

RESILIENCE

SHAVUOT STUDY BOOKLET

A joint project of



**IN TRIBUTE TO YONI JESNER Z'L,
WHO CONTRIBUTED SO MUCH TO
HIS COMMUNITY AND BNEI AKIVA.**

If you would like to volunteer for Tribe, Bnei Akiva or the Yoni Jesner Foundation, please get in touch:

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QUOTES ON RESILIENCE FROM YONI

“

“When you feel that you've got too much to do, make a list – there's nothing like organisation to bring you back down to earth.”



“

“Is it the situation that needs changing or is it you?”

”

“Time reveals depths that we never knew existed.”

Intro

Shavuot marks the moment that the Jewish nation received the Torah at Mount Sinai. This event took place in the Jewish year 2448, corresponding to 1313 BCE. That is a long time ago! Yet, the Torah's narratives, guidance and wisdom remain equally relevant to our lives.

This Shavuot study booklet has been created for teenagers and university students. Its theme is resilience. Ruth, who we read about on Shavuot, utilised mental and emotional strength to overcome tremendous challenges.

How do we deal with resilience when facing challenges in our own lives?

We have really tried to ensure that the content appeals to a wide range of people. Some of you may be at shul during the festival, others may not. Either way, we hope that this publication reaches you and that you enjoy the opportunity of studying the excerpts of text, while thinking about the meaning of resilience for each one of us.

Tribe and Bnei Akiva provide educational and social activities, which encourage young people to believe in their abilities and build resilience to pressure. One of the programmes we co-host is the weekly Student Bet Midrash, which is run by Tribe, Bnei Akiva, Mizrachi and Finchley Synagogue (Kinloss). This great partnership brings together young people in a really positive, relaxed, social and intellectually stimulating environment. If you haven't tried it yet, stop by sometime soon!

We are grateful to Rabbi Michael Laitner, Rabbi of the US Jewish Living Department and Eli Maman, Bnei Akiva Chinuch Worker, for joining us in compiling this booklet.

Chag sameach

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RESILIENCE

noun

The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness



Ruth's husband, father-in-law and brother-in-law passed away. She is now the one who goes to get food for the family. What does this demonstrate about her personality?



Ben is feeling very stressed by his exam revision. His mental wellbeing is at risk. What would you recommend he does to strengthen his resilience and help himself?



Sarah is a victim of cyberbullying. As a result, her self-esteem is very low and she feels lonely. What advice would you give her?



Ruth's story

Excerpts from Megillat Rut, chapter 1

1 Now it came to pass in the days when the judges judged, that there was a famine in the land, and a man went from Bethlehem of Judah to sojourn in the fields of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.

2 And the man's name was Elimelech, and his wife's name was Naomi, and his two sons' names were Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites, from Bethlehem of Judah, and they came to the fields of Moab and remained there.

3 Now Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons.

4 And they married Moabite women, one named Orpah, and the other named Ruth, and they dwelt there for about ten years.

5 And both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and the woman was left [bereft] of her two children and of her husband.

א וַיְהִי בָּימִינֵי שֶׁפֶט הַשָּׁפְטִים וַיְהִי
רֹעֵב בָּאָרֶץ וַיָּלֹךְ אִישׁ מִבֵּית לְחַם
יְהוָה לְגֹרֶל בְּשָׂדֵי מוֹאָב הוּא
וְאֲשֶׁר־זֶה נָשִׁי בְּנָיו:

ב וְשָׁם הָאִישׁ אֱלִימֶלֶךְ וְשָׁם אֲשֶׁר־
נָעַמְתִּי וְשָׁם שְׁנִי־בְּנָיו | מְחַלְלוּ וְכָלִילוּ
אֲפָרָתִים מִבֵּית לְחַם יְהוָה וְיָבָאוּ
שְׂדֵי־מוֹאָב וַיְהִי־וְשָׁם:

ג וַיָּקָם אֱלִימֶלֶךְ אִישׁ גָּעָמִי וַיָּשָׁאֶר
הָיָה וְשָׁנִי בְּנָיו:

ד וַיָּשָׁאוּ לְהָם נְשִׁים מִאֲבוֹתָם
הָאֶחָת עֲרָפָה וְשָׁם הַשְׁנִינָה רֹות
וַיִּשְׁבּוּ שָׁם כְּעֶשֶׂר שָׁנִים:

ה וַיָּמָתוּ גַּם־שְׁנִינָהֶם מְחַלְלוּ וְכָלִילוּ
וַתָּשָׁאֶר הָאָשָׁה מִשְׁנִי יְלֻדָּה
וּמִאִישָׁה:

6 Now she arose with her daughters-in-law and returned from the fields of Moab, for she had heard in the field of Moab that the Lord had remembered His people to give them bread.

7 Then she went forth from the place where she had been, and her two daughters-in-law with her, and they went on the road to return to the land of Judah.

11 And Naomi said, "Return, my daughters; why should you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb, that they should be your husbands?"

14 And they raised their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth cleaved to her.

15 And she said, "Behold, your sister-in-law has returned to her people and to her god; return after your sister-in-law."

16 And Ruth said, "Do not beg me to leave you, to return from following you, for wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people and your God my God."

17 Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. So may the Lord do to me and so may He continue, if anything but death separate me and you."

וְוַתָּקַם הִיא וְכָלְתִּיהָ וַתָּשָׁב מִשְׁעִי
מוֹאָב כִּי שָׁמָעוּה בְּשָׂדֵה מוֹאָב כִּי
פָּקַד ה' אֶת־עַמּוֹ לְתַתְתֵּלָה לְהַם
לְחַם:

ז וְתַצֵּא מִרְחַמְקָומָם אֲשֶׁר הִתְחַדֵּשׁ
שָׁמָמָה וְשִׁתְתִּי כְּלַתִּיהָ עַמָּה וְתַלְכִּנָה
בְּדַרְךָ לְשֻׁבָּב אֶל־אָרֶץ יְהוּדָה:

יא וְתַאֲמֵר גָּעָמִי שְׁבָנָה בְּנָתִי לְפָה
תַּלְכִּנָה עַמִּי הַעֲדָלִי בְּנִים בְּמָעִי
וְהַיּוּ לְכָס לְאַנְשִׁים:

יד וְתַשְׁנַה (חסר א) קָוְלָן וְתַבְפִּנָה
עַד וְתַשְׁקַע עֲרָפָה לְחַמּוֹתָה וְרוֹת
דְּבָקָה בָה:

טו וְתַאֲמֵר חַנְהָ שְׁבָה יְבָמָתָךְ אֶל־
עַמָּה וְאֶל־אֱלֹהִיהָ שְׁזַבְּבִי אַחֲרִי
יְבָמָתָךְ:

טו וְתַאֲמֵר רֹות אֶל־תַּפְגַּעַי־בִּי
לְעַזְבָּךְ לְשֻׁבָּב מִאַחֲרִיךְ כִּי אֶל־אֲשֶׁר
תַּלְכִּי אֶלְךָ וּבְאַשְׁר תַּלְכִּי אֶלְךָ
עַמְּךָ עַמִּי וְאֶלְקִינְךָ אֶלְךָ:

טו בְּאַשְׁר תִּמּוֹתֵל אָמֹות וְשָׁם אֶקְבָּר
כִּהְיָשָׁה ה' לִי וְכָה יוֹסֵף כִּי
הַפּוֹתֵר יִפְרַיד בֵּיןִי וּבִנְגָה:

Talking points



Why do you think Ruth wanted to stay with Naomi, her mother-in-law?



Ruth's sister-in-law, Orpah, decided to leave. Ruth decided to stay. What are your views about each of their actions?

How did Ruth react to her challenging circumstances?



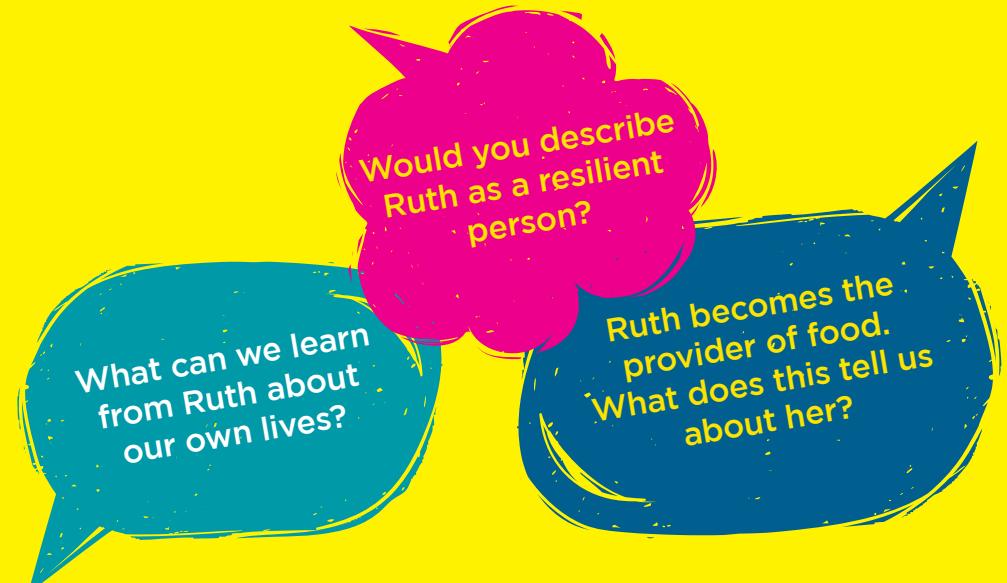
Ruth's story continued...

Excerpt from
Megillat Rut, chapter 2

2 And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "I will go now to the field, and I will glean among the ears of grain, finding someone (a farmer) whom I will please." And she said, "Go, my daughter."

ב ותאמר רות קמואביה אל נעמי אלכחה־גָּעָה חִשְׁדָה ואלקטרה בשבלים אחר אשר אמץ־חָנו בעינו ותאמר לה לך בתי:

Talking points



What can we learn from Ruth about our own lives?

Would you describe Ruth as a resilient person?

Ruth becomes the provider of food. What does this tell us about her?

A deeper look at Ruth

"And it was in the days when the judges ruled..."

(Megillat Rut 1:1)

Rabbi Elazar said "Iyov (known in English as Job) lived in the days when the judges ruled..."

(Talmud, Bava Batra page 15b)

Rabbi Elazar alludes to a connection between the stories of Rut (known in English as Ruth) and Iyov.

What is this connection?

There are many parallels between the stories of Naomi and Iyov. Both start out prosperous and with families but lose their children and belongings. Both complain about their fate, using bitter language. Both meet friends, who do not recognise them due to the difficult changes they have experienced (Iyov 2:12, Rut 1:19).

Alongside these challenges, both stories end well. At the conclusion of Iyov's story, God returns his wealth, and he is blessed with sons and daughters. At the end of Megillat Rut, her son is viewed as a continuation of Naomi's family (4:16).

Despite these similarities, the books have fundamentally different viewpoints on how one deals with difficulties. Iyov's story is centred on his and his friends' attempts at **understanding the reason** for his difficulties: how can it be that a just God has allowed such tragedy to occur? The book ends with an acceptance that sometimes we do not understand God's ways.

The story of Rut has a very different response to tragedy. Instead of aiming to achieve cognitive understanding, the book is replete with examples of doing and receiving acts of chessed (loving kindness). For example, Rut and her sister-in-law stay with Naomi after their husbands pass away and Boaz ensures that his relative (Naomi) and her daughter in law, have food to eat. Naomi in turn also tries to ensure that she does chessed for Rut, trying to aid her in finding a new home (3:1).

Talking points:

Are there other ways that Iyov, Naomi and Rut could have responded to tragedy?

All of us experience challenges and difficulties at various stages of life. What will our response be, and how will it affect us?

Psychological research has shown that rumination ("engaging in behaviours and thoughts that passively focus attention on symptoms of distress and on all the possible causes and consequence of these symptoms"; Nolen-Hoeksema & Harrell, 2002) causes people dealing with depression to deal with it for a longer time and in a more severe way. Additionally, this correlates with other mental health challenges, such as anxiety and self-harm.

Positive psychology, aims to reframe part of our discussion around mental health, and proactively build up resilience. There are a number of factors that can help build resilience, such as hope and optimism, expressions of gratitude, doing acts of kindness for others and having a flexible attitude.

Miriam Peretz (b. 1954) is an Israeli educator. Her son Uriel was killed in the IDF in 1998, and shortly after her husband passed away. In 2010, her second son Eliraz was killed in the IDF as well. In 2018, Miriam received the Israel Prize for "strengthening the Jewish-Israeli spirit."

At the ceremony, she said:

I have a heart that was broken three times with terrible announcements: The loss of my eldest son Uriel in battle in Lebanon, the death of my husband Eliezer due to a broken heart, and the loss of my second son in battle in Gaza. With that heart I came to my nation and in simple words, in the language of a broken heart, I spoke of this land and its legacy, of choosing goodness, of happiness, of devotion to life, of responsibility, of social involvement, and out of that heart which beats with faith in this country and this nation, out of the great depth of pain flowed springs of love.

When the heart is full of faith, it can withstand great challenges. I turned my grief [泪] into a new melody [歌].

Talking point:

What helped Miriam Peretz continue to educate and inspire?



Student Bet Midrash

Imagine a short burst of Jewish study and inspiration. Add to that a delicious dinner, an appealing social environment, a moment in your week to pause & reflect and a range of interesting speakers talking about meaningful topics. It sounds like you have just walked in to the Student Bet Midrash...WELCOME!

We asked some participants at the Student Bet Midrash for their views on the talking points in this booklet. Check out how their answers compare to yours:

Q Ruth becomes the provider of food. What does this tell us about her?

A It's about family, every action we do is a way to help other people and benefit them. Ruth gleaned for Naomi and herself. Togetherness and unity. Whatever situation you are in try to be together and go through it together.
Yael Reingold

Q Would you describe Ruth as a resilient person?

A Every challenge she faced she didn't settle for the minimum she always went that extra mile.
Zahava Hill

Q Why do you think Ruth wanted to stay with Naomi, her mother-in-law?

A Compassionate person, wanted to help Naomi. Even though she said that she had to give to Ruth, Ruth felt she had stuff to give Naomi.
Zahava Hill

A Because she wanted to be Jewish and to reconnect with that source so she gave up everything to do that.
Samuel Stones Sosnow

Q Ruth's sister-in-law, Orpah, decided to leave. Ruth decided to stay. Why do you think Orpah chose to leave?

A She was being respectful to Naomi's wishes, and to her there was nothing left to gain from staying.
Zahava Hill

Want more?

The Student Bet Midrash takes place on Thursdays from 7.55pm – 9.30pm at Kinloss Shul. It is a great place to be and helps each individual build their own resilience

Proud to work in partnership



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