

## Midrash Rabbah on Chapter 2 of the Book of Ruth

Soncino translation reformatted. Comments in italics.

### Ruth 2:1

1. And Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.

### Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 4:3)

AND NAOMI HAD A “MODA” OF HER HUSBAND'S, A MIGHTY MAN OF VALOR (Ruth 2:1).

-The word "moda" means kinsman. [Rashi: Nephew.]

*-Alshich: Naomi avoided him because she was ashamed of having deserted her people in famine, while Boaz stayed. She thought Boaz would be angry Naomi brought a Moabitess with her to boot, and so she hesitated to ask him for support.*

*-"Ish gibor chayil": A man of 'valor' or 'wealth'? Rashi: valor. Malbim: A man endowed with the highest human qualities, including magnanimity and dislike of ill-gotten gains.*

-R. Abbahu said: If a giant marries a giantess, what do they produce? Mighty men. Boaz married Ruth. Whom did they produce? David, of whom it is said, "Skillful in playing [music], and a mighty man of valor, and a man of war, and prudent in affairs, and a comely person and the Lord is with him" (1Sam. 16:18).

*-The Sages transform David's physical attributes into spiritual ones:*

-*"Skillful in playing" refers to his knowledge of Scripture.*

*-Talmud: R. Shefatiah further said in the name of R. Johanan: One who reads Torah without a melody... [is as if he said that God's statutes are not good][Ezek. 20:25] (Megillah 32a).*

*-Midrash: R. Levi said: If one only reads Torah with the proper modulation and intonation, it may be said of him HONEY AND MILK ARE UNDER YOUR TONGUE [Song of Songs 4:11]. [Song of Songs Rabbah 4:24]*

-*"A mighty man of valor," in the Mishnah;*

*-Fighting wars requires organization and the Mishna organizes Torah knowledge*

-*"And a man of war," who knows how to give and take in the contests of the Torah;*

-*"And prudent in affairs," in good deeds;*

-*"And a comely person" in Talmud.*

-*Another interpretation of "Prudent in affairs" is that he could deduce one matter from another.*

-*"And a comely (to'ar) person" in that he was well enlightened (me'ir) in halachah.*

-*"And the Lord is with him." The law followed his decisions.*

OF THE FAMILY OF ELIMELECH, AND HIS NAME WAS BOAZ (2:1).

In the case of wicked men, [Num. R. 10:5] the name precedes the word "his name",

-e.g. Goliath was his name (1Sam. 17:4), Nabal was his name (1Sam 25: 3), Sheba, the son of Bichri, was his name (2Sam. 20:1).

But in the case of the righteous, the word "his name" precedes the name,

-e.g. And his name was Kish (1Sam 9:1). And his name was Saul (1Sam 9:2). And his name was Jesse (1Sam. 17:12). And his name was Mordecai (Est. 2:5). And his name was Elkanah (1Sam 1:1). AND HIS NAME WAS BOAZ.

[Why is this?] Because they are like their Creator, as it is said: "But by My name YHVH I made Me not known to them."(Ex. 6:3). They objected:

-But it is written, And his name was Laban (Gen. 24:29)? R. Isaac answered: This is an exception.

*-His name was not Laban, which means pure white, but Kemuel or Bilaam [Gen. R. 57:4]. He was called Laban as a title of honor because he had a high position in his community.*

R. Berekiah said: It means refined in wickedness.

*-Laban, "pure white", might mean pure in wickedness.*

[Laban was not actually his name but rather an epithet denoting that he was clever or refined.]

-But it is also written, "The name of his [Samuel's] firstborn was Joel; and the name of his second, Abijah" (1Sam. 8:2) [even though they were wicked]?

*-Next verse [1Sam 8:3] says they were judges who accepted bribes and perverted justice.*

The Rabbis say: The meaning is, just as one was wicked, so was the other.

R. Judah b. R. Simon says: They changed their evil ways and were vouchsafed the Holy Spirit [of Prophecy], as it is said, "The word of the Lord that came to Joel the son of Pethuel" (Joel 1:1).

*-The Sages concluded that Pethuel was Samuel and Samuel's son Joel was the prophet Joel.*

*-Talmud: Anyone who claimed the sons of Samuel sinned is mistaken. [Shabbat 55b-56a]*

### **Ruth 2:2-3**

2. And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor. And she said to her, Go, my daughter.

3. And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and she happened to a part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was a relative of Elimelech.

### **Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 4:4)**

AND RUTH THE MOABITRESS SAID TO NAOMI: LET ME NOW GO TO THE FIELD, AND GLEAN AMONG THE EARS OF CORN AFTER HIM IN WHOSE SIGHT I SHALL FIND FAVOR. AND SHE SAID TO HER: GO. MY DAUGHTER (2:2).

*-Gleaning was a right of the poor [Lev. 19:9, 13:22, Deut. 29:19]*

*-Malbim: How righteous is Ruth! The daughter of the King of Moab gleans like a common pauper to spare her mother-in-law the indignity of doing it herself, in front of those who has known her as a rich woman.*

*-Rashi: "HIM IN WHOSE SIGHT I SHALL FIND FAVOR" – an owner who will let me glean without embarrassing me.*

*-Rav Gakkun: She went "after" the others, and took only what the others discarded, so as not to allow them to glance at her.*

R. Yannai said: She was forty years of age and yet you call her daughter? The answer is that she looked like a girl of fourteen.

AND SHE WENT AND CAME (2:3). She had not yet gone, yet you say, AND CAME? R. Judah b. R. Simon answered: She began to mark out the ways. [She went backwards and forward until she knew the road to the field.]

*-To minimize her chances of getting lost on her return and encountering men*

AND SHE HAPPENED TO (2:3). R. Johanan said: Whoever saw her was sexually excited and had an orgasm.

*-The word mikrah, "a happening" is connected with kri, "an emission of semen".*

THE PORTION OF THE FIELD BELONGING TO BOAZ, WHO WAS OF THE FAMILY OF ELIMELECH (2:3).

-i.e. it was given to her from what would later be due her as her portion [i.e. heritage].

*-God steered her to a field that later would be hers by right of inheritance from Boaz.*

### **Ruth 2:4**

4. And, behold, Boaz came from Beth-Lehem, and said to the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless you.

### **Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 4:5)**

AND BEHOLD, BOAZ CAME FROM BETHLEHEM (2:4).

*-After mourning the death of his wife. That's why the reapers answered Boaz "The Lord bless you", meaning "with a worthy wife", because, as the Sages said, "Ha-sharui belo isha sharui belo bracha" – "One who dwells without a wife dwells without blessing". [Iggeret Shmuel: 16<sup>th</sup> cent. commentary on Ruth]*

*-Actual quote: It was taught: He who has no wife dwells without good, without help, without joy, without blessing, and without atonement. [Bereshit Rabbah 17,2]*

*-The reapers did not initiate the greeting because one may not greet a mourner; he must greet first. [Rav Alkabetz]*

*-"Behold" indicates the hand of fate, of God*

-R. Tanhuma said on behalf of the Rabbis: Three things did the earthly Beth Din decree, and the heavenly Beth Din endorsed. These are, to greet one's neighbor by the name of God, to read the scroll of Esther, and [to take] tithes [from the produce of the Land and give them to Kohanim and Leviim].

-How do we know about greeting by the name of God? As it is said, "[False prophets] who think to make My people forget My name" (Jer. 23:27). When did they so think?

-In the days of Athaliah

*-Wicked and idolatrous queen of Judah for 6 years, ~840 BCE*

-The Rabbis say: In the days of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

*-Righteous men thrown into a fiery furnace for refusing to bow to idols before Babylonian emperor Nebuchadnezzar and survived [Daniel 3]*

-R. Hananiah in the name of R. Judah b. R. Simon said: In the days of Mordecai and Esther.

*-By slaughtering all the Jews, Haman would have caused God's name to be forgotten.*

*-When that is threatened, a righteous person stands up to reverse the trend. In Boaz's period (Judges) the threat was also there: "[After Joshua died] another generation arose that did not know God" [Judg. 2:10,12]*

And Boaz and his court arose and instituted that greeting should be by the name of God, as it is said, AND BEHOLD, BOAZ CAME FROM BETHLEHEM, AND SAID TO THE REAPERS: THE LORD BE WITH YOU

*-Radal: Boaz enacted the law of greeting in God's name; it was annulled in the days of Athaliah, and then was reintroduced.*

*-Also in other cultures: Dieu vous garde! Allah maak!*

And so the Angel said to Gideon, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor" (Judg. 6:12).

*-To avoid cheapening through overuse, the practice was restricted to greetings among friends [Rashi on Ber. 54a]*

-Whence do we know about the scroll of Esther? R. Jeremiah in the name of R. Samuel b. Isaac answered: What did Mordecai and Esther do? They wrote letters which they sent to all the exiles [Meg. 7a], saying, "Do you undertake to celebrate these two days in the future?" [Est. 9:27] They replied and said, "Were not the troubles of Haman enough, that you place upon us the burden of celebrating those two days?" [J. Meg. 1:5]

*-The commemoration of Haman's defeat might evoke hostility*

And they answered: "If it is because of that that you fear to do so, is it not already recorded in the annals, as it is said, "Are they not written in the book of the chronicles [of the kings of Media and Persia]?" (Est. 10:2). What did they do? They wrote a second letter and sent them this second letter of Purim (Est. 9:29).

R. Helbo said in the name of R. Samuel b. Nahman: Eighty-five elders, and among them some thirty prophets were troubled by the verse: "These are the commandments which the Lord commanded Moses" (Lev.27:34), "these," indicating that nothing can be added to them and nothing taken from them, nor is any prophet permitted to make a new law from then on, and yet Mordecai and Esther request us to promulgate a new law. Until the Holy One, blessed be He, enlightened them and they found it intimated in the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings:

-In the Torah, as it is written, "Write this as a remembrance in the book" (Ex. 17:14)

*-The verse adds "that I will surely erase the memory of Amalek under the heavens". Haman was regarded as a descendant of Amalek.*

-In the Prophets, as it is written, "Then they that feared the Lord spoke one with another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him" (Mal. 3:16).

-In the Writings, as it is written, "Are they not written in the book of the Chronicles" (Est. 10:2).

*-The Sages derived from "zot zikaron basefer" -- "Write this as a remembrance in the book" that all 3 parts of Tanach support remembering the eradication of Amalek with a Megillah reading.*

Rav, R. Hanina, R. Jonathan, and Bar Kappara and R. Yehoshua ben Levi all said: This scroll was not composed by the Court of that time, but was legislated at Sinai, [and the reason that it is written here is that] there is no chronological order in the Torah.

*-Meaning, there was an oral tradition to write a book as a memorial to a miracle that would occur at some time in the future in relation to a descendant of Amalek. So it is "as though" the Megillah were written in the Torah itself.*

And whence do we know that the Holy One, blessed be He, endorsed this action of the Sages? Rav answered: The written word is not kiblu (they took upon themselves) but kibel (he took upon himself – no vav) [Est. 9:27]. Who? The teacher of the Jewish people. [Moses.]

*-In time the rabbis instituted 7 rabbinic commandments (mitzvot d'rabbanan), in addition to the 613 in the Torah:*

1. *To recite a blessing before food or other pleasure*
2. *To wash the hands before eating*
3. *To kindle the Shabbat lights*
4. *To build an Eruv to allow carrying within public areas on Shabbat*
5. *To recite the Hallel psalms on special days*
6. *To kindle the Hanukkah lights*
7. *To read the Scroll of Esther on Purim*

*Before they are performed, the usual blessing must be recited: "Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us by your commandments and has commanded us to..."*

*The divine command is implied in the general law to follow any instructions of the religious authorities (Deut. 17:11, 32:7; Shab. 23a).*

*Talmud, Shabbat 23a: What blessing is uttered? -This: Who sanctified us by His commandments and commanded us to kindle the light of Hanukkah. And where did He [so] command us? R. Avia said: [It follows] from, you shall not turn aside [from the sentence that they will show you]. [Deut. 17:11.]*

*[Deut. 9. And you shall come to the priests the Levites, and to the judge who shall be in those days, and inquire; and they shall declare to you the sentence of judgment;*

*10. And you shall do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the Lord shall choose shall declare to you; and you shall take care to do according to all that they inform you;*

*11. According to the sentence of the Torah which they shall teach you, and according to the judgment which they shall tell you, you shall do; you shall not decline from the sentence which they shall declare to you, to the right hand, nor to the left.]*

*R. Nehemiah quoted: Ask your father, and he will show you; Your elders, and they will tell you. [Deut. 32:7]*

-From where do we know about tithes? Since R. Berekiah said in the name of R. Crespia: The children of Israel were exiled on account of the transgression of the laws of terumoth and maaserot (tithes). Simeon b. Abba said in the name of R. Johanan: Once they were exiled they were automatically exempt from this duty [since they are tied to the Land], but they themselves accepted liability for it. How did the men of the Great Synagogue act?

*-The council of the Jews from Ezra to Simeon the Just, c. 300 BCE*

They wrote a document [drafting the law] and spread it out in the Courtyard of the Temple, and in the morning they found a seal appended. [Mak. 23b, J. Ber. 9:5] That is the meaning of the verse, "And yet for all this we make a true covenant and write [it], and on the signature" (Neh. 10:1-2). One verse says, "al hechatum" (on the signature) and the other [Neh. 10:2] "al hachatumin" (on the signatories). How can this be explained? "Al hachatum" refers to the earthly court; "al hachatumin" to the additional signature of the heavenly court.

-Some add [to the three things mentioned] also the prohibition against using the spoil of Jericho. For so said the Holy One, blessed be He, to Joshua, "Israel has sinned" (Josh. 7:11). But was it not Joshua who made the decree? It therefore teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, agreed with it.

*-When Joshua conquered Jericho on Shabbat, he kept it off limits to Israel to avoid looting, and God agreed post facto. (Josh. 6:17; Tanh. Vayehi 8).*

## **Ruth 2:5-6**

5. Then said Boaz to his servant who was set over the reapers, To whom does that young woman belong?

6. And the servant who was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabite maiden who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab.

### Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 4:6)

THEN BOAZ SAID TO HIS SERVANT WHO WAS SET OVER THE REAPERS (2:5). Over how many was he appointed? R. Eliezer, the son of Miriam,

*-Why does his name give his mother's name and not his father's, as is the custom?*

said: He was set over 42, as we see from the verse,

"And Solomon numbered all the strangers that were in the land of Israel... and he set 70,000 to bear burdens, and 80,000 to be hewers in the mountains, and 3,600 overseers to direct the people's work" (2Chron. 2:16-17.).

*-I.e., 3,600 overseers for 153,600 people, or an average of 1 overseer for 42 people.*

One who adopts this plan can be aware of what each worker is doing.

TO WHOM DOES THIS YOUNG WOMAN BELONG? Did he then not recognize her?

*-He should have because she had gone to the mikvah to complete her conversion in front of the bet din of Bethlehem, who Boaz headed. He did not ask "Who is she?", but "Who does she belong to?", meaning "Who taught her such exemplary virtues?"*

The meaning is that when he saw how attractive she was, and how modest her attitude, he began to inquire concerning her:

-All the other women bend down to gather the ears of corn, but she squats to gather grain

-All the other women hitch up their skirts [into their belts], but she keeps her skirt down

-All the other women flirt with the reapers, but she modestly keeps to herself

-All the other women gather from between the sheaves [which the poor are not allowed to do], but she gathers only what is abandoned [as halacha prescribes]

In the same way one must understand the verse, "And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine [Goliath], he said to Abner... Whose son is this youth?" [1Sam. 17:55-58]. Did he then not recognize him? But yesterday he sent to Jesse saying, "Let David, I pray you, stand before me; for he has found favor in my sight" (1Sam 16:22), and now he inquires concerning him? The meaning is that when Saul saw the head of the Philistine (Goliath) he began to ask concerning David, "Is he a descendant of Peretz, a king? Is he a descendant of Zerach, a judge?"

*-Peretz and Zerach were the sons of Judah and Tamar (Gen.37:29-30). Peretz means a "breach", and refers to a king who breaches enemy walls [A.Z. 76b]*

*-Peretz becomes the great great great great grandfather of Boaz, who is the great grandfather of King David, the father of King Solomon, and the progenitor of the future Messiah*

And Do'eg, the Edomite, [Saul's chief of shepherds, who hated David] was there, at that time, and he said to him, "Even if he is a descendant of Peretz, is he not of impure descent? Is he not a descendant of Ruth, the Moabitess?" But Abner said to him, 'But has not the new law been made, "Ammonite but not Ammonitess, Moabite but not Moabitess"?'

*-Deut. 23:4 says: "An Ammonite or Moabite [masculine: 'Ammoni uMoavi] shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord." The new interpretation has Torah refer to males only, and allows female Ammonites and Moabites to become Jews.*

He answered him, 'But if so, let us also say Edomite but not Edomitess, Egyptian but not Egyptian women?'

*-Deut. 23:8-9 says: "You shall not loathe an Edomite [Adomi: masculine]; for he is your brother; you shall not loathe an Egyptian [Mitzri, masculine]; because you were a stranger in his land. The children who are fathered by them shall enter into the congregation of the Lord in their third generation." Do'eg asks: Should we also argue, by the same logic, that Edomites and Egyptian males can become Jews, but not the females?*

Why were the men spurned [in Deut. 23:4], was it not "Because they met you not with bread and with water?" (Deut. 23:5). The women ought also to have met the women?

*-Do'eg continued: The men were banned from becoming Jewish because they did not welcome the Jews. The women don't normally welcome males, but they could have welcomed the Jewish women, but did not, so they are just as guilty and should also be barred from becoming Jewish.*

And for the moment Abner forgot the law.

*-Abner told King Saul: By your life, O king, I do not know. [1Sam. 17:55].*

Said Saul to him, 'Go and inquire concerning that law which you have forgotten from Samuel and his Court.' When he came to Samuel and his Court, he [Samuel] said to him: "From where do you derive this logic [that Ammonite and Moabite women cannot become Jewish]? Doesn't it come from Do'eg? Do'eg is a heretic and will not depart from this world in peace, and yet I cannot let you leave without an answer."

- Even though one must not waste time answering a heretic, I will give you an answer.
- It is written: "All glorious is the king's daughter within the palace" (Ps. 14:14). [I.e. a woman should remain indoors.] It is not for a woman to go out and bring food, [even for other women], but only for a man.
- “And because they hired against you Balaam [to curse you]” (Deut. 23:5). A man hires, but not a woman.
- So the Ammonite and Moabite women are not responsible for this and should not be penalized.
- Saul was really asking all along if David is halachically Jewish, and Samuel answered “Yes”

AND THE SERVANT SET OVER THE REAPERS ANSWERED AND SAID: SHE IS A MOABITE DAMSEL (2:6), and yet you say that her conduct is praiseworthy and modest? Her mother-in-law had instructed her well.

- The servant tries hard to dissuade Boaz from being interested in Ruth. He suggests:
  - Torah Tmimah: Her seemingly modest behavior was drilled into her by her mother-in-law
  - She is a “naarah”, a “damsel”, too young for Boaz (who was 80)(and Ruth was 40)
  - Iggeret Shmuel: Her conversion was motivated only by love of Naomi, not of God:
    - Ruth 1:16-17. And Ruth said, Do not entreat me to leave you, or to keep from following you; for wherever you go, I will go; and where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God; Where you die, will I die, and there will I be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if even death parts me from you.
  - Zot Nechemati: She brings bad luck: She buried a husband and is destitute
  - Rashba Halevi: Are there not Jewish girls you can marry, not brought up Moabite?
  - Alshich: The servant meant all this but did not verbalize it all

### Ruth 2:7-8

7. And she said, I beg you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves; so she came, and she has continued from morning until now, scarcely spending any time in the hut.
8. Then said Boaz to Ruth, Do you not hear, my daughter? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go away from here, but stay here close to my maidens;

### Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 4:7)

AND SHE SAID: LET ME GLEAN, I PRAY YOU, AND GATHER AFTER THE REAPERS, etc. (2:7). She gathered only a small quantity for herself, [not enough for] she who awaited her in the house [Naomi].

- Iggeret Shmuel: Ruth did not have to beg (“I pray you”,) for gleaning is a right; she was just being polite

THEN SAID BOAZ TO RUTH: DO YOU NOT HEAR, MY DAUGHTER?

- Did you understand all the commandments of a Jewish woman?

DO NOT GO TO GLEAN IN ANOTHER FIELD (2:8), as in the verse, “You shall have no other gods before Me” (Ex. 20:3)

- The verse is applied to gleaning in other spiritual areas.

NOR GO AWAY FROM HERE, compare “This is my God, and I will glorify Him” (Ex. 15:2).

- Do not stray from observance of the commandments

BUT STAY HERE CLOSE TO MY MAIDENS. This refers to the righteous who are called maidens, as it is said, “Will you play with him as with a bird, or will you bind him for your maidens”? (Job 40:29).

- Stay close to righteous people.
- Material food is likened to spiritual food. In both you need just the right amount. Too little and you starve. Too much and your health suffers (indigestion and fanaticism?)
- Rav Arama: If Ruth and Naomi are his closest kin, shouldn't Boaz have offered them his home and support, rather than merely allowing them to exercise their right to glean? Boaz was testing Ruth. Had her conversion been insincere and motivated by desire to be supported by Boaz, she would have reacted differently.

### Ruth 2:9

9. Let your eyes be on the field that they reap, and go after them; have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.

### Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 4:8)

LET YOUR EYES BE ON THE FIELD THAT THEY REAP, AND GO AFTER THEM. HAVE I NOT CHARGED THE YOUNG MEN THAT THEY SHALL NOT TOUCH YOU? AND WHEN YOU ARE THIRSTY, GO TO THE VESSELS, AND DRINK OF THAT WHICH THE YOUNG MEN HAVE DRAWN (2:9).

-YOUR EYES refers to the Sanhedrin. There are 248 limbs in the human body, and they move only at the direction of the eyes.

*-So Israel must follow the decisions rendered by the Sanhedrin (Songs R. 1:64)*

This is the meaning of the verse, LET YOUR EYES BE ON THE FIELD, etc., AND GO AFTER THEM.

-THAT THEY SHALL NOT TOUCH YOU, i.e. that they will not discourage you [from practicing Judaism].

-AND WHEN YOU ARE THIRSTY, GO TO THE VESSELS. These are the righteous, who are also called vessels, as in the verse, "How the mighty have fallen [ech naflu giborim] and the vessels of war were lost" (2Sam. 1:27, when David eulogized Jonathan).

-AND DRINK OF WHAT THE YOUNG MEN HAVE DRAWN refers to Simchat Bet Ha-Shoevah [the Festival of Water-Drawing.]

*-Simchat Bet Ha-Shoevah. Festival during Hol Hamoed Sukkot, involving dancing, singing, playing the flute, and drinking water all night. Magnificent during Temple days:*

*-He who has not seen the rejoicing at the place of the Water-Drawing has never seen rejoicing in his life. [Sukkah 51a]*

*-They said of R. Shim'on ben Gamaliel that when he rejoiced at the Festival of Water-Drawing, he used to take eight lighted torches [and throw them in the air] and catch one and throw one and they did not touch one another. [Sukkah 53a]*

*(R. Shim'on ben Gamaliel, 10 BCE-70 CE, was Nasi of Sanhedrin and one of the Ten Martyrs, the first to be killed.)*

*-Still celebrated in Hassidic circles in Jerusalem and traditional communities: all-night live music, dance and refreshments*

And why is it called "Drawing"? Because from there they drew divine inspiration, as it is said,

"Therefore with joy you shall draw water from the wells of salvation" (Isa. 12:3).

*-Talmud: Divine inspiration rests only on someone in a state of joy. [J. Suk. 5:1]*

[some text omitted]

### **Ruth 2:10**

10. Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said to him: Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take cognizance of me, seeing that I am a stranger?

### **Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 5:2)**

THEN SHE FELL ON HER FACE AND BOWED DOWN TO THE GROUND, AND SAID: WHY HAVE I FOUND FAVOR IN YOUR SIGHT THAT YOU SHOULD TAKE COGNIZANCE OF ME (2:10). This teaches that she prophesied that he would make her his wife.

*-Hakireni: To take cognizance is also understood as "to know one's wife", carnally (Gen. 4:1)*

*-"Stranger" here is "nochri" (Gentile), not "ger". Why is Ruth describing herself that way? Maybe she meant, "as far as you know"? Or describing her origin?*

*-Iggeret Shmuel: Many women who glean here here are strangers, but no one pays special attention to them*

### **Ruth 2:11**

11. And Boaz answered and said to her, It has been fully told to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband; and how you have left your father and your mother, and the land of your birth, and have come to a people which you did not know before.

### **Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 5:3)**

-AND BOAZ ANSWERED AND SAID: IT HAS BEEN FULLY TOLD [Lit. "told told"] TO ME (2:11). Why is the verb repeated? It has been told me in the house, and it has been told me in the field,

-ALL THAT YOU HAVE DONE TO YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW SINCE THE DEATH OF YOUR HUSBAND, and certainly during his lifetime,

-AND HOW YOU HAVE LEFT YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER AND THE LAND OF YOUR BIRTH - this means, your country;

-[Another interpretation:] AND YOU HAVE LEFT YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER -- i.e. your idolatry, as it is said, "Who say to a stock: You are my father, and to a stone: You have brought us forth" (Jer. 2:27).

-AND THE LAND OF YOUR BIRTH refers to her surroundings,

-AND HAVE COME TO A PEOPLE THAT YOU DID NOT KNOW BEFORE, for had you come before, you would not have been [accepted as a convert].

*-Since the new law allowing Moabite women to convert had not yet been enacted.*

*-Rashba Halevi: You could only have been motivated by religious convictions and not ulterior motives*

### **Ruth 2:12**

12. The Lord will recompense your work, and a full reward shall be given to you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.

### **Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 5:4)**

THE LORD WILL RECOMPENSE YOUR WORK, AND A FULL REWARD SHALL BE GIVEN TO YOU BY THE LORD (2:12). R. Chasa said: Solomon shall be your reward.

*-God does not shortchange, so why state this? Because "full" reward is "shlemah", which can also be read "Shlomo" – Solomon. She will live to see him become king.*

*-Rav Arama: Only God can reward you, for no human act can reward you enough*

*-Iggeret Shmuel: Ruth's merit may be greater than Abraham's, for Abraham heeded a divine call (Lech lecha – get thee out) but Ruth left her familiar surroundings on her own initiative.*

*-Dubna Maggid (Kol Yaakov): The greatest reward for any mitzvah is the satisfaction of having performed it. [Is there, then, no real selflessness, as we all seek that satisfaction?]*

-UNDER WHOSE WINGS YOU HAVE COME TO TAKE REFUGE. R. Avun said: We gather from Scripture that there are

-wings to the earth, as it is said, "From the uttermost parts (lit. "wings") of the earth we heard songs" (Isa. 24:16);

-wings to the sun, as it is said, "But to you who fear My name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings" (Mal. 3:20);

-wings to the Hayyoth, as it is said, "Also the noise of the wings of the Hayyoth" (Ezek. 3:13);

*-The Hayyoth carry God's throne. This is the vision of Ezekiel. Rosh Hashana liturgy: Our prayers go to God on the wings of these angels.*

-wings to the cherubim, as it is said, "For the cherubim spread forth their wings" (1Kings 8:7);

-wings to the seraphim, as it is said, "Above Him stood the seraphim; each one had six wings" (Isa. 6:2).

Come and see how great is the power of the righteous [tzaddikim], and how great is the power of righteousness [tzedakah], and how great is the power of those who do kindly deeds, for they take refuge neither in the shadow of the morning, nor in the shadow of the wings of the earth, nor in the shadow of the sun, nor in the shadow of the wings of the Hayyoth, nor the shadow of the wings of the cherubim or the seraphim, but under whose wings do they take refuge? Under the shadow of the One at whose word the world was created, as it is said, "How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God, and the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings" (Ps. 36:8).

### **Ruth 2:13**

13. Then she said, Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not one of your maidservants.

### **Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 5:5)**

THEN SHE SAID: LET ME FIND FAVOR IN YOUR SIGHT, MY LORD... THOUGH I AM NOT ONE OF YOUR HANDMAIDENS (2:13). He said to her, "Heaven forbid! You are not as one of the handmaidens (amahoth) but as one of the matriarchs (imahoth)."

*-Revocalization of amahoth. Ruth is as worthy as the matriarchs. Unconsciously true statement, as Ruth is ancestress of David, Solomon, and Messiah. [BB 91b]*

*-Mashal Umelitza: Different interpretation: Ruth meant: I am not like one of your handmaidens who perform good deeds for the sake of reward; I do them leshem shamayim – for the sake of heaven.*

Similarly to be explained is the verse, "And Nobah went and took Kenath, and the villages thereof, and called it Nobah" (Num. 39:42), teaching that it did not retain this name. And similarly the verse, "And he said to me: To build her a house in the land of Shinar (Zech. 5:11), teaching that there is no salvation for falsehood.

*-A heh at the end of a word is usually silent. If it must be pronounced, we add a dot inside [mappik heh -- "produce the heh"]. In all three verses quoted here, lah, "to her" is written without the mappik heh and may therefore be read lo (meaning no). Thus Boaz said, "You are not a maidservant", Kenath was not called permanently by the name of Nobah, and the house of falsehood will not stand for ever.*

#### **Ruth 2:14**

14. And at the mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your morsel in the vinegar." And she sat beside the reapers; and he passed to her parched grain, and she ate, and was satisfied, and left.

#### **Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 5:6)**

AND BOAZ SAID TO HER AT MEAL TIME: COME HERE, AND EAT OF THE BREAD, AND DIP YOUR MORSEL IN THE VINEGAR. AND SHE SAT BESIDE THE REAPERS; AND THEY PASSED TO HER PARCHED CORN, AND SHE ATE AND WAS SATISFIED AND HAD SOME LEFT OVER (2:14). R. Jonathan interpreted this verse in six ways:

-The first [interpretation] refers it to David.

-COME HERE means, approach to royal state, as in the verse, "That You have brought me here" (2Sam. 7:18).

-AND EAT OF THE BREAD refers to the bread of royalty.

*-Not "Eat bread" but "Eat of THE bread"*

-AND DIP YOUR BREAD IN THE VINEGAR refers to his sufferings, as it is said, "O Lord, do not rebuke me in Your anger" (Ps. 6:2).

*-Harvesters use vinegar to allay thirst, cool body, and help digestion. Rav Alkabetz: Also avoid sunstroke, important for Ruth since she was not used to staying out in the sun so long.*

-AND SHE SAT BESIDE THE REAPERS. in that the throne was taken from him for a time [during the rebellion of Absalom], as R. Huna said: All these six months that David was in flight from Absalom are not included in his reign and he atoned for his sins with a she-goat, like a commoner.

*-A king atoned with a he-goat, a commoner with a she-goat (Lev. 4:23).*

-AND THEY REACHED HER PARCHED CORN: [this intimates] that he was restored to the throne, as it is said, "Now know I that the Lord saves His anointed" (Ps. 20:7).

-AND SHE DID EAT, AND WAS SATISFIED, AND HAD SOME LEFT OVER: this indicates that he would eat in this world, and [be satisfied] in the Messianic age, and [have some left over] in the World to Come.

*-David will "be satisfied" when he sees his descendant become Messiah and be resurrected then [Gen. R. 96:5] and will be with those who qualify for rewards on Judgment Day [Lev. R. 11:2]*

-The second interpretation of COME HERE. etc., refers it to Solomon.

-COME HERE; approach to royal state;

-AND EAT OF THE BREAD refers to the bread of royalty, as it is said, And Solomon's provision [lit.: bread] for one day was 30 measures of fine flour, and 60 measures of meal (1Kings 5:2)

-AND DIP YOUR MORSEL IN THE VINEGAR refers to the stain on his character.

*-Solomon lapsed into idolatry at times, married foreign women, collected huge taxes, and was punished with secession of Kingdom of Israel and Edom rebellion. (1Kings 11:9-13)*

*And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the Lord, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not keep what the Lord commanded.*

*Therefore the Lord said to Solomon, "Since this has been your practice and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and will give it to your servant. Yet for the sake of David your father I will not do it in your days, but I will tear it out of the hand of your son. However, I will not tear away all the kingdom, but I will give one tribe to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem that I have chosen.*

-AND SHE SAT BESIDE THE REAPERS, in that the throne was taken from him for a time, as R. Yohai b. Hanina said: An angel descended in the likeness of Solomon and sat upon his throne, while he went from door to door throughout Israel saying, I, Koheleth, have been king over Israel in Jerusalem (Eccl. 1:12). What did one of the housewives do? She gave him a plate of pounded beans, and struck him upon the head, saying, "Isn't Solomon sitting on his throne? And yet you say "I am Solomon king of Israel"." [Gittin 68b, Sanh. 20b]

-AND THEY REACHED HER PARCHED CORN; this indicates that he was restored to the throne.

-AND SHE DID EAT AND WAS SATISFIED AND HAD SOME LEFT OVER; he would eat in this world, and [be satisfied] in the Messianic age, and [have some left over] in the World to Come.

-The third interpretation of COME HERE refers it to Hezekiah

*-The most righteous king of Judah, purified cult from idolatry, ~700 BCE*

-COME HERE, approach to royal state.

-AND EAT OF THE BREAD, the bread of royalty.

-AND DIP THY MORSEL IN THE VINEGAR refers to his sufferings [in illness], as it is said, "And Isaiah said: Let them take a cake of figs", etc. (Isa.38:21).

-AND SHE SAT BESIDE THE REAPERS, in that the throne was taken from him for a time, as it is said, "Thus says Hezekiah: This day is a day of trouble and rebuke" (Isa. 37:3).

*-Sennacherib, king of Assyria, invaded Israel and besieged Jerusalem, and there was a conspiracy to overthrow Hezekiah and surrender [Lev. R. 5:5]*

-AND THEY REACHED HER PARCHED CORN indicates that he was restored to the throne, as it is said, "So that he was exalted in the sight of all nations from thenceforth" (2Chron. 32:23).

*-Sennacherib was defeated*

-AND SHE DID EAT AND WAS SATISFIED AND HAD SOME LEFT OVER; he would eat in this world, and [be satisfied] in the Messianic age, and [leave] in the World to Come.

-The fourth interpretation of COME HERE. etc., refers to Menasheh.

*-Hezekiah's son Menasheh was the worst Jewish king, but he eventually repented [2Kings 21:1-17]. Reigned 55 years, overthrew his father's reforms, reintroduced idolatry, condemned Isaiah to death.*

*-In Talmud (Sanhedrin 102b,) Menasheh appears to Rav Ashi in a dream and engages him in a halachic discussion. He shows himself to be well-versed in Torah and Rav Ashi's superior. So Rav Ashi's asks him: If you are so wise, why did you worship idols? Menashe responds, Had you been there and lived in my time, you would have done the same. You would have lifted the hems of your robes to run behind me to worship idols also.*

*-Society at large has a big impact on our behavior, and many wish to assimilate. If a great sage such as Rav Ashi can be enticed to worship idols, what about the rest of us?*

-COME HERE; approach to the royal state.

-AND EAT OF THE BREAD refers to the bread of royalty.

-AND DIP YOUR MORSEL IN THE VINEGAR, because his actions were sour as vinegar [stain and corrode as vinegar] on account of his evil deeds. [BM 83b, Chul. 105s]

-AND SHE SAT BESIDE THE REAPERS. in that he was deprived of his throne for a time, as it is said, "And the Lord spoke to Menasheh, and to his people; but they gave no heed, so he Lord brought them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, who took Menasheh with hooks" (2Chron. 33:10f.).

*-And led him off to Babylon*

R. Abba b. Kahana said: It means, with manacles.

R. Levi b. Chayyatha said: They made a mule of bronze and seated him on it and kindled a fire underneath it, and he cried out, 'O idol so-and-so, O idol so-and-so, save me!' And when he saw that it was of no avail, he said, "I recollect that my father used to read before me the verse, "In your distress, when all these things are come upon you... He will not fail you (Deut. 4:30-31.). I will call to Him; if He answers me, it is well; and if not, then it is all the same, and all gods are the same." At that moment the ministering angels arose and closed all the windows of heaven and appealed to God: 'Lord of the Universe! Will You accept in repentance a man who set up an idol in the very Temple?' He answered: "'If I do not accept him in repentance, I close the door in the face of all future penitents.'" What did the Holy One, blessed be He, do? He dug an opening for his prayer from under the Throne of Glory, where the angels could not reach. That is the meaning of the verse, "And he prayed to Him; and God received his entreaty (vayye'ather), and heard his supplication (2Chron. 33:13).

R. Levi commented: In Arabia they call chatirah 'atirah.

*-The chet is replaced by an ayin, as frequently happens among Semitic languages. Likewise, vayye'ather (he was entreated) similar to vayyachtor (he dug).*

-AND THEY REACHED HER PARCHED CORN, i.e. he was restored to the throne, as it is said, "And brought him back to Jerusalem to his kingdom (2Chron. 33:13). How did He bring him back? R. Samuel said in the name of R. Aba: He brought him back with a wind,

*-A wind miraculously carried him out of captivity in Babylon to Jerusalem*

as we say 'who causes the wind to blow'. [Ps. 147:18]

*-In 'Amidah: Mashiv ha-ruach*

-AND SHE DID EAT AND WAS SATISFIED AND HAD SOME LEFT OVER; he would eat in this world, and [be satisfied] in the Messianic age,

*-Some say his repentance earned him a share in the World to Come [Sanh. 90a]*

and [have some left over] in the World to Come.

-The fifth interpretation makes it refer to the Messiah.

-COME HERE: approach to royal state.

-AND EAT OF THE BREAD refers to the bread of royalty;

-AND DIP YOUR MORSEL IN THE VINEGAR refers to his sufferings, as it is said, "But he was wounded because of our transgressions" (Isa. 53:5).

-AND SHE SAT BESIDE THE REAPERS, for he will be deprived of his sovereignty for a time,

*-By the nations under Gog and Magog [Lev. R. 11:2]*

as it is said, "For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken" (Zech. 14:2).

-AND THEY REACHED HER PARCHED CORN, means that he will be restored to his throne, as it is said, "And he shall smite the land with the rod of his mouth (Isa. 11:4).

R. Berekiah said in the name of R. Levi: The future Redeemer will be like the former Redeemer [Moses].

The former Redeemer revealed himself and later was hidden from them. How long was he hidden? Three months, as it is said, "And they met Moses and Aaron" (Ex. 5:20) [Ex. R. 5:20]].

Likewise, the future Redeemer will be revealed to them, and then be hidden from them. And how long will he

be hidden? R. Tanhuma, in the name of the Rabbis, said: 45 days, as it is said [Daniel's vision of the end of days], "And from the time that the continual burnt offering shall be taken away... there shall be 1,290 days.

Happy is he who waits, and reaches 1,335 days (Dan. 12:11-12). [The difference between the two periods.]

What are these extra days? R. Isaac b. Ketzarta said on behalf of R. Jonah: These are the 45 days during which Israel will scrape moss and eat it, as it is said, "They scrape moss from trees" (Job 30:4).

*-Right before the Messianic age, there will be little food and the faithful will eat moss.*

Where will he lead them? From the land of Israel to the wilderness of Judah, as it is said, "Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness" (Hos. 2:16); while some say to the wilderness of Sihon and Og, as it is said, "I will yet again make you dwell in tents, as in the days of the appointed season" Hos. 12:10).

*-It was in the wilderness of Sihon and Og that Balaam blessed the 'tents of Israel' (Num. 24:5), hence "tents" in this verse is understood to refer to that place.]*

He who believes in him will live, and he who does not believe will depart to the Gentile nations and they will put him to death.

*-Either physically or he will assimilate and be lost to Judaism.*

R. Isaac b. Marion said: Finally the Holy One, blessed be He, will reveal Himself to them, and He will rain down manna upon them, "And there is nothing new under the sun" (Eccl. 1:9).

*-Whatever is destined to occur in the future Redemption occurred in the first.*

*-"Whatever has been is what will be, and whatever had been done is what will be done. There is nothing new under the sun – v'en kol chadash tachat ha-shemesh" (Ecc. 1:9)*

-The sixth interpretation makes COME HERE, etc., refer to Boaz himself

*-The literal meaning: Pshat.*

*-Torah has 4 levels: Pshat (plain meaning), remez (subtle meaning), drash (derived meaning), sod (hidden meaning)*

-COME HERE means approach here.

*-And sit with the common reapers*

-AND EAT OF THE BREAD: the bread of the reapers.

-AND DIP YOUR MORSEL IN THE VINEGAR, for reapers are wont to dip their bread in vinegar. R. Jonathan said: From this we can infer that dishes prepared with vinegar are brought into the granaries.

*-I.e. are liable to tithes*

-AND SHE SAT BESIDE THE REAPERS, actually at their side.

*-A sign of her modesty. Not among them, but at their side.*

-AND THEY REACHED HER PARCHED CORN; just a pinch between his two fingers.

*-The word for "parched corn", "kali", is connected with the word for "a little", "kalil"*

R. Isaac said: From this we can infer one of two things, that a blessing reposed either in the fingers of that righteous man [Boaz] or in the stomach of that righteous woman [Ruth]  
*-since such a small portion satisfied her*

but since it says,

-AND SHE DID EAT AND WAS SATISFIED AND HAD SOME LEFT OVER, it is more probable that the blessing was in the stomach of that righteous woman.

R. Isaac b. Marion said: This verse can teach us that if a man is about to perform a good deed, he should do it with all his heart. For had Reuben known that Scripture would record of him, "And Reuben heard it, and delivered him out of their hand" (Gen. 37:21), he would have borne Joseph on his shoulder to his father.

*-Reuben would have physically taken Joseph back to Jacob rather than just try to convince his brothers not to kill Joseph*

And had Aaron known that Scripture would record of him, "And also, behold, he comes forth to meet you" (Ex. 4:14), he would have gone forth to meet him [Moses] with timbrels and dances.

And had Boaz known that Scripture would record of him, AND HE REACHED HER PARCHED CORN, AND SHE DID EAT AND WAS SATISFIED AND HAD SOME LEFT OVER, he would have fed her with fatted calves.

*-Boaz would have done much more for her*

R. Cohen and R. Joshua of Sakhnin said in the name of R. Levi: In the past when a man performed a good deed, the prophet recorded it [for posterity]; but nowadays when a man performs a good deed, who records it? Elijah records it and the Messiah and the Holy One, blessed be He, endorse it. This is the meaning of the verse, "Then they who feared the Lord spoke with one another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him" (Mal. 3:16).

#### **Ruth 2:15-16**

15. And when she rose to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her;

16. And let fall also some of the handfuls on purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and do not rebuke her.

#### **Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 5:7)**

-AND WHEN SHE ROSE, TO GLEAN, BOAZ COMMANDED HIS YOUNG MEN, SAYING... AND ALSO PULL OUT SOME FOR HER OF PURPOSE FROM THE BUNDLES (2:15-16).

-R. Johanan used to scatter large silver coins about so R. Simeon b. Abba might pick them up, and R. Judah used to leave beans about so [his disciple] R. Simeon b. Halafta might acquire them. [BB 10b, Ket. 67b]

*-They were poor, and in this way they were able to help them, as Boaz did Ruth. Their pride did not allow them to accept charity.*

*-Coins or beans are unidentifiable lost objects, so finders can keep them without worrying about their owner*

*-Nachal Eshkol: Boaz was saying: She is a convert, and thus worthy of our compassion*

#### **Ruth 2:17-18**

17. So she gleaned in the field until the evening, and she beat out what she had gleaned; and it was about an ephah of barley.

18. And she took it up, and went into the city; and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned; and she brought out and gave to her what she had left over after being satisfied.

#### **Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 5:8)**

-SO SHE GLEANED IN THE FIELD UNTIL EVEN... AND IT WAS ABOUT AN EPHAH (2:17).

How much is an ephah? R. Johanan said: Three se'ahs, as we have learned [Men. 76b]: the ephah is three se'ahs. AND SHE TOOK IT UP AND WENT INTO THE CITY.

*-1 ephah = 10 omers. 1 Omer is a day's food for one person. So she gathered enough food for her and Naomi for 5 days. That's a lot for one person to carry, proving she was very strong*

#### **Ruth 2:19**

19. And her mother-in-law said to her, Where have you gleaned today? And where have you worked? Blessed is he who took notice of you. And she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz.

### **Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 5:9)**

-AND HER MOTHER-IN-LAW SAID TO HER: WHERE HAVE YOU GLEANED TO-DAY? (2:19).

It was taught in the name of R. Joshua: More than the householder does for the poor man does the poor man do for the householder, for Ruth said to Naomi: THE MAN'S NAME WITH WHOM I WORKED TODAY. She did not say, "who worked for me," but WITH WHOM I WORKED. I brought him many benefits in return for the one morsel of food which he gave me.

*-The reward for giving charity is greater than the benefit to the person receiving charity*

*-Talmud: The principal for charity is returned in the World to Come, and the dividends are enjoyed in this world (Peah 1:1, Eruvin 22a)*

*-Legend that Elijah appears as a poor man to a dying man to allow him to perform one last act of charity*

*-I. B. Singer story: One ruble!*

-R. Jose said [Lev. R. 34:9, in the name of R. Cohen]: ya'an uv-ya'an [because, even because - Lev. 26:43]; the word ya'an (because) has the same letters as 'ani (a poor man).

*-I.e. all the calamities in this chapter come as a result of neglect of the poor:*

*They must gain appeasement for their sin, because (ya'an) they rejected my ordinances, and because (uv-ya'an) their spirit disdained my decrees (Lev. 26:43)*

-R. Shiloh of Noveh [a town in Galilee, east of Gadara] said: Your wealth depends upon the poor man.

*-If you give charity, you will retain your wealth*

-R. Nahman said: It is written, "Because of that (biglal) the Lord your God will bless you in all your work": (Deut. 15:10) it [poverty] is a wheel (galgal) which comes round to all in the world, like the wheel of a pump [made of a revolving wheel with buckets attached which alternately fill and empty] which empties that which is full and fills that which is empty. Bar Kappara said: There is no man who does not come to this state [poverty], and if he does not his son does, and if not his son, his grandson. [See Ex. R. 31:3]

-It was taught: R. Eliezer b. Jacob said: The vengeance taken of the idolatrous nations will be on account of Israel, while the vengeance taken of Israel will be on account of their poor.

*-The vengeance taken of the idolatrous nations will be on account of Israel, as it is said, "And I will lay My vengeance upon Edom by the hand of My people Israel" (Ezek. 25:14);*

*-The vengeance taken of Israel will be on account of their poor, as it is said, "[You will look malevolently on your poor brother and refuse to give to him] then he will complain to the Lord against you, and it will be sin upon you." (Deut. 15:9).*

-R. Avun said: The poor man stands at your door, and the Holy One, blessed be He, stands at his right hand. If you give to him, He who stands at his right hand will bless you, but if not, He will exact punishment from you, as it is said, "Because He stands at the right hand of the needy" (Ps. 109:31).

-R. Abbahu said: We should be grateful even to the frauds among them, [charlatans who pose as poor people]. It has been stated: R. Johanan and Resh Lakish went down to bathe in the public baths of Tiberias, and a poor man accosted them. He said to them, "Give me something." They answered, "When we come out we will give it." When they came out they found him dead. They said: 'Since we did not assist him during his life, let us attend to him after his death.' When they arose from washing his body, they found a purse full of dinars next to him. [So he was a fraud.] They said: 'It is well.' Whereupon R. Abbahu said: "We should be grateful even to the frauds among them, for were it not for the frauds among them, were a man to see a beggar begging alms and refuse him, he would be punished with death immediately." [Lev. R. 34:9]

*-If all who asked for charity were legitimate paupers, then refusing charity to them would invite instant retribution. But because some are frauds, we are justified in waiting to check them out and do not suffer instant retribution for that. So we must be grateful to the frauds.*

### **Ruth 2:20**

20. And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he by the Lord, who has not abandoned his loving kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said to her, The man is a relative of ours, one of our close relatives.

### **Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 5:10)**

-AND NAOMI SAID TO HER DAUGHTER-IN-LAW: BLESSED BE HE OF THE LORD, WHO HAS NOT ABANDONED HIS LOVINGKINDNESS TO THE LIVING (2:20), for he has fed and sustained the living,

-AND TO THE DEAD, in that he occupied himself with their shrouds.

*-The Midrash suggests that Boaz paid for the shrouds of Mahlon and Chilion*

-AND NAOMI SAID TO HER: THE MAN IS A RELATIVE OF OURS, ONE OF OUR CLOSE RELATIVES (2:20).

R. Samuel B. Nahman said: Boaz was one of the notables of his generation, and yet the woman made him her relative, as it is said, THE MAN IS A RELATIVE OF OURS.

*-I.e., she did not say "we are related to him", but "he is related to us". She did this because she knew she had done him a favor by accepting his charity.*

### **Ruth 2:21-23**

21. And Ruth the Moabite said, He also said to me, You shall keep close to my young men, until they have ended all my harvest.

22. And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his maidens, that you should not be molested in any other field.

23. So she kept close to the maidens of Boaz to glean to the end of the barley harvest and of the wheat harvest; and lived with her mother-in-law.

### **Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 5:11)**

-AND RUTH THE MOABITNESS SAID: YEA, HE SAID TO ME: YOU SHALL KEEP CLOSE TO MY YOUNG MEN (2:21).

-R. Hanin b. Levi said: In truth she was a Moabite, [she still had impure thoughts] for Boaz said to her, "Abide here fast by my maidens" (Ruth 2:8), while she said, TO MY YOUNG MEN.

-SO SHE KEPT CLOSE TO THE MAIDENS OF BOAZ TO GLEAN TO THE END OF THE BARLEY HARVEST AND OF THE WHEAT HARVEST (2:23).

-R. Samuel b. Nahman said: From the beginning of the barley harvest until the end of the wheat harvest is three months.

-AND SHE DWELT WITH HER MOTHER-IN-LAW. AND NAOMI HER MOTHER-IN-LAW SAID TO HER: MY DAUGHTER, SHALL I NOT SEEK REST FOR YOU... AND NOW IS THERE NOT BOAZ OUR KINSMAN (2:23-3:2).

*-A divorced woman, a widow, or a female convert must wait three months before marrying to make sure they are not pregnant.*

*-See 2:8. So Boaz had to wait three months before he could marry Ruth (see R. Samuel b. Nahman's remark), so as to be sure she was not pregnant by her first husband. (Assuming they left Moab immediately after his death.)*