

# All In

WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE, WHAT ASPECTS OF YOUR LIFE ARE YOU COMMITTED TO?  
**EDUCATOR'S GUIDE**

## CENTRAL IDEAS

- 1 Our decisions impact who we are and who we will become.
- 2 Rut and Naomi are identical on the surface, but when push comes to shove their decisions reflect a deeper difference in commitment.
- 3 Their decisions did not only impact their own lives, but also on events that happened generations later.

## PART 1: HOOK ACTIVITY

### THE ROAD NOT TAKEN BY ROBERT FROST

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
 And sorry I could not travel both  
 And be one traveler, long I stood  
 And looked down one as far as I could  
 To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,  
 And having perhaps the better claim,  
 Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
 Though as for that the passing there  
 Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay  
 In leaves no step had trodden black.  
 Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
 Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
 I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh  
 Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
 Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
 I took the one less traveled by,  
**And that has made all the difference.**

**ACTIVITY:** READ ROBERT FROST'S POEM AND PROMPT LEARNERS TO:

- Share a decision your parents or grandparents have made that “made all the difference” for their lives.
- OR Share a decision a public figure has made that “made all the difference” in their lives.

## PART 2: RUT & ORPAH

### TORAH SOURCE AND DISCUSSION: (15-20 MINUTES)

Learn the following sections of Megillat Rut with the students or they can learn in Chavruta:

#### Part 1: Similarities

#### רות פרק א'

1 In the days when the chieftains ruled, there was a famine in the land; and a man of Bethlehem in Judah, with his wife and two sons, went to reside in the country of Moab.

1 וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם שֶׁשָׁפֵט הַשָּׂפֹּטִים וַיְהִי רָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ וּיְלָד  
 אִישׁ מִבֵּית לָחֶם יְהוּדָה לְגוֹר' בְּשָׂדֵי מוֹאָב הוּא  
 וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּשְׁנֵי בָנָיו:

2	The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name was Naomi, and his two sons were named Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah. They came to the country of Moab and remained there.	2 ושם האיש אלימלך ושם אשתו נעמי ושם שני בניהו מחלון וכליון אפרתיים מבית לחם יהודה ויבאו שדי-מואב ויהיו-שם:
3	Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left with her two sons.	3 וימת אלימלך איש נעמי ותשאך היא ושני בניה:
4	They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth, and they lived there about ten years.	4 וישאו להם נשים מאביות שם האחת ערפה ושם השנית רות וישבו שם כעשר שנים:
5	Then those two—Mahlon and Chilion—also died; so the woman was left without her two sons and without her husband.	5 וימותו גם-שניהם מחלון וכליון ותשאך האשה משני ילדיה ומאישה:
6	She started out with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab; for in the country of Moab she had heard that the LORD had taken note of His people and given them food.	6 ותקם היא וכלתיה ותשב משדי מואב כי שמעה בשדה מואב כי-פקד ה' את-עמו לתת להם לחם:
7	Accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, she left the place where she had been living; and they set out on the road back to the land of Judah.	7 ותצא מן-המקום אשר היתה-שמה ושתי כלתיה עמה ותלכנה בדרך לשוב אל-ארץ יהודה:
8	But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Turn back, each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me!"	8 ותאמר נעמי לשתי כלתיה לכנה שבנה אשה לבית אמך יעש ה' עמכם חסד כאשר עשיתם עם-המתים ועמדי:
9	May the LORD grant that each of you find security in the house of a husband!" And she kissed them farewell. They broke into weeping	9 יתן ה' לכם ומצאן מנוחה אשה בית אישה ותשק להן ותשאנה קולן ותבכינה:
10	and said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people."	10 ותאמרנה-לה כי-אתך נשוב לעמד:

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Until this point, who in the story is most similar to Rut?
- How are they similar?

At this point, the learner should see the similarities between Rut and Orpah, and how their trajectories were on the same path. Until...

### Part 2: A Moment of Difference

## רות פרק א'

11	But Naomi replied, "Turn back, my daughters! Why should you go with me? Have I any more sons in my body who might be husbands for you?"	11 ותאמר נעמי שבנה בנתי למה תלכנה עמי העוד-לי בנים במעי והיו לכם לאנשים:
12	Turn back, my daughters, for I am too old to be married. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I were married tonight and I also bore sons,	12 שבנה בנתי לכן כי זקנתי מהיות לאיש כי אמרתי יש-לי תקוה גם הייתי הלילה לאיש וגם ילדתי בנים:
13	should you wait for them to grow up? Should you on their account debar yourselves from marriage? Oh no, my daughters! My lot is far more bitter than yours, for the hand of the LORD has struck out against me."	13 הלתן   תשברנה עד אשר יגדלו הלתן תעגנה לבלתי היות לאיש אל בנתי כי-מר-לי מאד מכם כי-יצאה בי יד-ה':

14 They broke into weeping again, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law farewell. But Ruth clung to her.

14 ותשנה קולן ותבכינה עוד ותשק ערפה לחמותה ורות דבקה בה:

15 So she said, "See, your sister-in-law has returned to her people and her gods. Go follow your sister-in-law."

15 ותאמר הנה שבה יבמתך אל-עמה ואל-אלהיה שובי אחרי יבמתך:

16 But Ruth replied, "Do not urge me to leave you, to turn back and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God."

16 ותאמר רות אל-תפגעיי-בי לעזבך לשוב מאחריך כי אל-אשר תלכי אלך ובאשר תליני אליו עמך עמי ואלקיך אלקי:

17 Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus and more may the LORD do to me if anything but death parts me from you."

17 באשר תמותי אמות ושם אקבר כה יעשה ה' לי וכה יסוף כני המות יפריד ביני ובינך:

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- Who made the right choice? Which choice would you have made?
- Did Orpah and Rut's decisions "make all the difference?"
- Are there any hints in the pesukim that show us why they made different choices?

By now the students should see that while Rut and Orpah were on an almost identical path, one decision changed the trajectory of their lives. Notice how in pasuk 14 Orpah **kisses** Naomi while Rut **clings** to her, **perhaps this reflects a deeper difference in the relationship that previously was unseen**. Maybe Orpah's relationship was more like a simple kiss, and her connection with Naomi was more superficial while Rut has always embraced her mother-in-law. When push came to shove, one relationship was strong enough to continue.

## PART 3: A DECISION THAT BEAT THE GIANT

### CLOSING SOURCES AND DISCUSSION: (10 MINUTES)

Source 1: David Hamelech is a descendant of Rut.

רות פרק ד'

16 Naomi took the child and held it to her. She became its foster mother,

16 ותקח נעמי את-הילד ותשתהו בחיקה ותהי-לו לאמנת:

17 and the women neighbors gave him a name, saying, "A son is born to Naomi!" They named him Obed; he was the father of Jesse, **father of David**.

17 ותקראנה לו השכנות שם לאמר ילד-בן לנעמי ותקראנה שמו עובד הוא אבי-ישי אבי דוד:

Source 2: Goliath is a descendant of Orpah.

גמרא סוטה דף מב' עמוד ב'

The verse recounts that he was "named Goliath, of Gath" (I Samuel 17:4). Rav Yosef taught: This is because of his mother... It is written that Goliath's mother was: "Orpah"


וגלית שמו מגת תני רב יוסף ... אמו כגת... כתיב ערפה

Source 3: David beats the giant Goliath because of their great-great-grandmothers.

גמרא סוטה דף מב' עמוד ב'

It says: "And they (Goliath and his army) fell into the hands of David and his servants." Why? It is because of the acts of their forebears, as it is written: "And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, and Ruth cleaved to her" (Ruth 1:14).

ויפלו ביד דוד וביד עבדיו דכתיב (רות א, יד) ותשק ערפה לחמותה ורות דבקה בה



While the decision to stay or go seemed like it “made all the difference” for Rut and Orpah in their lifetimes, it influenced major events in the future as well. Our decisions matter in the short term and long term.

## **PART4: CONCLUSION**

While on the surface level Rut and Orpah’s lives looked identical – they married brothers, traveled together, lost husbands, and were both committed to continue on with their mother-in-law Naomi. Their commitment to Naomi was never equivalent and that expressed itself in Orpah’s kiss goodbye and Rut’s embrace to stay.

### **STEP ONE:**

We read Frost’s famous poem and considered what decisions might have been made before me that made a difference in their lives.

### **STEP TWO:**

We learned that Rut and Orpah had very similar trajectories until they split ways, but ultimately their commitment to Naomi always differed. Rut fully embraced the relationship, which is why it continued when things got difficult.

### **STEP THREE:**

We discussed that decisions don’t only influence the short term, but that Orpah and Rut’s decisions made a difference, generations later. David beat Goliath because he understood how to fully embrace his relationship with Hashem.

### **STEP FOUR:**

Are my core relationships (Hashem, family, friends) deep enough to withstand difficult times?

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