

This story of Ruth is a beautiful story, a story of how a woman from outside of a family helped bring kindness and redemption to that family, and only through that, the great King David was born. Ruth comes from the nation of Moab who descended from the family of Lot, the nephew of Avraham. The same Lot that Abraham had acted with kindness and selflessly to adopt after Abraham's brother's untimely death.

The fathers of the Jewish people, Isaac and Jacob, come from Abraham. Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, these are the mothers of the Jewish people but where did the mothers come from? They come from Nahor. We don't know much about Nahor except that he was the other brother of Abraham who acted selflessly to support the rest of his deceased brother's family. Abraham and Nahor, looked out for their brother who could no longer care for himself or his family.

Some think the story of Ruth does not have a plot, that it's just about a day in the life and times of ancient Israel. However it does have a plot; it's about a quest to repay, perform and establish kindness. On Pesach, we went free but on Shavuot, we received our national purpose. The holiday of Shavuot tells us about our mission statement. On this holiday, we read the Ten Commandments. This is our mission statement engraved in law. We also read the Book of Ruth, a story that tells us one thing for sure. There is no mission without kindness and selflessness. Our mission and purpose first demand selflessness. The selflessness of Abraham and Nahor become a foundation for the Jewish people. The selflessness of Ruth establishes Kingship in Israel. These people focused on perpetuating the names of others even at the expense, if necessary, of their own legacy. It is why Abraham mattered, it's why Ruth mattered, and it's why through acts of kindness and sacrifice each one of us in our own lives can still matter today. Everything we do that matters must be founded in selflessness and kindness.

Chag Sameach,
Rabbi Berger