

Kindness During A Time of Crisis: The Story of Ruth

Chapter Three: The Heroism of Knowledge

מגילת רות פרק ב פסוקים יז-כג

וַתִּלְקֹט בַּשָּׂדֶה עַד-הָעֶרֶב וַתַּחבֹּט אֶת אֲשֶׁר-לָקְטָה וַיְהִי כְּאִיפָה שְׁעָרִים: וַתָּשָׂא וַתְּבֹא הָעִיר וַתֵּרָא חֲמוּתָהּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר-לָקְטָה וַתּוֹצֵא וַתִּתֵּן-לָהּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר-הוֹתֵרָה מִשְׁבָּעָה: וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ חֲמוּתָהּ אִיפָה לָקְטֵת הַיּוֹם וְאַנְהָ עָשִׂיתָ יְהִי מִכִּיָּךְ בָּרוּךְ וַתִּגַּד לְחֲמוּתָהּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר-עָשְׂתָה עִמּוֹ וַתֹּאמֶר שֵׁם הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי עִמּוֹ הַיּוֹם בַּעַז: וַתֹּאמֶר נַעֲמִי לְכָלֶּתָהּ בָּרוּךְ הוּא לִיקְנוֹק אֲשֶׁר לֹא-עָזַב חֲסִדּוֹ אֶת-הַחַיִּים וְאֶת-הַמֵּתִים וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ נַעֲמִי קְרֹב לָנוּ הָאִישׁ מִגְּאֻלָּנוּ הוּא: וַתֹּאמֶר רות המואביה גַם כִּי-אָמַר אֵלַי עַם-הַנִּעָרִים אֲשֶׁר-לִי תִדְבָּקִין עַד אִם-כָּלּוּ אֶת כָּל-הַקִּצִּיר אֲשֶׁר-לִי: וַתֹּאמֶר נַעֲמִי אֶל-רות כָּלֶּתָה טוֹב בְּתִי כִי תִצְאִי עִם-נִעְרוֹתָיו וְלֹא יִפְגְּעוּ-בְּךָ בַּשָּׂדֶה אַחֵר: וַתִּדְבַּק בְּנִעְרוֹת בַּעַז לְלַקֵּט עַד-כָּלֹת קִצִּיר-הַשְּׁעָרִים וּקְצִיר הַחֲטִים וַתָּשֻׁב אֶת-חֲמוּתָהּ:

She gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned—it was about an 'ephah of barley—and carried it back with her to the town. When her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned, and when she also took out and gave her what she had left over after eating her fill. Her mother-in-law asked her, "Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be he who took such generous notice of you!" So she told her mother-in-law whom she had worked with, saying, "The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz." And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed is he to God, who has not withheld his kindness from the living or the dead." And Naomi said to her, "The man is close to us, he is of our redeemers." And Ruth the Moavite said, "Also, he said to me, 'With the boys that are mine you should cleave, until all of the harvest which is mine shall be finished.' And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, "It is good my daughter, that you should go out with his young women, and they will not harm you in another field."

כֹּה כִי-יָמוּךְ אַחִיר, וּמָכַר מֵאַחֲזָתוֹ--וּבָא גֹאֲלוֹ, הַקָּרֵב אֵלָיו, וּגְאָל, אֶת מִמְכַּר אַחִיו

If one of your fellow Israelites becomes poor and sells some of their property, their nearest relative is to come and redeem what they have sold.

For you are a near kinsman. To redeem my husband's inheritance, as it is stated, "and a close relative comes and redeems, etc."¹⁰ *Vayikra* 25:25. And my mother-in-law and I must sell our inheritance, and now it is incumbent upon you to buy it. Acquire [i.e., marry] me also, along with it,¹¹ *The Torah requires only that he redeem the relative's property, but it does not require that he redeem his relative's wife. She therefore asked him to marry her.* so that the name of the deceased be remembered upon his estate, so that when I come to the field they will say, "this is Machlon's wife."

Naomi's Plan

רות פרק ג פסוקים א-ד

וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ נְעָמִי חֲמוּתָהּ בְּתִי הֲלֹא אֶבְקֶשׁ לָךְ מְנוּחַ אֲשֶׁר יִיטֵב לָךְ: וְעַתָּה הֲלֹא בַעַז מִדַּעְתָּנוּ אֲשֶׁר הָיִית אֶת־נַעֲרוֹתָיו הִנֵּה־הוּא זֶרֶה אֶת־גֶּרְן הַשְּׁעָרִים הַלֵּילָה: וּרְחֹצֵת וְסֹכֶת וּשְׁמֵת שְׁמִלַתְךָ [שְׁמִלְתִּיךָ] עָלֶיךָ וִירַדְתִּי [וִירַדְתִּי] הַגֶּרְן אֶל־תְּדַעִי לְאִישׁ עַד כָּלְתּוֹ לֶאֱכֹל וּלְשִׁתּוֹת: וַיְהִי בַשָּׁכְבוֹ וַיֵּדַעַת אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב־שָׁם וּבָאת וּגְלִית מִרְגְּלֹתַי וּשְׁכַבְתִּי [וּשְׁכַבְתִּי] וְהוּא יִגִּיד לָךְ אֵת אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשִׂין:

And Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, shall I not seek for you a resting place that shall benefit you? And now, is not Boaz, whose girls you were with, our close acquaintance? Behold, he is winnowing barley at the threshing floor tonight. You should wash, and anoint yourself, and place a dress upon yourself, and go down to the threshing floor. Do not make yourself known to the man until he finishes eating and drinking. And it shall be, when he lies down, you should make known to yourself the place where he is lying there, and you should come and expose his feet and lie down. And he will tell you what you shall do."

Why Is Naomi Doing This?

פרק א	פרק ג
יִתֵּן יְקוֹק לָכֶם וּמִצָּאן מְנוּחָה אִשָּׁה בֵּית אִישָׁה וְתִשָּׂאנָה קוֹלָן וְתִבְכֶּינָה (ט)	וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ נְעָמִי חֲמוּתָהּ בְּתִי הֲלֹא אֶבְקֶשׁ לָךְ מְנוּחַ אֲשֶׁר יִיטֵב לָךְ (א)

What's Naomi's Intent

הושע ט:א

אֶל־תִּשְׂמַח יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־גִּיל כַּעֲמִים כִּי זָנִית מַעַל אֱלֹקֶיךָ אֶהְבֵּת אֶתְנָן עַל כָּל־גְּרִנוֹת דָּגָן: Rejoice not, O Israel, As other peoples exult; For you have strayed Away from your God: You have loved a harlot's fee By every threshing floor of new grain.

פרק ג פסוק יח

וַתֹּאמֶר שְׁבִי בְּתִי עַד אֲשֶׁר תִּדְעִין אֵיךְ יִפֹּל דְּבַר כִּי לֹא יִשְׁקֹט הָאִישׁ כִּי־אִם־כָּלָה הַדָּבָר הַיּוֹם: And Naomi said, "Stay here, daughter, till you learn how the matter turns out. For the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today."

Ruth's Response

רות פרק ג פסוקים ה-ו

וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ כָּל אֲשֶׁר־תֹּאמְרִי [אֵלַי] אֶעֱשֶׂה: וַתֵּרֶד הַגֶּרְן וַתַּעַשׂ כְּכָל אֲשֶׁר־צִוְתָהּ חֲמוּתָהּ: And she said to her, "Everything that you tell me, I will do." And she went down to the threshing floor. And she did all that her mother-in-law commanded her.

רש"י ג:ו

וַתֵּרֶד הַגֶּרְן וַתַּעַשׂ. היא אמרה לה "ורחצת וסכת ושמת שמלותיך עליך", ואחר כך "וירדת הגרן. והיא לא עשתה כן. אלא אמרה, "אם ארד כשאני מקשטת, הפוגע בי והרואה אותי יאמר שאני זונה". לפיכך, ירדה בתחלה הגרן ואחר כך קשטה את עצמה כאשר צוה חמותה: So she went down to the threshing floor and she did. She [Naomi] said to her, "Bathe and scent yourself, dress yourself in the finest garb," and afterwards, "and go

down to the threshing floor.” But she [Rus] did not do so, but [instead] she said, “If I go down when I am dressed up, whoever meets me or sees me will think that I am a harlot.” She therefore first went down to the threshing floor and afterwards adorned herself, as her mother-in-law had instructed.

בראשית פרק יט פסוקים ל-לז

וַיַּעַל לוֹט מִצּוֹעַר וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּהָר וּשְׁתֵּי בָנָיו עִמּוֹ כִּי יָרָא לְשָׁכֶת בְּצוֹעַר וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּמַעְרָה הוּא וּשְׁתֵּי בָנָיו: וַתֹּאמֶר הַבְּכִירָה אֶל־הַצְעִירָה אָבִינוּ זָקֵן וְאִישׁ אֵין בְּאֶרֶץ לְבֹא עָלֵינוּ כְּדֹרֶךְ כָּל־הָאֶרֶץ: לָכֵה נִשְׁקָה אֶת־אָבִינוּ יַיִן וְנִשְׁכְּבָה עִמּוֹ וְנַחֲיָה מֵאָבִינוּ זָרַע: וַתִּשְׁקֵן אֶת־אָבִיהָ יַיִן בְּלִילָה הוּא וַתְּבֹא הַבְּכִירָה וַתִּשְׁכַּב אֶת־אָבִיהָ וְלֹא־יָדַע בְּשָׁכְבָהּ וּבְקוֹמָהּ: וַיְהִי מִמָּחָרֶת וַתֹּאמֶר הַבְּכִירָה אֶל־הַצְעִירָה הֵן־שָׁכַבְתִּי אִמְשׁ אֶת־אָבִי נִשְׁקֵנוּ יַיִן גַּם־הַלִּילָה וּבְאִי שָׁכְבִי עִמּוֹ וְנַחֲיָה מֵאָבִינוּ זָרַע: וַתִּשְׁקֵן גַּם בְּלִילָה הַהִוא אֶת־אָבִיהָ יַיִן וַתִּקֶּם הַצְעִירָה וַתִּשְׁכַּב עִמּוֹ וְלֹא־יָדַע בְּשָׁכְבָהּ וּבְקוֹמָהּ: וַתִּהְרֶין שְׁתֵּי בָנֹת־לוֹט מֵאָבִיהָ: וַתֵּלֶד הַבְּכִירָה בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מוֹאָב הוּא אָבִי־מוֹאָב עַד־הַיּוֹם:

Lot went up from Zoar and settled in the hill country with his two daughters, for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar; and he and his two daughters lived in a cave. And the older one said to the younger, “Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to consort with us in the way of all the world. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and let us lie with him, that we may maintain life through our father.” That night they made their father drink wine, and the older one went in and lay with her father; he did not know when she lay down or when she rose. The next day the older one said to the younger, “See, I lay with Father last night; let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go and lie with him, that we may maintain life through our father.” That night also they made their father drink wine, and the younger one went and lay with him; he did not know when she lay down or when she rose. Thus the two daughters of Lot came to be with child by their father. The older one bore a son and named him Moab; he is the father of the Moabites of today.

The Night at the Threshing Floor

רות פרק ג:ז-ט

וַיֹּאכַל בֹּעַז וַיִּשְׂתַּי וַיֵּיטֵב לְבוֹ וַיָּבֹא לִשְׁכַּב בְּקֶצֶה הָעֶרְמָה וַתְּבֹא בִלְטָה וַתִּגַּל מִרגְלֹתֶיהָ וַתִּשְׁכַּב: וַיְהִי בַחֲצִי הַלַּיְלָה וַיַּחֲרֵד הָאִישׁ וַיִּלְפַּת וַהֲנִה אִשָּׁה שֹׁכֶכֶת מִרגְלֹתֶיהָ: וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אַתְּ וַתֹּאמֶר אֲנִי רות אִמְתְּךָ וּפְרִשְׁתָּ כְּנֹפֶךְ עַל־אִמְתְּךָ כִּי גֹאֵל אָתָּה:

And Boaz ate, drank, and his heart became merry. He came to lie at the edge of the heap of grain. And she silently approached and exposed his feet and she lay down. And it was at the midpoint of the night. And the man trembled and he grasped. Behold there is a woman lying at his feet! And he said, “Who are you?” And she said, “I am Ruth your maidservant. Spread your cloak over your maidservant, for you are a redeemer.”

רות רבה ו:ד

רבי יהודה אומר כל אותו הלילה היה יצרו מקטרגו ואומר, את פנוי ומבקש אשה והיא פנויה ומבקשת איש עמד ובעלה ותהיה לך לאשה

All that night his ardor persecuted him saying, "You are single and are seeking a woman, and she is single and is seeking a man! Arise and have relations with her and she will be for you a wife and your desire will be sated!"

רות רבה פרשה ו

אמר רבי ברכיה ארורים הרשעים. להלן כתיב (בראשית ל"ט) ותתפשהו בבגדו לאמר שכבה עמי, אבל הכא ופרשת כנפיק על אמתך

בעז לרות	רות לבעז
יְשַׁלֵּם יְקוֹק פְּעֻלְךָ וְתִהְיֶי מְשַׁכְרֶתְךָ שְׁלֵמָה מֵעַם יְקוֹק אֱלֹקֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר-בָּאת לְחַסּוֹת תַּחַת-כְּנָפָיו:	וּפְרִשְׁתְּ כְנָפְךָ עַל-אֲמֶתְךָ כִּי גֹאֵל אֶתָּה:

The Power of Restraint

רות ג:ט-יד

וַיֹּאמֶר מִי-אֶת וַתֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי רות אֲמֶתְךָ וּפְרִשְׁתְּ כְנָפְךָ עַל-אֲמֶתְךָ כִּי גֹאֵל אֶתָּה: וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ לַיהוָה בְּתִי הַיְסֻבֶּת חֹסֶדךָ הָאֲחֵרוֹן מִן-הָרִאשׁוֹן לְבִלְתִּי-לָכֶת אַחֲרֵי הַבְּחוּרִים אִם-דָּל וְאִם-עָשִׁיר: וְעַתָּה בְתִי אֶל-תִּירָאִי כֹל אֲשֶׁר-תֹּאמְרִי אֶעֱשֶׂה-לָּךְ כִּי יוֹדַע כָּל-שֹׁעֵר עִמִּי כִּי אִשָּׁת חֵיל אַתְּ: וְעַתָּה כִּי אֲמַנָּם כִּי אִם גֹּאֵל אֲנֹכִי וְגַם יֵשׁ גֹּאֵל קָרוֹב מִמֶּנִּי: לִינִי הַלַּיְלָה וְהִיא בְּבֹקֶר אִם-יִגְאָלְךָ טוֹב יִגְאָל וְאִם-לֹא יִחְפֹּץ לִגְאָלְךָ וְגִאֲלֶתְךָ אֲנֹכִי חִי-יְקוֹק שְׁכָבִי עַד-הַבֹּקֶר: וַתִּשְׁכַּב מִרגְלָתוֹ [מִרגְלוֹתֶיהָ] עַד-הַבֹּקֶר וַתִּקֶּם בִּטְרוֹם [בְּטָרָם] יָכִיר אִישׁ אֶת-רֵעֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-יֹדַע כִּי-בָאָה הָאִשָּׁה הַגֵּרָה:

And he said, "Who are you?" And she said, "I am Ruth your maidservant. Spread your cloak over your maidservant for you are a redeemer." And he said, "Blessed are you to God, my daughter, for you have shown more kindness in the latter [case] than in the first [case], in that you did not follow the young men whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, do not be afraid. Everything that you say I will do for you, because all of my people in the gate know that you are a woman of valor. And now, even though truly I am a *go'el*, there is a *go'el* who is closer than I. Lie here tonight and in the morning, if he shall redeem you, good, he has redeemed you, but if he shall not desire to redeem you, I myself shall redeem you, I swear by God. Lie until the morning. So she lay at his feet until dawn. She rose before one person could distinguish another, for he thought, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor."

בעז לרות	רות לנעמי
כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-תֹּאמְרִי אֶעֱשֶׂה-לָּךְ	וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-תֹּאמְרִי [אֵלַי] אֶעֱשֶׂה
לִינִי הַלַּיְלָה	כִּי אֶל-אֲשֶׁר תִּלְכִּי אֵלַי, וּבְאֲשֶׁר תִּלְיִנִי אֵלַי

Boaz: No Trickery- The Need for Knowledge

לוט	יהודה	נעמי על בעז
וַתִּשְׁקֵן אֶת־אֲבִיהָן יוֹן בְּלֵילָה הַזֶּה וַתָּבֹא הַבִּכִּירָה וַתִּשְׁכַּב אֶת־אֲבִיהָ וְלֹא־יָדַע בְּשִׁכְבָּהּ וּבִקְוָמָהּ	וַיֵּט אֵלֶיהָ אֶל־הַדֶּרֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר הִבֵּה־נָא אָבוֹא אֵלֶיךָ כִּי לֹא יָדַע כִּי כָלְתָהּ הוּא	וַיִּרְדְּתִי [וַיִּרְדְּתִי] הַגֶּרָן אֶל־תִּדְעֵי לְאִישׁ

וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אֶת

וַיִּשְׁכַּב שְׁמִשׁוֹן עַד־חֲצִי הַלַּיְלָה וַיָּקָם | בְּחֲצִי הַלַּיְלָה