

When You Are Named Ruth

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Abstract

This study aims to recall the ideas and activities in the field of law, politics, philosophy, the struggle for democracy and respect for human rights of two bright and exceptional personalities who left this world last year: Ruth Gavison (her areas of study include ethnic conflicts, protection of minorities, human rights, political theory, the judiciary, religion and politics, and Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. She was a member of the Israeli Academy of Sciences and Humanities. Nominated as a Judge at the Supreme Court of Israel in 2005), and Ruth Bader Ginsburg (Judge at the Supreme Court of the United States. She upholds and defends the rights of women and people of color, gender equality).

Keywords: Ruth Gavison, Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

We would like to dedicate this article to our recently deceased friend, the Israeli political scientist Dr. David Schwartz.

A well-known researcher in the field of parties and local government in Israel, he lectures at dozens of academic institutions to countless students and was the former deputy head of the Center for Local Government Research in the Department of Political Science at Bar-Ilan University.

He received his doctorate from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, was a professor at the Pedagogical University of Odessa in the Ukraine (Oshinsky), a businessman and chairman of an audit committee of a bank, chief of staff of the Israeli Minister of Science Yuval Ne'eman and an advisor to the Israeli Minister of Finance Yitzhak Moda'i.

In the past, he was also one of the prominent activists of the Israeli Liberal Party, “Hathiya” Party, and later on a member of the Likud Party conference.

He was known in all sectors of society in Israel as an exceptionally intelligent person and a true friend to every person he knew.

We will all remember him as a knowledgeable and kind-hearted man who loved to help and contribute from his experience to anyone who asked him for help.

May he rest in peace.

Daniel Galily & Tatyana Petkova

1. Introduction

To what extent do the names we bear determine our character and behavior in our lives?

The name Ruth is of Jewish origin and means “friend” (Hebrew: רִיחַת). The name Ruth is mentioned in the Torah and the Old Testament, it is the name of the main character in the Book of Ruth. Ruth is a Moabite woman who married a Jew and converted to Judaism. After a series of difficulties, she became a part of the Jewish community and became the great-grandmother of the Jewish King David. It is believed that the book was written during the Persian era (V-IV century BC) and that it argues with the prohibitions on marriage with non-Jews launched by Ezra and Nehemiah. The name Ruth is an extremely feminine name; it does not have a paired male name. Confusion can often be found when the name Ruth is confused for a related name with such names as Rufus, Rufina and Rufia. These are completely different and independent names that have nothing in common.

According to the etymology and meaning of the name, Ruth is not a woman who is ready to play a second role. This is a secretive, reserved, cautious woman, she keeps her feelings and emotions to herself, never decides anything for a hothead. For her, logical thinking will prevail, she will be attracted by large-scale projects, collective work led by her.

This determined, strict woman will succeed in achieving a certain success in the chosen path, she will want to leave an imprint on the world in one form or another. An exceptional and ambitious life is part of her choice, where her personal life is not taken into account. She will become a true friend, a loyal partner who will have a strong sense of duty.

Let’s try this definition of the name Ruth, to focus on the individuals who are the subject of analysis in this article.

In 2020, two bright and exceptional personalities left this world. Their ideas and activities in the field of law, politics, philosophy, the struggle for democracy and respect for human rights have left significant traces in the history of the humanities – Ruth Gavison and Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

2. Ruth Gavison

Her areas of study include ethnic conflicts, protection of minorities, human rights, political theory, the judiciary, religion and politics, and Israel as a Jewish and democratic state. She was a member of the Israeli Academy of Sciences and Humanities. Nominated as a Judge at the Supreme Court of Israel in 2005.



Image 1. Ruth Gavison
(Photo credit: Marc Israel Sellem) (see, *Jerusalem Post*, 2020)

She was born on 28 March 1945, Jerusalem, and died on 15 August 2020, Jerusalem. She was an Israeli expert of human rights expert, professor of law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She has held various academic positions and she has won numerous awards and prizes, including:

Academic appointments: 1969-2020: various appointments at the Faculty of Law of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem (HUJI); 1978-1980: Visiting Associate Professor of Law, Yale Law School; 1984-2010: Haim H. Cohn Chair for Human Rights, HUJI; 1990-2010: Full Professor, Faculty of Law, HUJI; 1990-1992: Visiting Professor of Law, University of Southern California; 1998-1999: Fellow, Center for Human Values, Princeton University; 2010-2020: Professor Emerita, HUJI; 2011-2012: Fellow, Strauss center for Law and Justice, NYU Law School.

Public committees: Gavison was a member of numerous Israeli Public Inquiry committees, including the following: 1976: Member, Kahan Committee on Privacy (generated Israel's law of privacy 1981); 1983: Member, committee on the privacy of information in governmental data-banks (generated an amendment to the privacy law); 1987-1990: Member, a public committee on orthodox-secular relationships in Israel; 1994-1997: Member, National Committee for Scientific and Technological Infrastructure. 1996-1997: Member, Zadok committee on press laws; 1997-1998: Member, Shamgar Committee on the Appointment of the Attorney-General and Related Issues; 2006-2008: Member, Winograd Commission to investigate the 2006 Lebanon War; 2013-2015: commissioned by the minister of Justice to report on the constitutional anchoring of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.

Awards and recognition: In 1997, Gavison was awarded the Zeltner Prize for legal research; In 1998, she received the Bar Association Prize, together with Association for Civil Rights in Israel; In 2001, she received the Avi Chai Prize, together with Rabbi Yaakov Medan, for bringing together Israeli society; In 2002, she was awarded the Jerusalem Prize for tolerance; In 2003, she was awarded the EMET Prize; In 2003, she was granted an honorary doctorate by the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York; In 2009, she was awarded the Cheshin Prize for excellence in research by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; In 2009, she was granted an honorary doctorate by the Bar-Ilan University; In 2011, she was awarded the Israel Prize, for legal research; In 2013, she received the Solomon Bublick Award of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; In 2015, she was awarded an honorary degree by the Open University in Israel.

In recent years, several scandalous controversial conflicts will remain significant in Israel's political life, which were largely deliberately provoked in order to have a scapegoat. The desired effect among voters was achieved. The conflicts led to political instability, multiple political crises and multiple parliamentary elections in the period 2000-2021. Here are some brief conclusions with which Ruth Gavison summed up the events.

Regarding the investigations related to Benjamin Netanyahu (the Amadi affair): "The story that is unfolding is neither sympathetic nor aesthetic. But the problem that worries much of society is not that Netanyahu is clean. What is worrying is the sense that there is an element of persecution in the system" (see Gavison, 2016; 2017; 2020).

On selective law enforcement: "It happens that the media mark certain objects for investigation without explaining to us why they marked these objects and not others. Then, around these objects, they create momentum. They collect material on them and provide it to the police to get the results they expect. That in itself creates a win-win situation. The media has an interest in proving that they are right, the police have an interest in meeting the expectations of the media, and the prosecution has an interest in proving that they are brave. In this way, each institution feeds the other and the process begins – proving guilt is only a "matter of time" (see Gavison, 2016; 2017; 2020).

On the Supreme Court: “I don’t think it is right for the court to rule in favor of Westernization and against traditionalism. Or for modernity and individualism and against the community. This is a very hard move to choose for me as well. As the supreme moral authority, it should be clear that the Supreme Court is superior to its officers. The enlightened public in whose name he works transcends the illegitimate values of the religious public. For example, here in Israel, in terms of democracy and the democratic decision-making process, there is a difficult problem” (see Gavison, 2016; 2017; 2020).

One may or may not agree with these powerful theses. But there is no doubt about it: Ruth Gavison was a visionary with a future-constitutive thought. The intent of her thought even more than twenty years ago predicted the horrific, degrading social processes that have occurred and will occur in Israeli nation and political life.

3. Ruth Bader Ginsburg



Image 2. Ruth Bader Ginsburg
Official portrait, 2016 (see Ginsburg, 2016)

Judge at the Supreme Court of the United States. She upholds and defends the rights of women and people of color, gender equality.

She was born on 15 March 1933, New York City, US, and died on 18 September 2020, Washington, D.C., US.

Nominations, awards and recognition. She is the recipient of numerous awards, titles that are a sign of her achievements, both in the field of law and in the ethical-humanizing spirit of pluralism, the sphere of liberalism regarding the rights of people, their protection, the right to choose. Among the many honors are these: Ginsburg officially accepting the nomination from President Bill Clinton on 14 June 1993. President Bill Clinton nominated Ginsburg as an associate justice of the Supreme Court on 22 June 1993, to fill the seat vacated by retiring justice Byron White (see Federal Judicial Center, 2018)

She was recommended to Clinton by then – US attorney general Janet Reno, after a suggestion by Utah Republican senator Orrin Hatch (Hatch, 2003: 180). At the time of her nomination, Ginsburg was viewed as having been a moderate and a consensus-builder in her time on the appeals court (see Berke, 1993; Richter, 1993).

Clinton was reportedly looking to increase the Court’s diversity; which Ginsburg did as the first Jewish justice since the 1969 resignation of Justice Abe Fortas. She was the second female and the first Jewish female justice of the Supreme Court (see Rudin, 2009; Pomante, 2018; Richter, 1993).

She eventually became the longest-serving Jewish justice (see Eisner, 2018) The American Bar Association's Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary rated Ginsburg as "well qualified", its highest rating for a prospective justice (see Comiskey, 1994).

Ruth Ginsburg was one of the few liberals and only the second woman to serve on the highest American court – the US Supreme Court. Chief Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg was a lifelong pioneer for gender equality, a champion of women's rights and a staunch opponent of President Donald Trump. Her death gives President Donald Trump a chance to expand the conservative majority in this key body of American justice with a third appointment in his term.

In her memory, we continue our commitment to fair and equal access to justice for those who need it most. We've collected eight of the most impressive quotes from Justice Ginsburg.

"Current changes, sustainable changes are gradual" (see Federal Judicial Center, 2018).

"Fight for what you care about, but do it in such a way that you have joined others" (see Federal Judicial Center, 2018).

"I tell law students that if you are going to become a lawyer and just engage in your profession, you have skills - very similar to plumbing. But if you want to be a real professional, you will do something besides yourself, something that makes a living... better for people who are less fortunate" (see Federal Judicial Center, 2018).

"Sometimes people ask me, "When will there be enough women (F) on the Supreme Court? And I say, "When there are nine." People are shocked. But when there were nine men (M), no one ever raised a question about it" (see Federal Judicial Center, 2018).

"Women should be part of all places where decisions are made. Women should not be an exception" (see Federal Judicial Center, 2018).

"I think unconscious bias is one of the hardest things to deal with. My favorite example is a symphony orchestra. When I was growing up, there were no women in orchestras. Listeners thought they could tell a woman playing from a man. Some clever person came up with a simple solution: to lower the curtain between the listeners and the people playing. And lo and behold, women began to get jobs in symphony orchestras" (see Federal Judicial Center, 2018).

"Judges keep thinking they can change. I always hope that if the court has a blind spot today, its eyes will be open tomorrow" (see Federal Judicial Center, 2018).

"I would like to be remembered as someone who used his talent to do his job to the best of his ability. And please help reduce the tears in our society, make life a little better by using all your abilities" (see Federal Judicial Center, 2018).

4. Conclusion

Dear participants of the 8th e-Conference,

Our article is a scientific essay.

In fact, the idea to write it appeared after the death of Rug Gavison. I (Tatyana Petkova) with the help of Dr. Daniel Galily, got acquainted with her scientific statements, which I highly recommend. The pathos and strong erosion with which she defends her theses will be an excellent lesson in ethical rhetoric for anyone.

A month after our world Jewish community lost one of its legal stalwarts in the person of Judge Ruth Gavison, Judge Ruth Ginsburg passed away – a liberal in spirit, an extremely

conservative and principled person to herself. It is difficult to write about these two extraordinary legal ladies, their cases must be listened to, analysed and understood. Their wisdom is in their words.

This research essay also has another important point.

Suddenly, on 6 March (2022), our very close friend and participant in almost all e-Conferences held so far – Prof. Dr. David Schwartz, left this world. For us, this was a huge shock, because we were in constant dialogue with him, both regarding his participation in the 8th e-Conference, as well as on the current topics of the day.

In fact, the commonality between the three Prof. Schwartz, Judge Gavison and Judge Ginsburg was not that they were Jews, but that their souls were irreconcilably struggling with the problems of justice and law enforcement in the various spheres of society - education, law, social life.

May they rest in peace.

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