



Discovering why You are Here

People who know Naomi keep asking about Ruth: “Who is this?” Ruth is always being asked about her identity. Boaz watches her picking barley in his field, and asks his attendant, who is in charge of the reapers, “To whom is this girl?” But you know the answer, Boaz! After all, when Ruth and Naomi returned to Beit Lechem, poor and bereaved, the whole town was shocked to see them. So why are you asking who this girl is?

And it happens once more, when at night she sneaks into the threshing floor and lies at his feet, Boaz asks: “Who are you?” But Boaz, you were already told; you know the answer! And again, when Ruth returns to her mother-in-law and knocks at the door, Naomi asks her: “Who are you, my daughter?”

Why, throughout the Megillah, is Ruth asked, “Tell me, who are you? Who *are* you? Who are *you*? But *who* are you?”

How many times do you look in the mirror and ask yourself: “Who is this girl? To whom do I belong in the world? What did I come here to do? What is the role G-d expects me to fulfill?”

On Shavuot we receive our role in the world. This holiday is called **מי** in the Zohar HaKadosh. We reach the level of “who.” **מי** has a *gematria* (numerical value) of 50. We counted 50 days and arrived at a place called *Mi*, “who,” also called the *Keter Elyon* in the Zohar. After asking yourself so many times who you are, to whom you belong, you are given a role

and reveal who you are. You have a title, you are crowned.

Rabbi Yosef HaTzaddik said: “If not for the holiday of Shavuot, כִּמְהָ יוֹסֵף, how many Yosef would be roaming in the marketplace” (Pesachim 68b). How many “Yosef” – why not “Yosefs”? Because these are the parts of the same Yosef. He has dispersed in a million directions and does not know who he is: “Maybe I’m Yosef the *talmid chacham*. Maybe I’m Yosef the computer guy. Maybe I’m Yosef the coach. Maybe I’m Yosef the student. Who am I?”



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Why don’t we recognize Ruth? Because the more you study Torah, the more you reveal about yourself. More and more and more. Ruth the Moabite gentile at the beginning of the Megillah is not the Jewish Ruth at the end of the Megillah. Each time we see her in a new and different context and ask: “Is this her? Which girl is this? What did the Torah do to her – could it be that, this one? Another one?”

The Russian doll, the babushka, hides another doll and another and another. Rabbi Nachman says that outwardly you become a heavy and cumbersome babushka. But the Torah removes one babushka and then another and another, until you reach the tiny babushkina deep in your soul. The Torah reveals my internal core to me. What have I come to do in the world? Who am I?

When the Jewish people stood at Mount Sinai פְּסָקָה זוֹהַמְתָּן, their contamination ceased (Shabbat 146a). What is זוֹהַמָּה? The Gemara explains: זֶה מֵהָמָה, – This, what is it? Meaning, who is it? Who is this girl? This confusion, this scattering, is זוֹהַמָּה. You pollute yourself with unnecessary energies: “Maybe I will learn this or maybe that...” Unnecessary contamination. Get clarity and you will find out who you are. In the giving of the Torah, everything becomes clear to you. With the giving of the Torah, a crown is placed upon you; your contamination ceases. You reach the 50th level of purity and the incredible and beautiful woman inside you is revealed.

Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi is a popular Israeli teacher, speaker and writer.

