes and take responsibility ultimately govern better than those who try to appear infallible.

And what advice would you give to someone facing a major challenge—just as you did back then with Goliath?

King David: Don't just focus on the size of the problem; focus on the One who is greater. Start small, be honest with yourself, and don't give up when things go



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wrong. God isn't looking for perfect people, but for people who are willing to get back up. That worked for me, too.

Note: This conversation with King David is based on the Bible. In our series “Conversations with Legends,” we speak with deceased figures from the worlds of politics, religion, science, and culture who were significant to Judaism and Israel. Our goal is to use AI to bring them and their ideas closer to today's audience. Interviews published so far include:

[Theodor Herzl](#), the founder of modern Zionism

[Chaim Weizmann](#), Israel's first president

[David Ben-Gurion](#), Israel's first prime minister

[Golda Meir](#), Israel's only female prime minister to date

[Anwar Sadat, the Egyptian president](#) who traveled to Jerusalem in 1977 to make peace with Israel

[Moses, who led the Jewish people out of slavery in Egypt and into freedom](#)

[Maimonides](#), the great Jewish scholar who lived in the 12th and 13th centuries

[Lord Jonathan Sacks](#), the former Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom

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[Theodor Adorno](#), the German philosopher and sociologist

[Martin Buber](#), philosopher, scholar of religion, and writer.

[Hannah Arendt](#), journalist and controversial thinker

[Carl Lutz](#), the Swiss diplomat who saved tens of thousands of Jews

[Paul Grüninger](#), the St. Gallen police commander who was dismissed and convicted for helping persecuted Jews

[Raoul Wallenberg](#), the young Swedish diplomat who saved tens of thousands of Jews in Budapest and was then abducted and killed by the Russians

[Oskar Schindler](#), who, as the head of a factory in Poland, saved the lives of over 1,000 Jews and became famous through the film “Schindler’s List”