



Torat Imecha 
NACH YOMI B'YUN

Please note that this is a transcript of the recordings rather than an essay. May our learning be a zechus for the safety of acheinu b'nei Yisrael in Eretz Yisrael and help to protect all those engaged in the war against terror. May the coming year be filled with ישועות, ברכות and נחמות for you, your family and our people and our land.

Sefer Rut is dedicated by Debbie and Yossi Rosenberg in loving memory of their dear grandmother, Mrs. Ruth Friedman, רבקה בת יעקב, עליה השלום.

Sefer Eicha is sponsored by Helen and Moshe Sassover and family in the memory of their beloved father and grandfather Ted Orden (Mordechai ben Ephraim v'Miriam Golda) in commemoration of his 10th yahrzeit. His family is forever grateful for his devotion to family, vision, courage and optimism. May the merit of our collective learning elevate his neshama and bring unity and peace to klal Yisrael.

Rut 4

Mrs. Rivka Alter

Welcome to Torat Imecha Nach Yomi with the OU Women's Initiative. My name is Rivka Alter and today we will be studying מגילת רות, פרק ד'. This פרק is the final in the מגילה and brings resolution to the loose ends from last פרק, namely how the גאולה for the family of אלימלך comes about. In פרק א' we were introduced to אלימלך who moved away from his people and shed himself of his responsibility as leader. In this פרק we witness Boaz moving towards his family and taking responsibility for its גאולה. As Boaz ascends to the gate, to the בית דין in the city, he runs into פלוני אלמוני, the family member who is the closest redeemer, the closest גואל.

In front of 10 men, Boaz asks him if he would like to assume responsibility and redeem the land of אלימלך, to which פלוני אלמוני agrees. However, Boaz further explains that redemption of the land also entails marrying רות, the widow of מחלון, in order to uphold the name of the deceased. At this point, this man, פלוני אלמוני, who remains nameless, decides to forfeit his rights to be the redeemer. Since the גאולה was a form of יבום, the חליצה of מצוה was necessary to formalize this man's refusal, and so his shoe was removed and handed to Boaz to assume responsibility in his place.

חליצה was done in front of members of the city who then blessed the marriage of Boaz and רות, that they should build a home similar to רחל and לאה who built up עם ישראל and that they should continue the lineage of פרץ, son of יהודה. After רות and Boaz marry, they have a son, and the women bless נעמי and praise ה' for affording her this redemption and family continuity.

נעמי raises the baby and the women proclaim that a son has been born to נעמי. He is named עובד, who is the father of ישי, and the grandfather of דוד. The מגילה ends with listing all the generations starting with פרץ and resulting in the birth of דוד, with the name דוד being the concluding word of the מגילה. Just like in פרק ג', the focus in this פרק is on the long-term continuity and legacy of the family of אלימלך and נעמי. Whereas the events of last פרק were conducted discreetly and in the dark and in the middle of the night, in this פרק all is resolved in the morning and in front of the public.

The plan that נעמי had encouraged last פרק, the one that we knew was even difficult for רות to do and was potentially jeopardizing her reputation, was not carried out exactly as she had imagined and carries over to this פרק. Just as we saw in פרק ב', there was a series of coincidences, in quotes, with רות ending up in Boaz's field and catching his attention, which we understand as being part of ה' יד. The beginning of this פרק is no different. Boaz immediately runs into the closer relative, as we're told והנה הגואל, behold the redeemer, in פסוק א'. The מדרש relates that ה' had said that just like רות did her part, and Boaz did his part in the story by putting in their efforts, ה' will now do his part by having the גואל appear just at the right time. And even if ה' would have had to go get him from the other end of the earth, He would have done so. אף אני אעשה את שלי. I will do what is required of Me.

The גואל remains unnamed in this פרק, since it's through his choice that he does not agree to uphold the name of the dead. פלוני אלמוני can be understood as the Jewish version of randomness, like John Doe or such-and-such or so-and-so. But we could also see that the name אלמוני specifically is alluding to a sense of being אילם, from the word mute or deaf. This alludes to the fact that the גואל chose not to listen or be aware of the הלכה that explicated that it was only a מואבי and not a מואבית, not a female, that was forbidden to convert and join עם ישראל. As a result, he chose not to fulfill a מצוה and marry רות, though there was really no issue in him doing so, and would have been a מצוה.

It could be that Boaz intentionally linked the land and marriage together because he knew פלוני אלמוני would not agree to this. But there is also precedent for this linkage as in the story with בנות צלפחד, where the inheritance of land and the continuation of the name of their father, the deceased, was linked to marriage within their שבט. The contrast between Boaz's decision and that of פלוני אלמוני serves to glorify Boaz and reminds us of a similar example in פרק א', where the decision of רות to join נעמי and ערפה to depart from her are also contrasted in effort to highlight the unbelievable חסד of רות in comparison to her sister-in-law. It's the מסירות נפש, the self-sacrifice of both רות and Boaz, that produced the future king who will embody this same quality necessary to be the ultimate leader of עם ישראל. And once a decision is made by a character in the מגילה to not play a part in this story of גאולה, the name of that character is not mentioned or given continuity in the text. Like ערפה in פרק א' אלמני, פלני in our perek.

The theme of this perek is clearly גאולה, redemption, as seen by the recurrence of this word and שורש 15 different times. In פסוק ט' the pasuk mentions the גאולה and names of the dead. They had also been mentioned in פרק א', and when doing so מחלון's name was mentioned before כליון's. Here the names are switched and it says כליון and then מחלון. מחלון being second, ending the pasuk with his name, referencing the forgiveness of his family and the redemption being brought to his earlier transgressions.

The name of the baby עובד represents the עבודה שבלב, the service of heart and heartfelt תשובה that was done by both Naomi and Rus from the beginning of the מגילה until here to bring about that redemption. Starting in פסוק י"א, there are also many examples of the word בית, house, focusing on the house of מלכה being put into existence, and a reference to the גאולה. The word בית in our perek is a contrast to the word שדה, referring to Moav back in פרק א'. The שדה was associated with earlier sins of the family, while the בית, represents the permanence, and the acts of חסד that are being done in our perek.

In פסוק ט"ז, Naomi is referred to as the אומנת, the foster mother to the baby born to Rus and Boaz. This term shares a root with the word אמונה, faith, and highlights Naomi's growth in these four פרקים from one with no hope, to one who trusts in Hashem, and is also going to play a role in instilling the מידה of faith and trust in Hashem in her progeny.

What is the significance of the shoe being removed to indicate whether one will or will not be a גואל? A shoe represents the status of someone free, who's able to make a choice, something that the גואל and Boaz both do in this Perek. Shoes also firmly plant our feet on the ground and establish a sense of permanence or in this case continuity, of the mitzvah that's being performed.

Removal of a shoe can be seen in certain places in תנ"ך as a step toward holiness and connection to Hashem by removing exterior barriers with the physical in attaining a spiritual status. Like with משה at the סנה, when he's told to remove his shoes, or with יהושע when he encounters the angel of Hashem in פרק ה' in ספר יהושע, and told to remove a shoe. We can understand this also as indicating the spiritual nature of Boaz's decision to be the גואל through the shoe removal.

Let's examine the reactions of the people of בית לחם who are witnessing what's going on. They serve as bookends in the מגילה, appearing both in פרקים א' and ד'. In פרק א', they're the ones who had been wronged by אלימלך and family and witnessed Naomi's return, neither providing assistance to her nor acknowledging Rus. They're the ones now, in פרק ד', to name the child born to Rus and acknowledge it in פסוק י"ז. And in פסוק י"א, they bless Rus that she should be like רחל and לאה.

The comparison to רחל and לאה is highlighting Rus as a woman who also came from a problematic background, but is transformed into a righteous mother, similar to רחל and לאה. We can also view רחל and לאה as essential mothers in the creation of the complete עם ישראל, and ones who symbolize national unity as mothers of both future kingdoms. This notion of unity is further communicated through specifically mentioning אפרתה and בית לחם in the same פסוק as these are both references to the burial spot of רחל, but they are both located within שבט יהודה, a child of לאה.

Therefore, this place is the perfect location to represent national unity and the ultimate representation and goal of redemption, where there'll be no more splits in the kingdom and no weak leadership. It is thus the perfect place to birth the future king who will be charged with national unity.

In פסוק י"ג, Hashem is specifically singled out as the One who blesses Rus with pregnancy, this blessing of continuity. The other time in the מגילה where ה' directly provided and is explicitly mentioned was in פרק א, when ה' remembered His nation to give them bread, the blessing of sustenance. It is these two blessings of food in פרק א, and of גאולה in our פרק ב that are represented in the events of פרקים ב and ג as well, and are the two goals that needed to be resolved in the מגילה. In evaluating all four פרקים of the מגילה, it's interesting to note that the plans organized by אלימלך and נעמי in the beginning of the מגילה, and by נעמי in פרק ג, are not actualized, while the plans of רות in פרק ב and בועז in פרק ד are the ones that are furthered through ה' orchestrating of people in the right place at the right time.

רות and בועז and their plans and eventual union also symbolized the תיקון for the period of the שופטים, which was full of hopelessness and was unsuccessful, and needed a change in order to pave the way for heralding מלכות ישראל. This was accomplished through their selfless actions and their actual child עובד, who will be דוד המלך's grandfather.

Why didn't שמואל הנביא include the events of this מגילה in ספר שופטים with the rest of the stories that marked that time period? Why separate them into a separate ספר? The answer could be related to the different messaging of each ספר, as seen by the endings of both.

ספר שופטים highlights the negative consequences of a lack of central leadership and no Jewish king, and as such ends off with the phrase mentioned earlier איש כל הישר בעיניו יעשה. That when there was no king, each person did what he wanted and only thought of themselves. In contrast, מגילת רות illustrates what can happen when people perform acts of חסד and pay attention to each other and forge connections, and is evidenced by the events leading to the birth of דוד, future king, and the last word mentioned in the מגילה.

ספר שופטים conveyed the failure of the tribe of יהודה to assume leadership, our מגילה refines and prepares the שבט of יהודה for imminent מלכות. This significant lesson is seen in the ending of the מגילה, by skipping the names of those who choose not to rise to the challenge of this time period and mentioning by name those who play an integral part in the development of עם ישראל. The story of לוט and אברהם is also able to come full circle in this מגילה and experience its own version of גאולה through the actions of רות, the descendant of לוט, and further highlights the centrality of חסד toward development as a nation.

By both beginning and ending the מגילה with an act of חסד, the importance of performing kindness and reaching out to others is highlighted. Another main point is seen through events unfolding as a combination of both human effort and divine intervention.

Although there are several reasons given for why we read this מגילה on שבועות, the phrase תורת חסד, a Torah of kindness, may be the most compelling. On the holiday when we celebrate our commitment to

תורה and our relationship with 'ה, we also highlight the equally important focus on our relationship with others and that our תורה observance is incomplete without both realms developed.

Eichah 1

Rebbetzin Aviva Feiner

Welcome to Torah Imecha Nach Yomi with the OU Women's Initiative. My name is Aviva Feiner and today we will be studying פרק א' איכה, ספר איכה, פרק א' איכה - the tune of איכה has become a musical symbol of the sorrow of Jewish of the Jewish people throughout history, a tune often attributed to the אנשי כנסת הגדולה.

איכה. The Piaseczna Rebbe says איכה, how could it be, is מלשון אִיכָה, the first call of Hashem to אדם וחווה after their sin. Where are you? Where are you, כלל ישראל? Are you but a chameleon? You just become whatever happens to you or will you wake up and realize that you can fix what you did wrong? Let's look at this ספר together and see how we can fix what we did wrong. We need a גאולה so badly.

The תואר quotes a very pertinent fact from the לבוש. We know that other מגילות, certainly Esther, must be written on a קלף with גויל, on a parchment with ink. איכה cannot be written on a parchment like תורה. We want to get rid of it. We don't want to hear this story anymore. Hopefully soon in our day.

is the הנביא that the ספר סדר עולם tells us was actually הולדתו יום הולדתו born on Tisha B'av and cursed the day he was born. He knew it would be a terrible day.

He lived through the lives of the last five kings, יאשיהו המלך, who was a צדיק, and his sons and grandsons, יהויקים, יהואחז, יהואחז, who were wicked kings, and צדקיהו המלך who was the צדיק of a king, who saw the destruction of the מקדש. Seventeen years prior to the destruction of the first המקדש, בית המקדש instructs, as we see in the first רש"י in איכה and is also brought in דברי הימים, to take a scroll and write down words concerning יהודה and ישראל. Perhaps they will repent. At the time that he writes down his נבואה, he gives a scroll to his trusted בן נריה to take it to King יהויקים.

It's in the fourth year of the kingdom of יהויקים. יהויקים hears בן נריה reading the three chapters and listening to the first chapter already, he takes a saber or a sword and stabs the scroll and throws it into the fire. How ironic. What יהויקים thought he could prevent by ripping and burning happens to ירושלים and ישראל soon after. יהויקים then rewrites those three chapters. Those three chapters are we know as we know them are פרקים א', ב', ד'.

They are written in order. The letters of the אלף בית representing a תורה that we need to live and not trample on. A תורה that will thrive throughout history. Rav Asher Weiss writes very beautifully that the letters of the אלף בית represent a concept of the תורה that can go on forever and ever. He mentions the death of רבי חנינא בן תרדיון one of the מלכות הרוגי who was wrapped in a תורה and burnt. His students asked him what do you see? And he says I see that the scroll is burning, but the letters are

flying. The letters of בית אלף, says Rav Asher Weiss, is the תורה that continues to flourish all over the world throughout history. They are פורחות, flying and flying on, flying with us as we learn this.

Later, ירמיהו adds פרק ג', which is in triplicate the letters of the בית אלף. The fifth chapter is added even later on.

Let us now begin איכה of פרק א'. A question. Who am I? Where am I?

רב שלמה רב שלמה? How could a nation that was so full of people become alone? איכה ירמיהו רבתי עם רב הירש, in much of his commentary on this. He says ירושלים, once a bustling city filled with people, is now alone. How lonely is she? She was full of people.

העיר רבתי עם היתה כאלמנה. She becomes like an אלמנה. We're going to meet ירושלים, she is like a every woman in pain. She's going to be described in this פרק as a widow, an אלמנה, a נדה, a cast-aside woman, a בתולה, a maiden. She was so full of people and now she is alone.

רבתי בגוים שרתי במדינות היתה למס. She had been great among the nations, she had been a princess among the peoples and the provinces. היתה למס, Artscroll translates that as a tributary. מצודות דוד tells us למס, she is now somebody who's עובד האומות. She has become enslaved to another. She is serving the nations of the world.

We're going to find double language very often in this פרק. תבכה בכה, surely cry, double crying. Every time that we have the double לשון, as Rashi points out here, we are talking about the two destructions of the two מקדש בתי. תבכה בלילה. You will cry at night, like the מקדש was destroyed at night.

דבר אחר רש"י says מרגלים, like the original cry of תשעה באב which was the cry of the מרגלים who said, "How can we go to that land? We don't want to go back." And Hashem said, "You cried for nothing. You will cry now on this night forever." And דבר אחר, רש"י, another opinion, when you cry at night, כל השומע בוכה עמו.

והדמעתה על לחיה, and מהריקרא says the opposite, when she cries at night, nobody hears her. Her tears remain on her cheeks because nobody hears her.

מכל אהביה. Nobody can comfort her. אין לה מנחם. quotes, those who loved her, they didn't love her.

כל רעיה בגדו בה. All her friends rebelled against her. She thought she could count on the others of the גוים. No, they rebelled against her. היו לה לאויבים. מכל אהביה, from all those who she thought loved her.

ישעיהו הנביא, ומחה ה' אלקים, even though her tears are not going away, promises us, חיד"א, that in the future Hashem will take away all of our tears. And very beautifully, the

says, she has no comforter to her. אבל ה' המנחם, אין לה מנחם, Hashem is the comforter. In fact, every time we go to the house of an אבל we say, המקום ינחם. Hashem will comfort you.

Thus we often open this ספר looking at the distress of כלל ישראל. In the third פסוק, in ג פסוק, we're going to find the name of the time period of the three weeks, which is the last words of this פסוק, בין המצרים which is between the straits. I prepared these שיעורים בין המצרים. In that time, I thought it would be most appropriate, and it really uplifted my בין המצרים.

ג. The third פסוק, גלתה יהודה מעני ומרב עבדה, She is working very hard, she is enslaved, we mentioned in the previous פסוק. היא יושבה בגוים לא מצאה מנוח. She did not find a מנוח. The first time we have someone finding מנוח is the נח, נח יונה, finds מנוח. That represents שבת as our day of מנוחה, but in the גלות, we don't have a resting place. We live among גוים and they don't want us anywhere. כל רדפיה השיגה בין המצרים. Everybody enslaved her and grabbed her between the straits. That is the days we are in בין המצרים, between the straits. Imagine a nation, Rav Hirsch says, that was to dwell in its homeland as stable, tranquil, and now is a restless, homeless nation suffering through all the catastrophes known to mankind.

ד פסוק. דרכי ציון אבלות מבלי באי מועד. She has no holidays, her ways, no מועד, her ways are mourning. כל שעריה שוממין כהניה נאנחים בתולותיה נוגות והיא מר לה. All the different stages of different people in pain. Her gates are abandoned.

We know the חיל אשת המלך שלמה בעלה נודע בשערים. The שער was the place of the wise people. We find in ספר רות that Boaz goes to the שער to consult with the wise men. שעריה שוממין. Her gates are abandoned. There's nobody there.

ה. כהניה נאנחים. Her כהנים, her priests, are sighing. Nobody is bringing them their קרבנות, nobody wants them.

ו. בתולותיה נוגות, her maidens are in pain.

ז. והיא מר לה. And she is embittered.

In fact, I heard in the name of Rav Matisyahu Soloman that one of the greatest fruitions of our גלות is happening in our דור, בתולותיה נוגות, that we have so many single women in pain. These words are so telling of the time we're in now. But we're going to see later on in ח פסוק another understanding of the maidens in pain.

ח. והיא מר לה. And she is embittered.

ט. היו צריה לראש אויביה שלו כי ה' הוגה על רב פשעיה עולליה הלכו שבי לפני צר. פסוק ה. We find that all our enemies become empowered

י. הלכו שבי. They have gone into captivity. This is the captivity that we still know now. It is so painful.

יא. ויצא מבת ציון כל הדרה. פסוק יא. All the beauty of ישראל כלל is gone.

אוי, one day they will know how beautiful we are again. But until then, ויצא מבת ציון כל הדרה, Now they hate us, they don't realize how beautiful we are. In fact, we say in our מוסף תפילות that והשיב כהנים לעבודתם ולזמרם, that one day we are waiting for the כהנים to go back and the לויים to sing, והשיב ישראל לנויהם. And כלל ישראל will go back to their houses.

Their נויהם is referred to as their houses there, but נוה is also beautiful. And whenever I say those words, that's what I think, that we will be beautiful again, everybody will know how beautiful we are.

Moving on to the eighth פסוק. חטא חטאה ירושלים על כן לנידה היתה. She has doubly sinned. She is now a woman who has been cast aside. We see the double לשון again. Not only did they serve עבודה זרה, but they served it in ירושלים. What does it say here? Everybody disparaged her. כל מכבדיה הזילוה כי ראו ערותה. גם היא נאנחה ותשב אחר around. Everyone saw her nakedness and she is now just totally miserable and turns around.

What does it mean they saw her nakedness? The אור החיים says, ראו ערותה, she did עבודה זרה in ירושלים. Not only did she do עבודה זרה, but in ירושלים. Or, say the מפרשים, the double language refers to the fact that she sinned between herself and God and between herself and her friends.

She רמיהו, this is the ultimate sin. כלל ישראל, Certainly ירמיהו doesn't want to, but he has to. The משך חכמה explains חטא חטאה, that they repeated their sins again and again so that it became like they were allowed to do them.

We're going to move now and skip a number of פסוקים to פסוק טז which is a very famous פסוק in ספר איכה. חטא חטאה, לשון עיני עיני, the double עיני עיני, על אלה אני בוכיה עיני ירדה מים כי רחוק ממני מנחם, and now עיני עיני, my eyes, my eyes. Finally one day we will see נחמו נחמו, a final comfort.

It's a constant crying. I'm crying constantly over these two בתי מקדש.

No one is comforting me. The זוהר says, על אלה, I'm crying because of אלה. What was the first grievous scene of the Jewish people? אלה אלהיך ישראל, the sin of the golden calf. I'm still crying from that sin and I have no comfort.

My children have become abandoned, כי גבר אויב, because the enemy is strong. I saw a לחם סתרים on פירוש that says that we should know that the children who are abandoned could also refer to the pain of the young maidens that we saw earlier. He says that it used to be that Jewish girls would go out, they'd say בך, מה אתה בוחר וראה, Young man, go out and see. This happened on טו, when they danced in the vineyards. Can you choose me? אל תתן עיניך בגוי, אל תט בנוי, אל תתן עיניך בגוי, Don't look at a non-Jew.

I have abandoned children. Why? Because they're not Jewish children. They did look elsewhere. And that is why the maidens are in pain, because they did look elsewhere, and they had children who we would abandon because they weren't ours.

זי. Again, she is not comforted. Again, she is cast aside. אין מנחם לה. פסוק זי

יח is a great admission. It is what we would call a הודאה or being מצדיק בדין. We're admitting we did wrong.

יח. צדיק הוא ה' כי פיהו מריתי. I rebelled. צדיק הוא ה'.

יח. Everybody listen to my pain. Know that all these terrible things happened to me because I sinned. שמעו נא כל העמים וראו מכאובי

יח. All of my children went into captivity. בתולותי ובחורי הלכו בשבי

Rav Schwab writes in his new ספר on תהילים produced by his son Rav Moshe Schwab, that we are captives in every land that we go into in גלות. He says that on את שבינו, which was the תהילים קנו, שובה ה' את שבינו, which we say before our בענטשן. We are captives everywhere בשבי. But we have שבי today.

And how could it be that any of our children are בשבי unless we sinned? Hopefully by now, nobody is in captivity anymore.

Moving to verse 21. שמעו כי נאנחה אני. Listen now, I am sighing.

כל אויבי שמעו רעתי, ששו כי אתה עשית. אין לי מנחם

Everybody, all my enemies were so happy because you did this, ה'. They hate us. You did this, ה'. You did it. You are the only reason for this. This גזירה came from You. Everything comes from You. Rav Avigdor Miller says we must concentrate on the words in עלינו, אמת מלכנו אפס זולתו, אמת מלכנו אפס זולתו. There is nothing in the world. אתה עשית, אמת מלכנו אפס זולתו. Everything comes from Him. You did this, אמת מלכנו אפס זולתו.

You called this day, and one day let them be like me. When נבוכדנצר was getting ready to surround Yerushalayim, תבל, לא האמינו מלכי ארץ וכל יושבי תבל, nobody believed that what happened to כלל ישראל could happen to them.

We say this later in איכה. But they laughed because they saw that ה' wanted this to happen to us. אין לך. He destroyed the עצים ואבנים to save us. Other kings, the מדרש says, when they have a יום קרב, they change the date. But הוא הקדוש ברוך הוא, and it will always be. הבאת יום קראת. You've said it would be this day.

Now we daven that Hashem will avenge them, as we say in נקם, אבינו מלכנו, פסוק כ"ב. Just avenge us. Or on every Wednesday, we say, Hashem avenge us, לעינינו נקמת דם עבדיך השפוך. And inflict them like You inflicted me. ועולל למו כאשר עוללת לי. I deserve everything that happened to me, but why do they continue to mock me? I should fix myself, and they'd better not hurt me anymore.