

# Crowning Everyday Heroes: The Book of Ruth

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R. Ze'ira said: This scroll [of Ruth] tells us nothing of purity or impurity, of prohibition or permission. For what purpose was it written? To teach how great is the reward of those who perform deeds of loving-kindness [*CHESED*].

Ruth Rabbah 2:14

## Chapter 1

- ▶ Naomi said, “Turn back my daughters, it is hopeless to follow me. Leave so that the Lord will deal kindly with you (grant you Chesed).” But Ruth clung to her.
- ▶ 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 live, I will live; your people shall be my people; and your G-d my G-d.”

Boaz said, “I have ordered the men not to molest you. And when you are thirsty, go to the jars and drink some of the water that they have drawn.”

Ruth asked, “Why are you so kind as to single me out, when I am a foreigner?”

Boaz replied, “I have been told of all you have done for your mother-in-law. May the L-rd reward you for your deeds.”

## Judges 21:25

בַּיָּמִים הֵהֱם אֵין מֶלֶךְ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ הַיָּשָׁר בְּעֵינָיו יַעֲשֶׂה:  
In those days, there was no king in Israel; everyone  
did as they pleased (what looked right in their eyes).

Ruth: From Alienation to Monarchy, Dr. Yael Zieger

(Ruth) aims to describe the anticipation of the creation of a monarchy that oversees a just society where all people receive their just due. A nation where its leadership draws strength and inspiration from G-d and looks out for the needs of the community, guiding the nation with morality.

רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן אָמַר, שְׁלֹשָׁה כְּתָרִים הֵינּוּ: כְּתֵר תּוֹרָה, וְכְתֵר  
כְּהֻנָּה, וְכְתֵר מְלָכוּת, וְכְתֵר שֵׁם טוֹב עוֹלָה עַל גְּבוּיָהּן.

Pirkei Avot 4:13

Rabbi Shimon taught: There are three crowns: the Crown of Torah, the Crown of Priesthood and the Crown of Royalty, but the Crown of a Good Name excels them all (supersedes them!). KETER SHEM TOV

## Rabbeinu Yona on Pirkei Avot

For all of the crowns, they need the crown of a good name. In Ecclesiastes, "A good name is better than good oil." He meant to say [here] that if he puts down precious oil in his house, it has a good smell (for him) and for the people of his house and for his close neighbors. But if they distance themselves from it a little, they do not smell it. But [with] one who is crowned by a good name - even if he stands in this corner, his reputation goes from one end of the world to the other.

## Maimonides (Rambam) on Pirkei Avot

These three good ranks were given to the Jewish people at the time of the Giving of the Torah: priesthood, monarchy and Torah. The crown of Torah remains for anyone who wants to be crowned by it. But the fourth crown, the Crown of a Good Name comes from Torah as well, combining its knowledge and practice- only through both does a truly good name come.

Talmud Shabbat 88a

**Rabbi Simai taught: When Israel accorded precedence to the declaration “We will do” over the declaration “We will hear,” 600,000 ministering angels came and tied two crowns to each and every member of the Jewish people, one corresponding to “Naaseh/We will do” and one corresponding to “V’Nishma/We will hear.”**

Rabbi Yoḥanan said: And Moses merited all of the crowns. Reish Lakish said: In the future, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will return them to us, as it is stated: “And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads” ([Isaiah 35:10](#)). The joy that they once had will once again be upon their heads.