

## Midrash Rabbah on Chapter 4 of the Book of Ruth

Tanach, Midrash in bold, commentary in italics.

*Why do we read Ruth on Shavuot?*

- King David, her descendant, was born and died on Shavuot [Y Chagigah 2:3]
- Shavuot is harvest time [Exodus 23:16], and the events of Book of Ruth occur at harvest time.
- The gematria of Ruth is 606, and the Israelites received 606 commandments at Sinai (in addition to the 7 Noahide Laws already given, for a total of 613).
- Ruth was a convert, and all Jews also entered the covenant at Sinai, when the Torah was given.
- The central theme is loving-kindness, and Torah is about loving-kindness.
- Ruth was allowed to marry Boaz, based on the Oral Law's interpretation of the verse, "A Moabite may not marry into the Congregation of the Lord" (Deut. 23:4). This points to the unity of the Written and Oral Torahs.

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### Ruth 4:1

**1. Then Boaz went up to the gate, and sat down there; and, behold, the next of kin [redeemer] of whom Boaz had spoken passed by. He said, "Hey there, Ploni Almoni [such and such a one]! Come over, sit down here. And he came over and sat down.**

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### Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 7:7)

**"Then Boaz went up to the gate [to fulfill his promise to Ruth], and sat down there; and, behold, the next of kin of whom Boaz had spoken passed by. " Was he then standing waiting behind the gate? [What a coincidence!]**

*-Boaz was head of the Sanhedrin, and in that capacity was sitting there. [Iggeret Shmuel]*

**R. Shmuel b. Nachman answered: Had he been at the uttermost ends of the earth, the Holy One, blessed be He, would have caused him to fly and would have brought him there in order that that righteous man would not be distressed while sitting there.**

**R. Berechiah said: Thus expounded two great men, R. Eliezer and R. Joshua.**

**R. Eliezer said: Boaz played his part, and Ruth played hers, and Naomi played hers, so the Holy One, blessed be He, said, "I, too, must play Mine."**

*-God will meet us halfway if we start performing a mitzvah. Partnership between people and God.*

*Vilna Gaon: God makes the plants grow only if people plow and sow the field first.*

*Also, people must go as far as they can for God to help at all. [Also Gen. R. 59:11; Lev. R. 16:4]*

*-Each one must do his part: Boaz resisted temptation to sleep with Ruth, Ruth obeyed Naomi and went to Boaz against her instinct, and Naomi urged Ruth to get married even though she would be living alone; and also overcame some mother-in-laws' ill feelings towards their daughters-in-law. [Iggeret Shmuel]*

**"He said, "Hey there, Ploni Almoni [such and such a one]! Come over, sit down here."**

**R. Joshua said: His name was Ploni Almoni.**

*-Ploni=hidden, Almoni=nameless → "The anonymous one". Why anonymous?*

*-To spare him embarrassment, since in the end he did not fulfill his role [R. Alkabetz]*

*-He did not deserve to be called by his real name, Tov, meaning "good" [Ima Shel Malchut]*

**R. Shmuel bar Nachman said: He was ignorant (*ilem*) of the words of the Torah. [Ploni] said: "The former ones [Mahlon and Chilion] died only because they took them [Orpah and Ruth, Moabite women] to wife. Shall I then go and take her? Heaven forbid that I should take her. I will not contaminate my seed. I will not introduce a disqualification into my children." But he was unaware of the new law already enacted, "Ammonite but not Ammonitess, Moabite but not Moabitess."**

*-Torah says that an Ammonite [masculine] or a Moabite [masculine] shall not enter the congregation of the Lord. [Deut. 23:4-8], later interpreted to mean males only, not females, so Ruth, a female, was admissible.[Yevamot 76b]*

*-Note: "New law"[chadsha halacha] – not "reinterpretation". Rambam: It was an oral tradition from Sinai that had been forgotten, then reinstated.*

*-“Come over, sit down here. And he came over and sat down.” Ploni was Boaz’s uncle, but he obeyed him nevertheless because Boaz was head of Sanhedrin.*

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## **Ruth 4:2**

**2. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, “Sit down here.” And they sat down.**

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## **Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 7:8)**

**“And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, “Sit down here.” And they sat down.”**

**R. Alexandri said: From this we learn that an inferior has no right to take a seat until his superior grants him permission.**

**R. Pinchas said: From this we learn that this house [the House of Judah] appoints elders at banquets.**

*-This was Ruth’s wedding banquet. Whether she would marry Ploni or Boaz remained to be seen, though. [Rada]*

**R. Eleazar ben R. Yosei said: From this we learn that the blessing of the bridegroom requires a quorum of ten.**

*-The Sheva Berachot, the 7 blessings recited at a wedding, require a minyan. [Ketubot 7b]*

**R. Yudan ben Pazzi said: And [this requirement applies] not only if a [never-married] bachelor marries a virgin, but even if a widower marries a widow [as is the case here].**

*-Talmud: Minyan also required to confirm halacha allowing Ruth to convert to Judaism. [Ketubot 7b]*

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## **Ruth 4:3-4**

**3. And he said to the redeemer: “Naomi, who has returned from the country of Moab, is selling a parcel of land that belonged to our brother Elimelech.**

**4. And I thought I should tell you about it, and say, “Buy it in the presence of those sitting here, and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you are willing to redeem, redeem! But if he is not willing to redeem, then tell me, that I may know; for there is no one to redeem it but you; and I come after you.””**

**And he said, “I am willing to redeem it.”**

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## Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 7:9)

**"If you are willing to redeem, redeem!" -- this he said to the redeemer.**

**"But if he is not willing to redeem," -- this he said to the Bet Din [that's why the switch from 'you' to 'he'] "then tell me, that I may know."**

*-The switch from "you" to "he" is because when speaking of something good, like redeeming a relative's property, the performer is addressed directly, but when speaking of something bad, like refusal to redeem, the performer is addressed indirectly. [Iggeret Shmuel]*

*-Alternative: That I may know her, i.e. marry her. (The phrase "that I may know" is superfluous without this explanation.)*

**-- that you should not say "I have a wife and children [so I have no need to marry Ruth], but I will take her into my house, on condition that I need not have sexual relations with her."**

*-Boaz is hinting that if the redeemer takes the field he must also marry Ruth.  
Why must he? So Mahlon, Ruth's dead husband, is remembered. [Rashi]*

**When the redeemer heard this, he said, "Certainly she, Ruth, is gone away."**

*-Ploni did not take the hint. He accepted to redeem the field only because he thought Ruth was not part of the deal -- "gone away".*

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## Ruth 4:5

**5. Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must buy it also from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the deceased, to restore the name of the dead to his inheritance."**

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## Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 7:10)

**"Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must buy it also from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the deceased."**

*-Rashi: Implies that Naomi won't sell unless you marry Ruth.*

*-By reminding Ploni that Ruth is a "Moabitess" (without mentioning the new law) and that she married one who left the Land of Israel, Boaz hoped to discourage Ploni so he could have Ruth to himself. This is allowed, because if someone has not been specifically appointed to fulfill a mitzvah, that mitzvah is open to all, and one can strive to acquire it even aggressively. [Rav Aron Zlotowitz, from Shaarei Teshuva]*

**The ketiv [written word] is *kaniti* [I have bought]. This corroborates the view expressed by R. Shmuel bar Nachman [above], that he was ignorant of the words of the Torah, saying: "The former ones died only because they took them to wife, shall I then go and take her? Heaven forbid that I should take her; I will not contaminate my seed, I will not introduce a disqualification into my children." But he was unaware of the new law which had already been enacted, "Ammonite but not Ammonitess, Moabite, but not Moabitess.""**

*-The written word is *kaniti* (I have bought) but is read *kanita* (you must buy). Boaz said "I have bought" rather than "you must buy" because he was certain that Ploni would refuse to marry Ruth.*

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## Ruth 4:6-7

6. And the redeemer said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I harm my own inheritance; take my right of redemption for yourself; for I cannot redeem it.

7. Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning exchanging; to validate any matter a man took off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbor; and this was the manner of attesting in Israel.

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#### Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 7:11)

*-Ploni said "I cannot redeem it" twice: Once because he thought it would cost him his life, and once because he thought it would jeopardize his children's future.*

*-Ploni essentially said: I can't marry her because the new law may be challenged, and only someone of your (Boaz's) stature can defend it. Also, I have a wife and you have none. Finally, any children we may have will be Mahlon's, not mine. [Alshich [16<sup>th</sup> cent. Tzfat], Iggeret Shmuel, the Bach]*

**"Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning exchanging; to validate any matter..."** R. Chanina applied this verse to Israel. Just as at first Israel uttered praise for their redemption, as it is said, "This is my God, and I will glorify Him" (Ex. 15:2), so [did they later praise] for the exchange [of God for the Golden Calf], as it is said, "Thus they exchanged their glory for the likeness of an ox that eats grass" (Ps. 106:20). There is nothing more repulsive and abominable and uncouth than an ox when it is munching grass.

Formerly they used to acquire the title to a property by means of a shoe or sandal, as it is said, "a man took off his shoe", but later they acquired the title by means of "chopping" [ketzatza].

What is "chopping"? R. Yosei bar Abin answered:

**-If a man sold his field to a non-Jew, his relatives used to bring barrels full of parched corn and nuts and break them open in the presence of children, and the children would gather them and proclaim, 'So-and-so is cut off [niktzatz] from his inheritance.'**

**-If [the field] was returned to him [by buying it from the purchaser], they used to say, "So-and-so has returned to his inheritance."**

*-Children are highly impressionable, and would remember the experience all their lives.*

*-A non-Jew or a Jew from a different family [Y Kiddushin 1:5]*

*-A shoe was used because it was convenient and available without loss of modesty. [Ibn Ezra]*

**And likewise [Ketubot 28b], if a man married a woman who was not fitting for him [i.e., halachically prohibited], his relatives used to bring barrels full of parched corn and nuts and break them open in the presence of children, and the children would gather them and proclaim "So-and-so is lost to his family." When he divorced her, they used to say, "So-and-so has returned to his family."**

**At a still later period they again acquired a title with a shoe or a sandal, "a man took off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbor", and at a still later period they acquired title by payment of money, by a deed or by chazakah [an act of improvement]. And all three are referred to in one scriptural verse: "Men shall buy fields with money -- that is purchase them with money; and write in a document and sign -- refers to the witnesses to the deed; and call witnesses" (Jer. 32:44) -- that is, witnesses to the chazakah.**

*-The property in question is ownerless at first.*

**R. Yosei said in the name of R. Jochanan: Money cannot effect acquisition when it is less than the value of a perutah [the smallest coin – Bava Metzia 44a] nor can land be acquired with less than the value of a perutah. The statement of R. Hanina contradicts this, since R. Hanina said [Bek. 50a, Gen. R. 58:7]: "The shekel mentioned in the Torah is a sela"; in the Prophets it is a litra, in the Writings it is a centenarium [100 shekels].**

R. Yudan ben Pazzi said: With the exception of the shekels of Ephron, [Gen. 22:16] which were centenaria.

But the two statements cannot be compared, since in this connection it says keseph (money, or silver), while R. Hanina speaks of shekels.

-But R. Jochanan's statement does disagree with R. Eliezer, since R. Eliezer used to say that the act of walking through a field establishes the title, as a Baraita teaches [Bava Batra 100a]: If he walked in the field, whether along its length or along its breadth, he has acquired up until the area that he has walked--these are the words of R. Eliezer.

-The Sages, however, say: He cannot acquire possession until he has performed a chazakah [an act of improvement]. But all are in agreement that if a man sells a pathway to his fellow, and he walks in it, he has taken possession.

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Ruth 4:8

8. Therefore the redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself". And he took off his shoe.

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Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 7:12)

"Therefore the redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself". And he took off his shoe."

Whose shoe? Rav and Levi disagreed. One said the shoe of Boaz, while the other said the shoe of the redeemer. It is more probable that he who says the shoe of Boaz is correct, for it is customary for the purchaser to give the pledge [Bava Metzia 47a].

There is a similar uncertainty in the verse "And Achiyah grabbed hold of the new garment." (1Kings 11:30). Whose garment? Rav and Levi disagreed. One said the garment of Jeroboam, while the other said the garment of Achiyah. R. Samuel b. R. Nahman said: It is probable that he who says the garment of Achiyah is correct, since it is natural for the righteous to rend their garments when there is schism in the kingdom of the House of David.

*-King Solomon was tolerant of idolatry. So the prophet Achiyah the Shilonite incited Jeroboam (Yarav'am) to rebel against the king and found the Kingdom of Israel, with ten tribes, while Rehoboam (Rechav'am) continued to rule the Kingdom of Judah in the south, with the remaining two tribes.*

*Note: Rehoboam was the son of King Solomon and an Ammonite woman, Naamah.*

*-A garment sometimes symbolizes a kingdom. [Gen. R, 75:4] Achiyah rent the garment into 12 pieces and gave 10 to Jeroboam (symbolizing tribes of Israel).*

Similarly the verse, "And as Samuel turned away to leave, he grabbed the hem of his tunic, and it tore." (1Samuel 15:27). Whose tunic? Rav and Levi disagree. One says Saul's tunic, while the other says Samuel's tunic. But reason suggests that he who says Samuel's tunic is correct, since it is the custom of the righteous to rend their garments when their plans do not turn out well.

*-The prophet Samuel anointed King Saul, but Saul failed, so Samuel took the kingdom away from him.*

Similarly with the verse, "Neither did Jeroboam recover strength again in the days of Aviyah [son of Rehoboam]; and the Lord smote him and he died" (2Chron. 13:20).

[Was Jeroboam or Aviyah smitten?] R. Shmuel [bar Nachman—see Lev. R. 33:5] said: You would think from this verse that it was Jeroboam who was smitten. In fact, it was Aviyah who was smitten. And why was Aviyah smitten? Because he rendered the [dead] children of Israel unrecognizable, as it is said, "The appearance of their countenance testifies against them." (Isa. 3:9).

**R. Acha said: Because he stationed guards over them for three days until their appearance changed [and they became unrecognizable through decomposition], as we have learned [Yevamot 120a]: Testimony may be given only on the face with the nose.**

*-The testimony identifying a corpse, required to allow the wife to remarry and not become an agunah, must take place within three days of death. Children of a second marriage would be mamzerim if the woman is not properly divorced or the husband not certifiably dead.*

*-In Aviyah's 3-year reign in Judah, he was unable to regain control of the Northern Kingdom in spite of savage battles. He mutilated the corpses of his enemies to further damage the Northern Kingdom.*

**R. Jochanan and Resh Lakish [gave other reasons].**

**R. Jochanan said: Because he publicly gave vent to his suspicions of idolatry about them, as it is said, "You are a great multitude, and there are with you the golden calves that Jeroboam has made for you as gods" (2Chron. 13:8).**

*-Etz Yosef: Not all of Jeroboam's 800,000 soldiers worshipped idols, so Aviyah should not have issued such a sweeping indictment.*

**Resh Lakish said: Because he insulted the honor of [the prophet] Achiyah the Shilonite, as it is said, "And worthless, lawless people gathered around him [Jeroboam]" (2Chron. 13:7), calling Achiyah the Shilonite a "lawless" person.**

*-Achiyah was following God's command of splitting the kingdom, so he was not "lawless".*

**The Sages said: [Aviyah was punished] because an idol came into his hand and he did not destroy it. That is the meaning of the verse, "And Avijah pursued Jeroboam, and took cities from him, Beth-el and its villages" (2Chron. 13:19), and it is written, "And he [Jeroboam, made two golden calves and] placed the one in Beth-el." (1Kings 12:29).**

**And we may deduce from this an a fortiori argument; if God smites a king who insults a king, how much more so an ordinary person who insults an ordinary person! [Gen. R. 65:20]**

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**Ruth 4:9-11**

**9. And Boaz said to the elders, and to all the people, "You are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Machlon's, from the hand of Naomi.**

**10. And also Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Machlon, have I bought to be my wife, to restore the name of the dead to his inheritance, so that the name of the dead shall not be cut off from among his brothers, and from the gate of his place; you are witnesses this day."**

**11. And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that has come into your house like Rachel and like Leah, who both built the house of Israel. May you prosper in Ephrat, and be famous in Bethlehem."**

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**Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 7:13)**

*-"Ruth the Moabite" – to stress to the crowd that, despite her origin, he can marry her*

*-"the wife of Machlon" – to stress that her husband's spirit is still within her [Zohar]*

*-"so that the name of the dead shall not be cut off" – to stress that his purpose is not selfish*

*-"You are witnesses" is repeated twice – to stress that everything is out in the open.*

**"And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman that has come into your house like Rachel and like Leah"".**

**R. Berechiah [Gen. R. 71:2] said: Most of those sitting [with Boaz] were descendants of Leah, so he mentions Rachel first.**

*-One must honor one's fellow more than oneself [Yefeh Toar, 16<sup>th</sup> cent. Turkey comm. on Midrash]*

**R. Abba bar Kahana said: Rachel was Jacob's primary wife, as it is said, "But Rachel was barren" (Gen. 29:31). [Do not read "'akarah" (barren) but "'ikarah" (the primary one).]**

**R. Shim'on bar Yohai taught: Since [people] made derogatory remarks about Rachel [because she was barren], all of Jacob's descendants are ascribed to her [to compensate her for the embarrassment she suffered], as it is written, "[A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping:] Rachel weeps for her children, [refuses to be comforted]" (Jer. 31:14).**

*-Some said that Rachel's righteousness was just a show, because if she was truly righteous God would not have made her barren. [Etz Yosef]*

**And not only to her, but even to her son [Joseph], as it is said, "It may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph" (Amos 5:15).**

**And not only to her son, but even to her grandson, as it is said, "Is Ephraim a darling son to Me? Is he a child that is dandled?" (Jer. 31:20).**

*-Rachel, her son Joseph, or her grandson Ephraim represent all Israel.*

*-“May you prosper in Ephrat, and be famous in Bethlehem”. That is, may you no longer be called “Ruth the Moabitess” but “Ruth of Bethlehem” [Alshich]*

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#### **Ruth 4:12-13**

**12. And may your house be like the house of Peretz, whom Tamar bore to Judah, of the seed which the Lord shall give you of this young woman.**

**13. And so Boaz took Ruth, and she became for him a wife; and when he went in to her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son.**

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#### **Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 7:14)**

**“And may your house be like the house of Peretz, ... of the seed which the Lord shall give you of this young woman.” They said: "May all the children which the Holy One, blessed be He, will give you be from this righteous woman."**

**[Why limit their blessing so? Because a verse says,] similarly, “And Isaac entreated the Lord opposite his wife, because she was barren” (Gen. 25:21). What is the meaning of "opposite his wife"? It teaches that Isaac prostrated himself in one corner, and Rebecca in the other, and [Isaac] said, "Lord of the Universe, may all the children which You art destined to grant me be of this righteous woman."**

*-Each one was facing the other while praying for children, hence “opposite”. Seeing the person one is praying for while praying enhances the efficacy of the prayer. That is why kohanim face the congregation when blessing them. [Etz Yosef]*

**Similarly, “And Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife [Hannah]” (1Sam. 2:20). He [Eli] blessed them, saying, “May all the children which the Holy One, blessed be He, will give you be of this righteous woman.””**

**“And so Boaz took Ruth, and she became for him a wife; and when he went in to her, the Lord gave her conception.” R. Shim’on ben Lakish said: [Ruth] did not have a womb, but the Holy One, blessed be He, carved a womb for her [out of her body]. [Gen. R. 63:5]**

*-An explanation of the unusual phrase “The Lord gave her conception.” God had done the same for Sarah [Gen. R. 47:2] and for Rebecca [Gen. R. 63:5].*

*-“Conception” = “Herayon” = 271 = Gestation period in days [Niddah 31b]*

*-“She bore a son”, not “to him” because Boaz did not live to see his son. [Rav Alkabetz] Boaz died right after intercourse and did not survive his wedding night. [Yalkut Shim’oni, an aggadic compilation of Tanach books]*

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#### **Ruth 4:14**

**14. And the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a redeemer! May his name be famous in Israel!**

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#### **Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 7:15)**

*-“In Israel” – confirms Ruth’s conversion and acceptance.*

*-“To Naomi”? Not to Ruth? Ruth is no longer mentioned after this point.*

**“And the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a redeemer!” [Why the extra word ‘hayom’ – this day?] Just as this day [i.e., the sun] rules in the skies, so shall your seed produce one who shall rule and govern in Israel forever. [The Messiah].**

**R. Chunya said: It was as a result of the blessings of those women that the line of David was not cut off entirely in the days of Athaliah. [2Kings 11]**

*-The wicked Athaliah, daughter of the wicked King Ahab (Ach’av) and Jezebel (Izavel), introduced the worship of Baal in Jerusalem, seized the throne of Judah for six years by assassinating the entire House of David, including her own grandchildren. But one infant grandson, Yehoash, was rescued and eventually reigned for 41 years, had Athaliah killed, and destroyed her Temple to Baal.*

*-Talmud: Never should the blessing of even an ordinary person be unimportant in your eyes [Megillah 15a] Le’olam al tehi birkat hed-yot kalla bi-enecha.*

**R. Tanhuma said in the name of R. Shmuel: Elsewhere it is written, “[Come, let us ply our father with wine and lie with him,] that we may give life to offspring through our father” (Gen. 19:32). It is not written “son”, but “offspring”. That [refers to] offspring who comes from another place. And who is this? The King Messiah [who comes from Moab through Ruth and from incest through Lot’s daughter].**

*-Midrash interprets zera’ (offspring) as related to zar (foreign). [Etz Yosef]*

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#### **Ruth 4:15-17**

**15. And he will become your life-restorer, to sustain your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him.**

**16. And Naomi took the child, and laid him in her bosom, and became his nurse.**

**17. And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, A son has been born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed; he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.**

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#### **Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 7:16)**



**“And he will become your life-restorer, to sustain your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him.” R. Yehudah and R. Nehemiah commented on this.**

**R. Yehudah said: [It means] better than the seven heads of the patriarchal household [sons of Jesse], mentioned elsewhere [Firstborn Eliab, Abinadab second, Shimea third, Nethanel fourth, Raddai fifth,] Ozem sixth, David seventh (1Chron. 2:13-15).**

**R. Nehemiah said: [It means] better than the seven who are mentioned here [in Ruth 4:18-21], namely Peretz, Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon, and Boaz.**

*-The 7 sons of Jesse or the 7 generations from Peretz to Boaz.*

*-Ruth is called “better” than David and than Boaz!*

*-Why “A son has been born to Naomi” rather than to Ruth?*

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#### **Ruth 4:18-22**

**18. And these are the generations of Peretz; Peretz fathered Hezron,**

**19. And Hezron fathered Ram, and Ram fathered Amminadab,**

**20. And Amminadab fathered Nachshon, and Nachshon fathered Salmah,**

**21. And Salmon fathered Boaz, and Boaz fathered Obed,**

**22. And Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.**

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#### **Midrash (Ruth Rabbah 8:1)**

**R. Abba bar Kahana opened [his exposition with the verse], “Agitate, but do not sin.” (Ps. 4:5).**

**David said to the Holy One, blessed be He, “How long will they agitate against me and say, ‘Is he not of tainted descent? Is he not a descendant of Ruth the Moabitess?’” “Reflect in your hearts on your beds (ib.). Are you, too, not descended from a prohibited marriage between two sisters [Rachel and Leah]? See what your own roots are and be silent. (ib.). And even Tamar, who married your ancestor Judah, is it not a tainted descent? She was but a descendant of Shem, the son of Noah. What about you? Do you have a distinguished pedigree?”**

*-David is telling his detractors that their own lineage is also “tainted”.*

*-Jacob married two sisters, which was allowed at the time, but provides a questionable basis for the future since the Torah prohibited it later. But the Patriarchs were said to observe the Torah even before it was given. Some argue that the sisters were converts, and converts halachically sever all family ties, so they were not legally “sisters”. [Radbaz, 16th-cent. Spain, Chief Rabbi of Egypt; Responsa, Vol. 2, #696]*

*-Similarly, Tamar was Judah’s daughter-in-law, and the Torah later prohibited such unions. [Lev. 18:15]*

**R. Yaakov bar Aviyah said: [The meaning of this verse is]: Agitate your [Evil] Inclination, but do not sin. The Rabbis explain: [It means:] Anger your (Evil) Inclination and do not sin.**

*-The first says resist the Evil Inclination when it tempts you to sin; the second says seek a confrontation with it by putting yourself in places of temptation, then overcome it.[Etz Yosef]*

*-The first says resist the Evil Inclination by observing negative commandments. The second says anger it by fulfilling positive commandments.[Radal]*

**“Ve-elleh toldot Peretz.” “And these are the generations of Peretz.” R. Abba said: Wherever the word elleh (these are) occurs, it invalidates the preceding ones; [and wherever it states] ve-elleh (AND these are), it adds to the preceding ones. [Ex. R. 30:3]**

*-Examples:*

*"These are the generations of Jacob" (Gen 27:2), to disqualify Esau.  
 "These are the generations of the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 2:4), to indicate that there was nothing before.  
 -Why not start with Judah, who fathered Peretz with Tamar? Because that union was questionable.*

**"And Hezron fathered Ram." But wasn't Yerachme'el born before [Ram], as it is written, "The sons of Hezron who were born to him: Yerachme'el, and Ram, and Chelubai"? (1Chron. 2:9) [Yerachme'el is omitted] because he married a Canaanite woman in order to adorn himself with her, as it is written, "And Yerachme'el had a foreign wife, whose name was Atarah (Adornment)" (1Chron. 2:26).**

*-Atarah was beautiful and of noble lineage. [Yefeh Anaf]*

**"And Ram fathered Amminadab, and Amminadab fathered Nahshon, and Nahshon fathered Salmah, and Salmon fathered Boaz." [Why is he called Salmon?] Because up to him they formed ladders (sulamoth) of princes [or judges], but from him onwards they formed ladders of kings.**

*-From Salmon on, greater and greater men were born in that line ("ladder").  
 -Nachshon was first to plunge in the sea at the time of the Exodus.  
 -Amminadab was Aaron's father-in-law (father of Elisheva)  
 -David is sometimes referred to as "of the Seed of Jesse (Yishai)".*

**R. Yitzhak opened [by expounding on] the verse "Then I said: Behold, I have come in a scroll book written about me." (Ps. 40:8).**

**I [David] needed to recite a song for [having been allowed to] come [into the congregation of Israel]. For the word "Then" [az] refers to a song [of praise], as it is said, "Then (az) sang Moses" (Ex. 15:1). [The reason for this song of praise is that] I was included in the verse "An Ammonite and a Moabite shall not come into the assembly of the Lord" (Deut. 23:4), but I have [been allowed to] come "in a scroll book written about me" (Ps. 40:8).**

**-"In a scroll" refers to the verse, "[nations] about whom You had commanded that they should not enter Your congregation" (Lam. 1:10).**

**-"In a book" refers to "An Ammonite and a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord" (Deut. 23:4).**

**And not only have I been allowed to enter, but the approval has even been written about me in both a scroll and a book.**

**-"In a scroll" refers to [the Book of Ruth] "Peretz, Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, [Salmon], Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David".**

**-"In a book" refers to "And the Lord said: Arise, anoint him; for this is he!" (1Sam. 16:12).**

*-David argues: I am legitimate.*

**R. Huna said: It is written "[She bore and son and named him Seth, because] God has provided me (shat) another offspring [in place of Abel]," (Gen. 4:25), that is, [a more distant] offspring, from another place. And who is that? The King Messiah. [Gen. R. 23:5; 51:8]**

**R. Berechiah and R. Simone said: We may illustrate with a parable of a king who was travelling from one place to another, when a precious pearl fell from [the crown on] his head. So the king and all his retinue stopped there. All the passers-by asked, "What are the king and his retinue doing here?" They discerned the reason and said, "A pearl has fallen from his head." What did [the king] do? He gathered all the soil into heaps and brought brooms. He had one heap swept, but did not find it; a second heap, and he did not find it; but in the third, he found it, [Gen. R. 39:10, 29:3] and they announced, "The king has found his pearl!"**

**-Similarly, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Abraham, "Lech lecha – go for yourself" (Gen. 12:1). It is for you that I have been waiting [Gen. R. 12:9]. What need did I have to record the genealogy of Shem, Arpachshad, Shelah, Eber, Peleg, [Reu, Serug,] Nahor, and Terah?**

(1Chron. 1:24-26), except for your sake, “Abram, who is Abraham”? (1Chron. 1:27) “You found his heart faithful before You” (Neh. 9:8).

-Similarly, the Holy One, blessed be He, said to David, "What need did I have to record the genealogy of Peretz, Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, [and] Jesse? Is it not for your sake?" [For regarding David, Scripture states] “I have found David, My servant; [with My holy oil have I anointed him]” (Ps. 89:21)

*-Ruth lived to see her grandson's grandson Solomon become king. [Bava Batra 91b]*