

THE BOOK OF RUTH  
in  
MIDRASHIC LITERATURE

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of requirement for the degree of  
Rabbi.

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March 15, 1934.  
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## THE BOOK OF RUTH IN MIDRASHIC LITERATURE

### Introduction

The source material for this thesis has been arbitrarily limited to Midrash Rabbah to the Book of Ruth, the sections in Yalkut Shimoni devoted to Ruth, i.e. sections 610-890, and a Kabbalistic Midrash, Har Adonay, quoted by Judah David Eisenstein in his collection of two-hundred Midrashim<sup>in</sup> titled Otzer Midrashim.

An attempt to exhaust the subject is therefore not the problem involved. It is rather to discover what the above mentioned sources reveal.

The study divides itself conveniently into three chapters. The first shall consider the nature, authorship and probable date of the source material, and a discussion of the Book of Ruth, its author, its date and its purpose as reflected in the Midrash. Chapter two shall relate the Rabbinic reactions to the incidents of the Ruth story and attempt to reconstruct the story of Ruth as it might have been written by the Rabbis of the Midrash; while chapter three shall be devoted to a discussion of the attitude of the Rabbis toward the characters in the story, the type of exegesis found in the literature, legislation in the Midrash and Rabbinic sentiments on God and Israel, Torah, Reward and Punishment, Judgment and Judges, etc., closing with a treatment of the homiletic introductions and proems of Ruth Rabbah.



## CHAPTER I

### The Sources

Ruth Rabbah, a purely haggadic-exegetic midrash is grouped together with that general body of literature. Scholars are in agreement that from internal evidence it most probably was among the earlier midrashim since all of it is written in the language and style of the Palestinian haggada.<sup>1</sup> Many of its illustrations are in Yerushalmi and in Genesis Rabbah, Lamentations, Rabbati and Song of Songs. It contains nothing from Babylonian haggada. Even if there are references to incidents also mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud like the midrash on verse 22 of Second Chronicles Chapter four which is cited in Ruth Rabbah Chapter two and also occurs in Babbah Bathra 91b; upon closer investigation one finds that what the Babylonian Talmud cites is a Bereitha and not from the Babylonian haggadah. Throughout the entire midrash "There is not even a hint of any characteristic of a later time, therefore there is no reason to place it beyond the time of the later haggadic Rabbis even though it is impossible to date it exactly." During the post Amoraic and Gaonic period collections and revisions of the haggadic midrashim took place receiving then the form in which they have been handed down more or less unchanged.<sup>2</sup> It

was generally considered that the prohibition against writing down the "word of the oral law" referred not only to halakot but also to haggadot. R. Hiya bar Abba severely censures the reduction of haggadot to writing.<sup>3</sup> While Rabbi Jochanan and Rabbi Simeon ben Lakish, contemporaries of Joshua ben Levi, recognized such collections as demanded by the times and declared "it were better to repeal an interdict (i. e. permit the writing of haggadot, than to allow the Torah to be forgotten in Israel."<sup>4</sup>

The haggadic method of presentation differs from that of scientific exegesis in that it does not attempt to give the simple meaning of a word, i.e. the meaning of the individual word and the content of the sentence, in a word, that which the author wishes to say in regard to a Biblical verse, but seeks rather to air a private view of moral content or to interpolate into the interpretation of the verses prevailing current ideas. In Alexandria, men like Philo allegorized in order to find Greek philosophy in the scriptures; in Palestine they expatiated on all those things which in the course of time had become the usage and custom among the Jews and which were recognized as moral-religious, during religious services, for the purpose of proving that these customs already existed in the Bible. Now and then we find in the haggada fairly correct exegetical conceptions (which go back for the most part to older traditions) some of which are not at all

and others only partly related to the Biblical verse.<sup>5</sup>

The small midrash, Ruth, consisting of eight sections accompanies the text of the Biblical book practically without interruption from beginning to end explaining it now literally, now allegorically, the first section closes with Chapter 1, verse 2; the second with 1:17; the third with 1:21; the fourth with 2:9; the fifth with 3:7; the sixth with 3:13; the seventh with 4:15 and the eighth with 4:19 being the shortest of all comprising only two verses. We note in passing that Chapters four, verses sixteen and seventeen which speak of Naomi as the nurse of Ruth's child, and of its being named Obed by the neighbors, are omitted in the midrash. Either these verses called forth no comment from the Rabbis or it was not included in the texts which we have.

Six sections, namely: the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and eighth are introduced by an appropriate proemium; only the first and seventh are directly connected with the text. Even as the Midrash to Esther and the one to Lamentations so also the Midrash to Ruth opens with a special introduction containing several proemia.

If we examine the content we find that the main idea of our Midrash is to depict the culture-historical background in order to make clear the Ruth story which takes place in the foreground. The first verse of the text offers the necessary clues to this depiction. Since the Book of Ruth begins with the words: "It was at the time when the judges were judging,"

which is taken in the sense: "It was at the time when the judges were being judged,"<sup>6</sup> the conclusion which is drawn is that it was a time of moral depravity. The judges perverted justice, were partisan and took bribes, convicted the innocent and absolved the guilty. What wonder then that with corruption at the top there should be corruption at the bottom. Since the judges trampled justice under foot, the people refused to obey and took these very judges to task; therefore, the exclamation: "Woe to the generation which judges its judges and woe to the generation whose judges must be judged."<sup>7</sup>

The Yalkut Shimoni is an haggadic compilation of midrashim on the old Testament. The author, of whom we shall speak later, collected various interpretations of Biblical passages and arranged them according to the sequence of those portions of the Bible to which they refer. Lengthy citations are often abridged or only partially quoted, the remainder being cited elsewhere.<sup>8</sup>

In his exegesis of each passage, often in the text itself the author indicates the sources from which his explanations are derived. In the earlier editions published in Salonica the sources are given at the beginning of each corresponding Biblical passage but later they were placed in the margin.<sup>9</sup>

The sources embrace not only the major portion of haggadic literature during the ancient and Gaonic period but also the haggadic literature as late as the twelfth century. The



author quotes from Sifre Zuta, Sifre, Mechilta, Pesikta, Tanhuma, Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, Shohar Tob, Tanna de be Elijahu, Seder Olam, Mishna, Gamara, and both Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi.<sup>10</sup>

Scholars differ as to the authorship of the Yalkut. It has been attributed to Rabbi Simeon of Frankfort, Rosh Ha Darshanim.<sup>11</sup> Rappaport, however, maintains that it was written by Simeon, the father of Joseph Kara,<sup>12</sup> ~~Keren Hemed 7:4~~ ff. This claim is untenable because he flourished in the eleventh century and the book quotes midrashim of a later date;<sup>13</sup> furthermore it would be reasonable to expect Joseph Kara to quote this midrashic work if it were his father's, which he never does.<sup>14</sup> Zunz presents the theory that the author flourished in the early part of the thirteenth century and maintains that the title, "Rosh Ha Darshanim," was bestowed upon him later. It is certain that the manuscript of Yalkut Shimon mentioned by Azaria del Rossi existed in 1310.<sup>15</sup> Sometime during the latter half of the fifteenth century the volume reached Spain, Isaac Abravanel being the first to mention it.<sup>16</sup>

The first edition of the Yalkut was printed in Salonica in 1521. The section on the Prophets and Haggiographa came out first, the section to the Pentateuch not being published until 1526. In 1566 a Venice edition appeared which was emended containing many variations from the Salonica edition. The latest edition was published in Wilna 1898, which contains footnotes giving the sources, a glossary of difficult words,

index of Chapters and verses, of Biblical passages, and a commentary by Abraham Gumbiner entitled Zayit Ra-Anan.<sup>17</sup>

Har Adonay is a small Zohar to the Book of Ruth which is attributed to the traditional author of the Zohar Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai. Since the entire tradition is questioned by scholars we make bold to state that here too the claim is untenable. The author must therefore remain forever unknown. It was printed in Amsterdam, 1712; in Zalkara, 1794; together with a book called Lekute Zohar; in Shklarv, 1807 and also in a collection entitled Yalkut Ha Roim published in Warsaw in 1885.<sup>18</sup>

The book is written in late Aramaic which is quite artificial having many Hebraized forms and having little regard for grammatical rules.

Based on the general Kabbalistic assumption that all the books of the Bible have allegorical meanings, Har Adonay seeks to disclose the secrets of the Book of Ruth. It opens as an account of one of Shimon ben Yochai's ventures into a burial cave where he meets with the "faithful shepherd." Shimon asks of the shepherd, "Since it is well known that the Torah, the prophets and the Haggiographa are allegorical, what are the secrets of the Book of Ruth?" After praising Shimon ben Yochai as the "holy light," as one worthy to know the true secrets of the Torah and after condemning those who assert that the Bible is just simple narrative, he proceeds to tell him the

hidden meaning of the Book of Ruth.

According to the haggada the prophet Samuel is the author of the Book of Ruth<sup>19</sup> which was supposed to have been written to prove David's aristocratic lineage and to remind David of the noble simplicity of the customs of his ancestors.<sup>20</sup> Another tradition has it that the Book of Ruth was written for the sole purpose of indicating the great value of human love,<sup>21</sup> as confirmed so nobly by Ruth and Boaz and to prove that in reward divine grace made them the ancestors of the royal house of David.<sup>22</sup> According to Har Agonay the Book of Ruth was written to teach people how to worship on this earth so they will merit the world to come.<sup>23</sup> The conviction being that on the three occasions of Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur and Hoshana Rabbah the heavenly hosts sit in judgment over the world and men who learn the Torah and thus are prompted to do penance through fasting, recall the merit of their forefathers, and unite the earth with the holy name.<sup>24</sup>

Whatever be the events treated by our book, one version of an haggada places them in the time of Samgar and Ehud,<sup>25</sup> another in the time of Barak and Deborah<sup>26</sup> and still a third in the time of Barak, Deborah and Jael.<sup>27</sup> On the other hand there is a view which maintains that Elimelech and his supporters left Palestine after the death of Deborah and Barak, that is during the period in which there were no rulers and thereby a famine of which Ruth 1:1 speaks which was the result of



continuous robberies and devastations whereby the enemies of Israel brought it to the brink of ruin and impoverished it.<sup>28</sup> Finally the haggadah designates Ibzan as the ruler of that time and identifies him with Boaz<sup>29</sup> of whom indeed it is said that he was the president of the court.<sup>30</sup>

The place of the Book of Ruth in the Bible according to Babbah Bathrah 14b is before the Psalms to which it serves as an introduction because David, the author of the Psalms, descended from Ruth.

NOTES CHAPTER ONE.

1. Dor Dor V'Dorshav vol. 3 page 273.
2. J.E. vol. VIII page 551 b. Midrash haggadah J. Theodor.
3. Midrash Tehilim to Psalm 28:5 Euber edition page 240, commenting on verse 5:  
ר"י אמר אלו האנדרות
4. Gitin 60a. דר"י יוחנן ור"ש בן לקיש ... והא לא ניתו ליכתב [אנדרות]  
אלא ביון דלא איפשר עת לעשות לה"
5. Das Buch Ruth in der Midrasch-Litterature page V. Hartmann, Phil.D.
6. Ruth Rabbah 1:1 אוי לרור שפפון אח שופפיהם, ואוי לרור שופפיו צריכין להשפם
7. ibid. " " " " " " " "
8. Cf. Yalkut-Shimoni, Ruth Vilna edition page 1042 תר"ב, 1043 תר"ד
9. Gottesdienstliche Vorträge pages 295-296.
10. cf. Title page to Yalkut Shimoni Vilna edition.
11. ibid.
12. Keren Chemed 7:4ff.
13. R. Shimon Karah V'Ha Yalkut Shimoni Page 18. Abraham Epstein.
14. ibid page 17.
15. Gottesdienstliche Vorträge Pages 295, 303.
16. Ha Hoker Page 134 Epstein Abraham.
17. R. Shimon Karah V'Ha Yalkut Shimoni page 19-20.
18. cf. Otzer Ha Sepharim under Har Adonay.
19. E.E. 14b. שמועל כתב ספרו ושופפיהם ורור
20. Kanon des alten Testaments, S. Furst.
21. Ruth Rabbah 2:15. אחר ר"י זעירא ... למה נבדחה [רור] ללמוד במה שבר  
שוב פגומלי חסדים
22. E.E. 14b. Quoted in Yalkut Shimoni introduction to Ruth
23. Har Adonay section Aleph וסרסא לן לבני אינשי היאך למעבר בהאי עקמא  
בניו למיזכא עלמא דאחי.
24. ibid. בר ירמיה קוב"ה בראש השנה ויוסא דכיפורא והושענא רבא ברינא רבא  
לעיוני ברינא דעלמא, וכדין יחבין סרי דינא ברקיע לסדכר חוביא דבני  
עלמא. וכדין בעי בר נש לסילא אורייחא ולסיחב בבפנא בנין לסדכר זכוחא  
דאבהא דאיהו אדון כולא, וכדין בר סתעורר האי בר נש למיחב כתיובחא, וכדין  
זבי למקרי איש בנין דאזיל סביחיה לבי כנישיא ויחב ולא אכיל נהסא בהאי  
שעיא. וכדין סתחברי ארעא קדישא בשמא קדישא דאיהו דרגא רביעא.

NOTES CHAPTER ONE.

25. Ruth Rabbah 1:1 ריב"ל שמנר ואהור היו
26. ibid. רב אמר ברק ודבורה היו
27. ibid. רב הונא אמר ברק דבורה ויעל היו
28. Lekach Tob to Ruth page 4 quoted by Hartmann page VI note 4.
29. Yalkut Shimoni תר"א
30. Handschrift aus Jemen, ein kurzer apadischer Midrasch zur Ruth.  
Codex der Berliner Koniglichen Bibliothek (ms. or fol. 1203) 167b;  
Quoted by Hartmann page 85. ופרשני כנפיר על אסתיר אמרה לו אתה אב  
בית דין.

## CHAPTER II

### The Story of Ruth as Reflected in Midrashic Literature

#### A. Rabbinic Reactions to the Incidents of the Story

##### The Antecedents of Ruth

I 1-2 In the time when the judges were in power,<sup>1</sup> and corruption of the worse type prevailed, when judges accepted bribes, perverted justice convicting the innocent and absolving the guilty,<sup>2</sup> a famine occurred in the land so that a certain man of prominence<sup>3</sup> from Beth Lechem in Judah emigrated to the country of Moab along with his wife and two sons. The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's Naomi and the names of his two sons Machlon and Chilion.

The advent of such a prominent personage leaving the country was of considerable concern since he was of tremendous influence on his countrymen and set them an example of cowardice instead of courage.<sup>4</sup> According to R. Dosa the famine was occasioned by a bad harvest in which an investment of forty-two Sea of seed yielded only forty-one Sea of grain,<sup>5</sup> a condition which made not for a dearth of provision but only for exorbitant prices. The emigration of Elimelech and his family from Judah to Moab was certainly not justified since as Rabbi Simeon ben Gamliel contends an Israelite may leave Palestine for a foreign land only when there are no provisions to keep him alive.<sup>6</sup> But Elimelech saw in advance that because of the famine the poor would

search him out and urge him for support. He and his family believed that thus his wealth would be exhausted and anticipated this by moving to Moab.<sup>7</sup> This explains the severe judgment of the exile of Klimelech.

A short time after their arrival in Moab he dies.  
I: Naomi with her two sons remain in Moab for ten years during which time the sons marry Moabite women by names Ophra and Ruth; shortly thereafter both Machlon and Chilion die. Bereft of her two children as well as her husband Naomi with her daughters-in-law prepared to return to her native land for she had heard from traveling merchants that the Lord had taken note of His people and given them food.<sup>8</sup> So she accompanied by Ophra and Ruth set out toward Judah. But ere they had traveled far Naomi said to her daughters-in-law: "Go return each of you to your mother's house. May the Lord deal as kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me. May the Lord enable you to find a home, each of you in the house of her husband."

Naomi's urgent plea that Ruth and Ophra return to their own people is interpreted to indicate her desire to free herself of the disgrace brought on the family by the marriage of Machlon and Chilion to these Moabite women an act forbidden by the laws of Israel.<sup>9</sup> At the same time she is not unmindful of the kindness which these strange women showed her sons, in that they performed the last rites of the dead according to the Hebrew law<sup>10</sup> and therefore seeks to impart to them blessings of the Lord.

Naomi kissed them good-bye, but they lifted up their voices in weeping and said: "No, we will go back with you to your people."  
-10



This entire incident is interpreted by the authors of the Midrash allegorically to indicate that Ophra and Ruth desired to accept Judaism and presented themselves to Naomi for conversion.<sup>11</sup> That Naomi told them to return to their mother's house is only in accordance to the procedure imposed upon one who is about to convert a non-Jew, namely that he point out the disadvantages of becoming a Jew and that for three days he urge the candidate to remain in the faith of his people.<sup>12</sup> But only if the candidate persists is he to be accepted into the fold.

I: But Naomi said: Turn back, my daughters.  
11-14 Why should you go with me? Have I anymore sons to become husbands? Turn back for I am too old to get married. And if perchance I should marry and have sons would you wait for them until they were grown up?" Then they lifted up their voices again in weeping and Ophra kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.

According to ... Isaac Ophra accompanied her mother-in-law four miles and therefore she merited that four heroes should descend from her.<sup>13</sup> Rabbi Berachya in the name of R. Isaac observes: Ophra escorted her mother-in-law forty steps for which later on her descendant (Goliath) was allowed to defy the ranks of Israel forty days before he was slain by David.<sup>14</sup>

I: "See," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law has  
15-17 turned back to her own people and her own gods; turn back after your sister-in-law." But Ruth answered, "Do not press me to leave you, to

turn back from following you; for wherever you go I will go; and wherever you will lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God; wherever you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord requite me and worse, if even death separate me from you."

Here is shown the difference in character between Orpah and Ruth. Orpah finally yields to Naomi's persuasion and returns to her people and to her god, which the Rabbis interpret to mean when she returned to her people she returned to idol worship.<sup>15</sup> But Ruth insists, saying: "Do not vex me, do not prevent me from going over to Judaism for in any event I shall be converted and it were better through<sup>you</sup> than through anyone else."<sup>16</sup> When Naomi heard this she began teaching Ruth the laws of a proselyte. ~~AND SAID~~ "My daughter it is not customary for the daughters of Israel to go to amusement places of idol worshippers." Ruth answered, "wherever you go I will go." "It is not the custom of an Israelite to dwell in a house which has no mezuzah. Ruth answered "wherever you will lodge, I will lodge." "Your people shall be my people," and "your God shall be my God" is taken as Ruth's agreement to accept the obligation of all the mitzvot.<sup>18</sup> And "where you die I will die" refers to the four types of death decreed by the Beth Din, while "there will I be buried" refers to the two cemeteries set aside by the Beth Din for those stoned or burned and for those strangled or executed.<sup>19</sup>



I: When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her she ceased arguing with her. So the two of them went on until they came to Beth Lechem. Upon their arrival in Beth Lechem the whole city became agitated over them and the women said: "Is this Naomi?" But she said to them: "Do not call me Naomi (pleasant) call me Mara (bitter) for the Lord has dealt very bitterly with me. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back destitute. Why should you call me Naomi, seeing the Lord has afflicted me and has brought evil upon me?" So Naomi returned from the country of Moab, accompanied by her daughter-in-law, Ruth, the Moabitess. They reached Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to become a Jewess the scripture reads "and both of them went" indicating how beloved the proselyte is in the eyes of God for as soon as Ruth made the final decision God considered her equal with Naomi.<sup>20</sup> The time of Naomi's and Ruth's arrival in Bethlehem is designated according to one point of view as taking place on the day of the cutting of the omer on which all the people of the neighboring cities come together.<sup>21</sup> Another point of view has it that it was on the very day on which Boaz's wife died and all the Israelites had gathered in order to show their sympathy, among them also Naomi and Ruth who wanted to take part in the funeral proceedings,<sup>22</sup> while a third tradition has it that Ibzan whom they identify with Boaz<sup>23</sup> was marrying off his daughter on that day and all were gathered for the ceremony.<sup>24</sup> When the people saw Naomi they could not recognize her because long poverty and hardship had changed her countenance. For according to Rabbi Hiya: All suffering is difficult but poverty is the most difficult to bear since

when other types of hardship are over the prior conditions prevail again but poverty leaves a permanent deficiency as it is written: "My eye is dulled because of poverty." (Psalms 88:10)<sup>25</sup> As for Ruth, at this time she is supposed to have been forty years old<sup>26</sup> and of captivating beauty.<sup>27</sup>

### The Meeting of Ruth and Boaz

2: Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a wealthy man whose name was Boaz. one day Ruth, the Moabitess  
1-7 said to Naomi: "Let me go to the fields and glean among the ears of grain after him with whom I might find favor." "Go, my daughter," she said to her. So off went Ruth and came and gleaned in the field after the harvesters; and it was her fortune to come upon the part of the field belonging to Boaz who was of the family of Elimelech. Just then Boaz himself came from Bethlehem. "The Lord be with you," he said to the harvesters. "The Lord bless you," they replied. "Whose girl is this?" said Boaz to his overseer in charge of the harvesters. "It is a Moabite girl who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab," the overseer answered. "She said 'Let me glean, if you please, and gather among the sheaves after the harvesters.' So she came and has remained since morning until now without resting even a little."

The phrase "a man of wealth" אִישׁ רַב־עֹשֶׂה the Rabbis rendered as "a man of great power" which some interpreted as a "man who had a great capacity for the study of the law;"<sup>28</sup> while Rabbi Abahu chose to regard אִישׁ רַב־עֹשֶׂה as actual physical power and goes on to state that "when a giant marries a giantess they bear giants. Boaz the אִישׁ רַב־עֹשֶׂה married Ruth the אִשָּׁה רַב־עֹשֶׂה from which union David was born who in I Samuel 16:18 is called giant אִישׁ רַב־עֹשֶׂה.<sup>29</sup> Ruth realizing

that she as the younger of the two women must undertake the task of supporting the household asks permission of her mother to go and glean in the fields.<sup>30</sup> The permission granted, scripture reads "she went and came." It is clear that one of these words would have been adequate for the thought. The redundancy, according to Rabbi Eliezer, means that Ruth went to and fro, hither and thither looking for decent people to whom she might attach herself,<sup>31</sup> while Rabba Juda b. Rabbi Simon maintains that the repetition indicates that Ruth made signs on the way in order to be able to retrace her steps with facility.<sup>32</sup> When Ruth arrived on the field Boaz was not there and upon his return he asks of his overseer "Who is that girl?" The question arises "But should he, Boaz, not recognize her since she was of his family and had returned at such time when the entire community were gathered together?" But because she was so different from the usual women who came to glean Boaz was attracted to her and inquired after her. The description of Ruth's conduct as it differed from the other women while she was gleaning in the field is charming. Whereas the women bent over lifting their clothes high and joking with the reapers as they gleaned among the sheaves, Ruth gleaned while seated with her skirt down keeping at a distance from the gleaners.<sup>33</sup>

2:           Then Boaz said to Ruth: "Now listen, my girl,  
8-13           do not go to glean in any other field, but stay  
              here close by my women. Note the field that they

are reaping and follow them. Have I not charged the servants not to molest you? And when you are thirsty go to the water jars and drink of the water the servants draw." Then Ruth fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor with you that you should take notice of me, when I am a foreigner?" Boaz in reply said: "I have been fully informed of all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and of how you left your father and mother and the land of your birth and came to a people that you knew not before. May the Lord reward your conduct and may you receive full recompense from the Lord, the God of Israel under whose wings you have come for shelter." "I thank you, sir," she said, "for you have cheered me, and have spoken comfortingly to your maidservant, even though I do not belong to your maidservants."

This conversation between Boaz and Ruth is interpreted spiritually as her conversion to Judaism.<sup>34</sup> In order to make Ruth's acceptance to Judaism possible, for the halacha strictly forbids Amorites and Moabites to enter into the congregation of Israel, the Midrash introduces a word twist in the legal prescription by saying only the male and not the female persons are meant since only the masculine forms Amorite and Moabite appear in the law. Therefore the women of these nations were free to enter into Judaism.<sup>35</sup> The knowledge of Ruth's exceptional devotion had spread far and wide therefore the use of the double expression 1211 1211 <sup>36</sup> The phrase "may you receive full recompense" 1211 1211 1211 is interpreted as a prophecy made by Boaz to Ruth in which he foretells the fact that Solomon would descend from her. The Midrash derives this from the fact that the word 1211

which also spells Solomon is here used.<sup>37</sup> Ruth is thankful to Boaz for the comforting words he spoke to her when according to the Midrash he told her: "you are destined to rise to greatness. Your children are destined to be leaders in Israel and you are destined to wear the crown of kingship. Though you are now poor, from you will issue forth one who shall dedicate a hundred thousand talents of gold to the Temple,"referring to David.<sup>38</sup>

2:           Come and eat of the bread and dip it in vinegar. She seated herself beside the harvesters  
14-17       and he handed her some parched corn. She ate until she was satisfied and had some left over. When Ruth got up to glean Boaz gave orders to his servants. "Let her glean among the sheaves and do not be rude to her. Pull out some bundles for her and leave them for her to glean. So she gleaned in the field until evening; then she threshed what she had gleaned and it amounted to about an ephah of barley.

According to Rabbi Jochanan the meal which Ruth eats is an incident to be interpreted allegorically and is a forecast of the events of the Davidic dynasty. The invitation to "come and eat bread" means come and partake of kingship. We also learn that in time the house of David will meet with conflict, that the kingdom will be divided, and there will be much suffering hence that part of the meal, bread dipped in sour vinegar.<sup>39</sup> Rabbi Isaac maintains that scripture wishes to point out that a man should perform every mitzvah with a whole heart for he never knows its value. Had Boaz known that there would be a permanent record of this action of kindness toward Ruth he would have



certainly fed her fatted calves.<sup>40</sup> When Ruth finished her meal she returned immediately to the field; then it was that Boaz addressed his servants and told them not to molest Ruth, but to allow her to glean among the sheaves for she is the daughter of a king,<sup>41</sup> even though a Moabitess her nobility had to be respected. When one of the servants informed Boaz that Ruth would not consent to glean among the sheaves he answered with the next verse of the Bible. "Pull out some of the bundles and leave them as 'shikhah."<sup>42</sup>

2:

18-23

Ruth took up the barley and coming into the city showed her mother-in-law what she had gleaned. Then she brought out and gave her what she had left after being satisfied. "Where did you glean to-day," her mother-in-law asked, "where did you work? Blessed be he who took such notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked. "Boaz is the name of the man with whom I worked," she said. Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed of the Lord whose goodness has failed neither the living nor the dead." The man is a relative of ours, he is one of our close relatives." Furthermore said Ruth, the Moabitess "he said to me, 'you must stay close to my male servants until they have finished all of my harvest.'" "It is best, my daughter," Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, Ruth, "that you should go with his women, so as not to be molested in any other field." So she stayed close by the women working for Boaz, gleaning until the end of both the barley and wheat harvest, then she returned to her mother-in-law.

When Naomi asks Ruth "where did you glean?" Ruth answers

"The one with whom I worked is Boaz." It is written

177 11 127 728

and not 'וְיִשְׁכַּח לְמַעַן for 'whom I did (something)' and not 'who did something for me.' From this we learn that the poor man does the benefactor more good than the latter the former.<sup>43</sup> For the poor man gives the wealthy one the opportunity of doing good and earning the future life. Naomi expressed the wish that Boaz be "blessed of the Lord" in that he is kind to the living seeking to feed them and help them,<sup>44</sup> and also forgets not the dead being anxious about the shrouds and a worthy burial<sup>45</sup> for philanthropy "gemilath Hesed" is better than "zedakah" alms-giving. Alms are given only to the living while philanthropy can be shown to the living as well as the dead.<sup>46</sup> Further alms-means giving of money only while philanthropy includes also personal influence.<sup>47</sup> Verse 21 reads "Furthermore Ruth, the Moabite said," and R. Jochanan interprets the phrase to indicate that Ruth still had a flaw in her character and is justly called "a Moabite" since she acknowledges her moabitish lack of character when she accuses Boaz falsely of ordering her to glean with the "male servants" whereas in truth he ordered her with the female servants. Cf. 2:8.<sup>48</sup> That is why her mother-in-law fearing an outbreak of this Moabitish characteristic told her "It is best that you go with his women."<sup>49</sup>

#### Ruth's Appeal to Boaz

- 3: Naomi said to Ruth: "Should I not be seeking a  
home for you, my daughter where you may be comfortable?  
1-6 Now what about our relative, Boaz, with whose



women you have been? See, he is going to winnow barley at the threshing floor tonight. Wash and anoint yourself therefore, put on your best clothes, and go down to the threshing floor; but do not let your presence be known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. See to it, however, when he lies down that you note the place where he lies, then go in, uncover his feet and lie down yourself; he will let you know what to do." "I will do just as you say," she responded." So she went down to the threshing floor, and did just as her mother-in-law had instructed her.

"Should I not seek a home for you" indicates that a daughter is not at home until she is in the house of her husband.<sup>50</sup> According to one interpretation Naomi's question, "What about our relative, Boaz?" was thrown out not as a suggestion to Ruth but merely as a leading question in the hope that Naomi might elicit an admission from her daughter-in-law, for in truth Naomi had suspected there was already an understanding between Ruth and Boaz.<sup>51</sup> Naomi's instructions to Ruth that she "wash herself" means that she should cleanse herself of idolatry<sup>52</sup> and take the prescribed ritual bath for conversion; "that she anoint herself," means that she ennoble herself with good deeds,<sup>53</sup> and dress in her best is an admonition to wear her Sabbath clothes.<sup>54</sup> Verse three is written: "Wash, anoint yourself and I will go down to the threshing floor." Ruth said: "If I go down to Boaz at night and make my bed at his feet I might meet with harm." Thereupon Naomi answered, "I will go down" my merit will accompany and protect you.<sup>55</sup> From the word "go down" it is inferred that threshing floors are always made in low lying places.<sup>56</sup>

That Boaz spent the night at the threshing floor and did not go home to sleep, leads R. Abba bar Kahana to give expression to his opinion that a Talmid Chacham should not go out at night alone.<sup>57</sup> Ruth had implicit faith in the advice of Naomi but according to Rabbi Eliezer ben Pedath she executed the commands of her mother-in-law to wash and dress only after she had reached the threshing floor fearing lest she be molested on her way down by some men because of her captivating charm. He interpreted this as an extreme act of wisdom on the part of Ruth.<sup>58</sup>

- 3: When Boaz had eaten and drunk, and felt content  
he went to lie down at the end of the grain heap.  
7-8 Then she came in, stealthily uncovered his feet and  
lay down. At midnight the man started up, and turning  
over, discovered a woman lying at his feet.

Boaz felt content      2211 means that he praised the  
name of the Lord with the blessing      22201 2127 .<sup>59</sup> Another  
tradition interprets that he indulged in some sweets after the  
meal and that sweets incite the tongue to the study of the law.<sup>60</sup>  
Still a third reflection was that Boaz sought a wife and at last  
discovered her in Ruth, therefore      127 221 his heart was content  
since it is written in Prov. 18:22      212 222 228 222      61  
That Boaz should lie down at the end of the grain heap astonishes  
Rabbi Judah Ha Nasi so he queries of Rabbi Pinchas b. Rhama,  
"How is it that such an aristocratic man as Boaz should spend  
the night beside a grain heap?" Rabbi Pinchas explained it thus:  
"Under the prevailing immoral conditions the grain was taken  
from the threshing floor and given as a price for lewdness and

Boaz wanted to prevent this.<sup>62</sup> Another tradition has it that Boaz remained on the threshing floor for the pious who refrain from dishonest pursuits were wont to guard their just rewards, the results of honest labor.<sup>63</sup> "At midnight" the Midrash tells us it was the custom of King David to get up and play upon the harp in thanks to God as it is written in Ps. 119:62. "At midnight I will arise and give thanks to Thee." He was grateful for the goodness God had shown his ancestors in that He put into Boaz's heart only words of blessing for Ruth (3:9) so that when Boaz arose suddenly and saw her he uttered no insulting words. For the slightest impropriety in speech would have resulted in estrangement and the Davidic dynasty would not have been founded.<sup>64</sup> The word פָּתַח "and he turned over," according to the Midrash should be pointed with a feminine ending and instead of referring to an act of Boaz should refer to an act of Ruth. For Ruth wound herself around Boaz like a fungus growth, feeling her hair he was startled thinking at first it was a demon, but then he realized demons have no hair<sup>65</sup> which provoked his next question in verse nine.

- 3: "Who are you?" he said. "I am Ruth, your maidservant," she answered. "Cover your maidservant  
9-10 with your mantle, for you are a close relative."  
"May the Lord bless you, my girl," he said. "This last kindness of yours is lovelier than the first in that you have not run after the young men, either poor or rich," said Boaz.

According to the Midrash, the following conversation took

place between Boaz and Ruth. Boaz: "Are you a demon or a woman?" Ruth: "A woman." Boaz: "Married or single?" Ruth: "Single." Boaz: "Are you in a clean or unclean condition?" Ruth: "Clean."<sup>66</sup> Boaz: "What are you doing here?" Ruth: "I have come to fulfill the deed of which the Torah says: 'When your brother is impoverished and sells part of his property, then shall his nearest relative intervene as his redeemer and redeem that which was sold. (Lev. 25:25) "Fulfill the words of the Torah." Thereupon Boaz answered: "If you have come for that purpose then remain here till morning. If the nearest relative shall withdraw from exercising his duty, I shall assume it."<sup>67</sup> Rabbi Berachya points out the difference between a virtuous woman and a lewd one. Ruth said: "Cover your maidservant with your mantle," while Potephar grabbed Joseph by the garment and said "lie with me." (Gen. 39:9)<sup>68</sup> Boaz blessed Ruth in verse ten and called forth the following comment from Rabbi Simeon ben Lakish: Ruth was about forty years old and was childless in her previous marriage with Machlon. Since, however, pious Boaz prayed for her (3:10) she was rewarded (4:13)<sup>69</sup> The Rabbis say: Boaz as well as Ruth was rewarded because of the blessings of the pious. (4:11)<sup>70</sup> Rabbi Jochanan infers that Boaz was eighty years old and could have no children until Naomi prayed for him (2:20). He was rewarded (4:13). Therefore one should never desist from blessing an old man.<sup>71</sup> The Targum explains the praise in verse ten: "This last kindness of yours is lovelier than the first" as follows: Your first kindness consisted in this: that you

went over to Judaism, the second, in that you conducted yourself like a woman who waits for the Leverite until he is grown up.<sup>72</sup> Rabbi Samuel remarks that a woman usually loves a poor youth rather than an old, though rich man.<sup>73</sup> Ruth was the rare exception.

3: Boaz: "And now my girl have no fear I will do for  
11-13 you all you ask; for all the counsellors of my  
people know that you are a fine woman. Now then it  
is indeed true that I am a close relative, but there  
is another relative closer than I. Stay here to-  
night, and then in the morning, if he will do the  
duty of a close relative for you, good; let him do  
so; but if he does not wish to do the duty of a close  
relative for you, then, as the Lord lives, I will  
do so for you. Lie down until the morning."

Boaz says consolingly: "And now my girl have no fear."<sup>74</sup>

In the phrase *וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁכַּב* in verse twelve, the word *כִּי* is interpreted as follows: By saying *כִּי* Boaz expresses his doubt as to whether the redeemer would fulfill his duty. That he was not sure of this we also gather from the end of the verse.<sup>75</sup> "Stay here tonight" unmarried; this is the last night you will be without a husband.<sup>76</sup> In verse thirteen *וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁכַּב* is translated by the Rabbis of the Midrash: "If Tov redeems you." Tov, according to one tradition, was an older brother of Boaz's.<sup>77</sup> Rabbi Joshua asserts that Tov, Elimelech and Salmon are brothers and that the first two uncles of Boaz's, and meets the objection that Boaz speaks of Elimelech as a brother with the assertion that an uncle may also be called a brother.<sup>78</sup> "During the night which Ruth spent with Boaz, according to the tradition of Rabbi



Juden, the yetzer hara tormented Boaz trying to persuade him to have relations with Ruth saying to him thus: "You are single and she is single, you are looking for a woman and she is looking for a man. Go and have relations with her." Boaz, however mastered his passion by the solemn oath: "As the Lord liveth."<sup>79</sup>

3: So she lay at his feet until morning, but got up  
14-15 before one could recognize another; for she said:  
"Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." Bring the mantle which you have on," he said, "and hold it out." So she held it out and he measured out six omers of barley and put it on her shoulder; then she went back to the city.

Boaz directed the word: Let it not be known, etc. to his house servant according to Rabbi Meir.<sup>80</sup> But R. Huna and R. Jeremiah in the name of R. Samuel b. Isaac claim that the verse is the prayer of Boaz. All night he lay face downward and prayed: "O God, Thou knowest I have not touched her, then may it be Thy will that it be not made known that a woman came down to me to the threshing floor, so that the Divine name be not desecrated through me."<sup>81</sup> Furthermore when Boaz commanded Ruth to bring her mantle he significantly addressed her in the masculine '27 so that none of the youths might sense the presence of a woman if perchance Boaz was heard speaking.<sup>82</sup> Boaz gave Ruth six omers of barley for which he merited that these six righteous men should descend from him: David,

Hezekiah, Josiah, Hananya-Michael-Azariah counted as one descendant, David and the Messiah.<sup>83</sup> It is interesting here to note that the writer of the Targum realizing that six omers of barley is a burden too great for a woman to carry, inserts:

"and a strength came to her from God in order that she might carry them."<sup>84</sup> Though rendered in the English translation

"then she went back to the city", the Hebrew reads וְהָיָה "and he went" to inform us that Boaz accompanied Ruth back to the city gates so that none of the young men would harm her.<sup>85</sup>

3: And she came to her mother-in-law's. "Who are you, my daughter," she said. Then she told her  
16-18 all that the man had done for her. "These six omers of barley he gave to me. 'For,' said he, 'you must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'" "Wait, my daughter," she said "until you learn how the matter turns out; for the man will not rest until he settles the matter today."

"Who are you" seems rather absurd to the Rabbis of the Midrash so they ask: Could not Naomi recognize her daughter? Of course she could. That was not the real question addressed to Ruth. One must render מָה with the English 'what' as though it were מָה. Then the question is "What are you, my daughter, married or single."<sup>86</sup> One of the midrashim explains the last verse of the chapter thus: Naomi speaking to Ruth said: "Calm yourself, my daughter, for we (i.e. our family including Boaz) are not of those irresponsible persons who give vague promises and do not keep them. Thus Boaz will not rest until he sees the matter through this very day."<sup>87</sup>



### Ruth's Marriage to Boaz and their Descendants

4:1-4      Meanwhile Boaz went up to the city gate and sat down there just as the close relative was passing, of whom Boaz had spoken. "Come over and sit down here," he said. So he came over and sat down. Then Boaz got ten of the elders of the city and said "Sit down here." When they had seated themselves Boaz said to the close relative, "Naomi who has come back from Moab is selling the piece of land which belonged to our relative, Elimelech, so I thought I would tell you about it, suggesting that you buy it in the presence of those who are sitting here, and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, then do so; but if you will not redeem it then tell me so that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I come after you." "I will redeem it," he said.

Since the redeemer went by, just at the time Boaz sat at the gate in order to accomplish the redemption of Naomi's property, the Midrash asks whether the relative was already in the vicinity of the city gate, whereupon Rabbi Samuel ben Nachman observes that God would have had the redeemer pass by the city gate even had he been at the other end of the world so that the pious Boaz would not have to be vexed by this restriction to his marriage with Ruth.<sup>88</sup> According to Rabbi Eliezer, God sent an angel out to lead Tov past the gate in order to crown with success the zeal of Boaz, Ruth and Naomi in fulfilling the duty of redemption.<sup>89</sup> The Hebrew phrase 'כִּי־יִשְׁכַּח אֶת־שְׁמוֹ of verse one, which is usually rendered in some such impersonal manner as "such a one," is here interpreted by Rabbi Joshua as the actual name of the relative in question.<sup>90</sup> Rabbi Samuel b. Nachman, on the other hand, derives the word 'dumb' כִּי־יִשְׁכַּח

from 'לדבר . He was ignorant of the Torah.<sup>91</sup> He regarded the marriage of Ruth, a Moabite, as a sin, because he was unlearned in the law, for he founded his objection to becoming Ruth's husband on the grounds of her illegitimate descent; with the additional remark that the first husbands of Ruth and Orpah died just because of their marriage to these women.<sup>92</sup> This is evidence that he was not aware of the new halacha to Deuteronomy 23:5 which makes it applicable only to males.<sup>93</sup> From the fact that Boaz summoned ten elders, in whose presence he fulfilled all the conditions which enabled him to marry Ruth, Rabbi Eliezer bar Jose infers that the marriage blessing must be spoken in the presence of ten men.<sup>94</sup> Rabbi Judan son of Pazi hastens to add, ten are required not only for the marriage of a man and a maid but even for a widow and a widower.<sup>95</sup> The Midrash points out that 4:4 is addressed partly to the close relative, i.e. "If you will redeem it, then do so," and partly to the assembled elders who formed the Beth Din, i. e. "and if not, etc."<sup>96</sup>

4:5-6 Then Boaz said: "At the time that you buy the field from Naomi, you must also buy Ruth, the Moabite, the widow of the deceased, in order to restore the name of the deceased to his estate." Then the close relative said: "I cannot redeem it for myself lest I ruin my own estate. Use my right of redemption for yourself; for I cannot do so."

Ruth Rabbah remarks that the *kesib* of verse five 'לדבר namely, with the first person singular ending instead of the second singular, 'לדבר is proof of the interpretation of Rabbi Samuel b. Nachman that the relative was ignorant of the law.

In consequence of the redeemer's objection to marrying Ruth, Boaz wishes to indicate by *וְאֶתְּנָהּ* I take her for my own.<sup>97</sup> In verse six, twice the relative says he cannot redeem Ruth. The first time by way of boasting of his aristocracy, for which sake he rejected a union with the illegitimate Moabite woman, and the second time because he already had a wife.<sup>98</sup> The Targum elaborates on verse six. "Use my right of redemption for yourself," since you have no wife. Inasmuch as I am married I cannot take another wife into my house lest I cause strife.<sup>99</sup>

4:7        Now this was the ancient custom in Israel: concerning redeeming, and concerning exchanging, to confirm all things a man drew off his shoe and gave it to his neighbor; and this was the attestation in Israel.

The discussion of this custom is reserved for Chapter three where we intend to treat all such phases of this study.

4:8-12    Accordingly when the close relative said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself," he drew off his sandal. Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses today that I am buying from Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Machlon. Also Ruth, the Moabite, the widow of Machlon, I am buying to be my wife, in order to restore the name of the dead to his estates, so that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his relatives nor from the gates of his place, you are witnesses today." Whereupon all the people at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built up the house of Israel; may you achieve wealth in Ephrath, and gain fame in Beth Lechem; and from the offspring that the Lord gives you by this young woman,

may you have a house like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.

Rav and Levy differ about who took off the shoe, the one asserts Boaz, the other, the close relative.<sup>100</sup> It seems, however, that the first is more probable for it was the custom of the buyer to give the pledge.<sup>101</sup> At the beginning of our book, 1:4-5, scripture reads Machlon and Chilion, mentioning the better one first. Here at the sale, however, the reverse order is given. From this is deduced that one should be on guard against the worse one in the family. Boaz claims expressly that he purchased the entire property of Chilion and then Machlon's, so that Orpah should not later contest the sale of her former husband's property for the sake of her future descendants.<sup>102</sup> Although Boaz and most of the aristocrats descended from Leah, scripture names Rachel first, v. 11, for she had first place in Jacob's house.<sup>103</sup> According to Rabbi Tanchuma who spoke in the name of Rabbi Samuel, the expression וְהָיָה the descendant instead of just וְהָיָה as in Gen. 19:34 (story of Lot and his two daughters) indicates that the Messiah was to be an offspring of Ruth.<sup>104</sup>

4:           So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife;  
             he had intercourse with her, and the Lord  
13-15       made her conceive, and she bore a son.  
             Then the women said to Naomi, "Bless the  
             Lord who has not left you this day without  
             a close relative. May the boy's name become  
             famous in Israel. He shall renew your youth,  
             and be the stay of your old age; for your

daughter-in-law who loves you has borne him, who herself is more to you than seven sons."

Boaz married Ruth after her conversion to Judaism by a Kethubah, contract, and Kiddushin, sanctification ceremony.<sup>105</sup> This marriage was the necessary condition for the fulfillment of the blessing which Boaz gave to Ruth (i.e. the one signified by his giving her the wheat, 3:15)<sup>106</sup> "And he had intercourse with her." After Boaz perceived Ruth's noble character, he complied with the marital duty.<sup>107</sup> וַיִּשְׁכַּב בּוֹאָז עִיטָּה בַּלַּיְלָהָ הַהוּא And God made her able to conceive. Rabbi Simion ben Lakish sees in this the fact that Ruth had not the physical structure to bear children, but God changed her physical structure after she was married to Boaz.<sup>108</sup> Rabbi Huna claims it is to be attributed to the blessing of these women, v. 14, (for which we are to be grateful.) that the offspring of David at the time of Queen Athaliah were not altogether wiped out.<sup>109</sup> According to the same authority the word וְיָשָׁר which occurs in the blessing means: "Even as the day, i.e. the sun rules the heavens, so may your offspring hold sway forever in Israel."<sup>110</sup> Rabbi Judah and Rabbi Nechemya differ in regard to the interpretation of וְיָשָׁר. The first takes it as the seven family heads in I Chronicles 2:12-15, the other as the chiefs enumerated in Ruth 4:18-21a.<sup>111</sup>

4: 16-22 Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her bosom, and became his nurse; and the women in the neighborhood spread the report of him, "A son has been born to Naomi." So they called his name Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the



father of David. Now this is the geneology of Perez: Perez was the father of Hezron, Hezron of Ram, Ram of Aminadab, Aminadab of Nachson, Nachson of Salmon, Salmon of Boaz, Boaz of Obed, Obed of Jesse and Jesse of David.

Although Ruth was the mother of Obed, scripture reports "a son has been born to Naomi, for Naomi became its nurse, v.16. From this it follows that he who brings up a child (orphan) in his house, is to be regarded for his meritorious service as if he had given it life.<sup>112</sup> Rabbi Abahu in the name of Rabbi Jose b. Simra said: When a section begins with וְהָיָה then it is not to be construed with what precedes, whereas if it begins with וְהָיָה it is to be construed in very close connection with the preceeding.<sup>113</sup> The word שִׁשִּׁי is written defectively, i.e. without the י (whose numerical value is six) everywhere in scriptures except in Genesis 2:4 and one passage, v. 18, which represents the six good traits which Adam forfeited after the fall and which will be restored to mankind at the time of the Messiah, a descendant of Perez.<sup>114</sup>

## B. The Midrashic Story of Ruth

The story of Ruth came to pass during a crisis in the life of the people of Palestine. Political corruption was so widespread that the people lost all respect even for the judges.<sup>115</sup> As a punishment God sent upon the people one of the ten famines which He had ordained as a disciplinary method to be used from creation until the coming of the Messiah.<sup>116</sup> This particular one was the result, according to Rabbi Dosa, of a bad harvest in which the investment of forty-two sea of seed yielded only forty-one sea of grain.<sup>117</sup> Elimelech and his family, a wife and two sons, who were members of the aristocratic class, deserted the country rather than attempt to reform the sinful people or alleviate the condition of the needy.<sup>118</sup> An act unforgivable since, according to Rabbi Simon ben Gamliel, one is not permitted to emigrate to a foreign land during stress except when there is not enough food in the holy land to keep one alive.<sup>119</sup> In addition Elimelech, because of his social position of influence, set a bad example for his countrymen in that he deprived them of courage and patience, breaking down the morale of the nation.<sup>120</sup> Nevertheless he takes up his abode in Moab where, because of distinction, the men become officers in the army,<sup>121</sup> and the two sons, after the death of their father, married the daughters of Ezlon, king of Moab.<sup>122</sup> The death of Elimelech and the disgrace of an intermarriage with the illegitimate Moabites was

not enough of a retribution for the act of desertion, for in due time the entire family became impoverished and finally Machlon and Chilion, the two sons, died. Naomi heard from some itinerate merchants that the famine in Judah had abated and resolved to return to her native country.<sup>123</sup> Despite the fact that there was a deep bond of love between Naomi and her two daughters-in-law she hesitated to take them with her back to Palestine, realizing the disgrace upon herself which would be revealed by their presence<sup>124</sup> and the hardships they would have to endure as despised Moabite women.<sup>125</sup> Orpah is unwilling at first but after a time is convinced to return to her people, which is interpreted to mean she agreed to return to idol worship.<sup>126</sup> She did, however, accompany Naomi for four miles for which good deed she was later rewarded in that four giants descended from her, i.e. Goliath and his three brothers.<sup>127</sup> Ruth, on the other hand, was determined to become a Jewess, and remained obstinate even in the face of all the warning which Naomi gave her in regard to the hardships of being a Jewess. That an Israelite woman was enjoined to keep the Sabbath and holidays,<sup>128</sup> and forbidden to attend certain places of amusement<sup>129</sup> could not shake her faith. Even the restriction of only one God was not too severe, for in answer she gave utterance to the famous verse, 1:17, "Thy people shall be my people and thy God shall be my God."<sup>30</sup> So together they journeyed to Beth Lechem. Their arrival, according to one point of view, was on the day of the cutting of the omer for which occasion all

the people in the neighborhood were accustomed to gather together.<sup>131</sup> Another tradition has it that it was the very day on which Boaz's wife died and all had gathered for the funeral.<sup>132</sup>

After they had settled in Judah, Ruth realized that, as the younger person, it is her duty to provide support, and seeks to go out and glean in the field after the harvesters.<sup>133</sup> As fortune would have it she gleaned on the field of her near kinsman, Boaz. He seemed attracted to her, for in addition to being of captivating beauty.<sup>134</sup> she was extremely modest, keeping her distance from the gleaners and working in a seated posture keeping her skirts down.<sup>135</sup> This modesty, according to the midrash, was not native to Ruth but acquired through her association with Naomi.<sup>136</sup>

Boaz has a conversation with Ruth, which is allegorically interpreted as her conversion to Judaism,<sup>137</sup> in order to make her eligible for acceptance into the house of Israel.<sup>138</sup>

Because Boaz was disposed kindly toward Ruth he instructed his servants to help her in every way, even to drop sheaves purposely so that she would have a greater gleaning. As a result she returned home with more grain than it was usual for one to get in one day. This aroused Naomi's curiosity as to where Ruth had worked, and after finding out it was in Boaz's field, tells Ruth that he is a relative of theirs. Together they enter upon a plan to induce Boaz to marry Ruth. Naomi gives her the advise to wash, annoint herself, dress in her Sabbath clothes,<sup>139</sup> and go down to Boaz at the threshing floor, and to trust that Boaz will be attracted and marry her.

Naomi is certain that Boaz will remain at the threshing floor over night since the morals of the people were so lax that the owner of grain had to remain and guard it since the men were accustomed to pay the prostitutes with grain.<sup>140</sup>

Ruth goes down to Boaz and following the devised plan marks the place where he is asleep; there she lies down at his feet, entwines herself around him<sup>141</sup> and awakens him with the tickle of her hair.<sup>142</sup> Startled, he would have probably cried out, perhaps even with a curse<sup>143</sup> but all being the work of Providence, Ruth calms him by revealing the fact that he is a near relative and as far as she knows, eligible to redeem her. He tells her that there is yet a closer relative who must be given the opportunity to redeem her first, but that he is next and will do so if he gets the choice. Boaz blesses Ruth and tells her to remain there over night. We are told that all night Boaz has a struggle with his yetzer hara, which tries to prevail upon to have intercourse with Ruth but he finally triumphs and swears he will not violate her.<sup>144</sup>

In the morning Ruth and Boaz arise early before anyone discovers them together. Boaz gives her six omers of barley and escorts her as far as the city.<sup>145</sup> Ruth returned home, while Boaz went to seek out the close relative in order to give him his opportunity to acquire Ruth as a wife and the property which Naomi was selling.

Such an act required the presence of witnesses, therefore,



Boaz went to the city gate where it was the custom of the elders to hold court. It being destined that Boaz should marry Ruth, God has the close relative pass the gate just as the assemblage is in session, indeed the midrash tells us that had the close relative been at the other end of the world God would have caused him to pass the gate at this moment.<sup>146</sup>

In our text this relative is referred to as <sup>וְהַיְיטָן</sup> which according to Rabbi Joshua was his actual name,<sup>147</sup> while Rabbi Samuel bar Nachman claims he was thus called because he was ignorant of the Torah <sup>וְהַיְיטָן</sup>.<sup>148</sup> He thought that the first husbands died only because they married these Moabite women, as for me, I better not attach myself to these stained women and avoid bringing confusion into my family.<sup>149</sup> The new interpretation of the scripture: that reference is here made to the males, but not to the females of these two races, was altogether unknown to him.<sup>150</sup> Another interpretation has it that he refused to accept the conditions of the redemption because he already had one wife and did not seek any strife in the family by adding another one to his household.<sup>151</sup>

Boaz, now free to marry Ruth, does so in the presence of the same assembly, acquiring her and the property of Naomi, Machlon and Chilion. With the blessings of the people that his house may be like the house of Leah and Rachel and like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore, Boaz and Ruth depart.

We are told in the midrash that Ruth was incapable of

motherhood and Boaz was childless, but because of the pious blessings of the people they were able to have children,<sup>152</sup> and because of their piety they were worthy to have the Messiah descend from them.<sup>153</sup> With this the midrash closes.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1. Ruth Rabba 1:1 ויהי בימי שפוט השופטים...ומי היו רב אמר ברק  
ודבורה היו. ריב"ל אמר שמנר ואחוד היו. רב חונא  
אמר דבורה וברק ויעל היו. שפוט חד שופטים חרין השופטים תלתא.
2. Ruth Rabba 1:1 ibid.
3. Ruth Rabba 1:4 כך אליכלך היה סנדוליהסדינה וספרנמי הדור.
4. Ruth Rabba 1:4 ולמה נענש אלימלך. עיי' שהפיל לבן של ישראל אליהם.
5. Ruth Rabba 1:4 רעב שבא בימי שפוט השופטים ר" חונא בשם ר" דוסא  
ח"ב מאות היו ונעשו מ"א.
6. Ruth Rabba 1:4 ארשב"ג איסתי בזמן שאינו מוצא ליקח אבל מוצא ליקח  
אפי' מאה בשקל לא יצא ישראל חוצה לארץ.
7. Lekach Tov, page 2. Quoted by Hartmann, page 5, note 4.
8. Ruth Rabba 2:11 ותקם היא וכלותיה ותשב מדה מואב כי שמעה בשדה  
מואב. שמעה מהרוכלים המחזירין בעיירות. ומה שמעה  
כי פקד י"י את עמו לתת להם לחם.
9. Yalkut Shimoni תרא מפני מה מהזרת אותם כדי שלא תתב"ש בהם
10. Ruth Rabba 2:15, Yalkut Shimoni תרא ויעש ה' עמכם חסד ר'  
הנינא ברי דרב אחא אמר יעשה כתיב כאשר עשיתם עם הסתים  
שנפלתם בתכריכייהם.
11. Ruth Rabba 2:17 שכנה בנתי לכנה. ר' אבואל בר נחמני בשם ר' יודן  
בר' הנינא בנ' מקומות כתיב כאן שכנה שכנה כננד  
נ' פעמים שדוחין את הנר ואם הפריח יוצר מכאן מקבלין אותו.  
לאחניירא Targum of 1:10 adds

12. Yalkut Shimoni תרא לזכנה שזכנה רבי שמואל בר חייא בש"ר הנינא בשלשה מקומות כתיב כאן שזכנה שלשה פעמים.
13. Ruth Rabba 2:21 ר' יודן בש"ר יצחק ד' מילין הלכה ערפה עם חסונה ועמדו סמנה ד' גבורים
14. Ruth Rabba 2:21 ר' ברכיה בש"ר יצחק מ' פביעות הלכה ערפה עם חסונה ונתלה לזכנה מ' יום.
15. Ruth Rabba 2:22 כיון ששבה אל עמה שבה אל אלהיה.
16. R.R. 2:23 ש"ם דעתי והתנייר אלא מוצב על ירך ולא ע"י אחרת.
17. R.R. 2:23 כיון ששמעה נעמי כך התחילה מודדת לה נרים.
18. R.R. 2:23 אמרה לה אל אשר תלכי אלך. אמרה לה בתי אין דרכן ישראל לדור בבית שאין שם מזדזה. אמרה לה באשר תליני אלין. עמך עמי אלו עונשים ואזהרות ואלהיך אלהי שאר מצות:
19. Ruth Rabba 2:25 כאשר תכונני אבות. אלו ד' מיתות ביד בקילה שריפה הרג וחנק. ושם אקבר אלו שני קברים המתקנים לב"ד. אחד זנבלין ולנשרפין ואחד לנהרגין ולקנהנקין.
20. Yalkut Shimoni תרא אבר ר' אבהו בוא וראה כמה חביבי נרים לפני הקב"ה כיון שנחנה דעה להתנייר השנה הכתוב אותה לנעמי שנאמר וזלכנה שתיהם עד בואנה בית לחם. ותלכנה שתיהן. א"ר שמואל בר' כימון אותו היום קציר העומר היה. דתנינן תמן כל העיירות הכסוכים לשם היו מתכנסות כדי שיהא נקצר בערב גדול.
21. Ruth Rabba 3:6 אשתו של בעז מתה באותו היום ונתכנסו כל ישראל לנטילות חבדים ואזיל כל עמא לנטילות חבדא. נכנה רוח עם נעמי והיתה זו יוצאת וזו נכנה.
22. Ruth Rabba 3:6

22. (cont.) Yalkut תרא א"ר יצחק אותו היום שבאת רוח המואביה  
לארץ ישראל ומה אשמו של בועז היינו דאמרי אינשי עד דלא  
שכיב שכבא קיימא מני ביזיה.
23. Yalkut Shimoni תרא א"ר נחמן בר יצחק אמרין זה בועז.
24. Yalkut Shimoni תרא וי"א אמרין היה משיא את בנותיו.
25. " " " א"ר חייא כל היסורין קשים ושל עוני קשה מכלן.  
כל היסורים באים וכשהולכים להם מתחדש בהו' שהיה, אבל יסורין  
של עוני מבהין עיניו של אדם שנאמר עיני דאבה מני עוני.
26. Rut. Rabba 4.6 רבי ינאי אמר בת מ' שנה היתה ואין קוראין בה  
אלא לבת מ' שנה.
27. Ruth Rabba 4.6 ויקר מקרה א"ר יוחנן כל הרואה אותה מריק קרי.
28. Berlin Hs. of the Arabic Version to Ruth edited by Peritz in  
M.G.W.J. Quoted by Hartmann, Das Buch Ruth in der Midrash  
Literatur, page 33.
29. Ruth Rabba 4.4 א"ר אבהו נפיל נריב לנפילא מה הם מעמידין  
נבוריחיל. בעז נריב לרות מה הם מעמידין דור.
30. Lekach Tov. "Ruth went only with permission of her mother-  
in-law." The NJ no doubt gave rise to this interpretation  
since it also says in Beraitna 9a בקשה לא לזון בלא  
The word NJ always signifies a request. Hartmann, Das Buch  
Ruth, page 34. Sub verse 2.
31. ותלך ותבא ותלקב כשדה א"ר אלעזר שהלכה ובאת הלכה  
ובאת עד שמצאה בני אדם המהונגנין לילך עמה.
32. Ruth Rabba 4.6 ותלך ותבא עד כרון לא אזלת ואת אמרת ותבא.  
ר' יהודה בר' ביטון אמר התחילה סביימת לפניך הדרכים.



33. Ruth Rabba 4.8 לסי הנערה הזאת ולא הוה חכים לה. אלא כיון שראה אותה נעיסה ומעשיה נאים התחיל שואל עליה.  
כל הנשים שוחחות ומלקטות וזו יושבת ומלקטת כל הנשים  
מלקטות בליהם וזו משלשלת בליה כל הנשים משחקות עם הקוצרים  
וזו נצנעת עצמה. כל הנשים מלקטות בין העמרים וזו מלקטת טן ההפקר.
34. R.R. 4.10 ויאמר בועז אל רוח שמעת בתי אל תלכי ללקוט בשדה  
אחר. ע"ש לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים על פני. וגם לא  
תעבורי מזה ע"ש זה אלי ואנוהו. ובה תדבקין עם נערוצי אלו  
הצדיקים שקרויין נערים שנא' [איוב ס'] התשחק בו בצפור ותקשרנו  
לנערותיך. עיניך בשדה אשר יקצורון והלכת אחריהן הלא צויתי את  
הנערים לבלתי נגער וצמית והלכת אל הכלים ושתית מאשר ישאבון  
הנערים. עיניך זו מנהדרין רמ"ה איברים שיש באדם אינן הולכין  
אלא אחר העינים הלא שנא' עיניך וגו'. והלכת אחריהן לבלתי נגער  
שלא לרחוק. והלכת אל הכלים אלו הצדיקים שקרויין כלים שנא'  
[ש"ב א] איך נפלו נכורים ליאבדו כדי מלחמה. ושתית מאשר ישאבון  
הנערים זה בית השואבה ולמה נקרא שמה שואבה שמשם היו שואבין רוח  
הקודש שנאמר [ישעיה יב] ושואבתם מים בששון ממעיני הישועה;  
וישאו להם נשים שואביות. תני בש"ר מאיר לא  
35. Ruth Rabba 2.9 ניירום ולא תבטלו אותם ולא היתה הלכה להתחדש ולא היו  
נענשין עלהם עמוני ולא עמונית מואבי ולא מואביות.  
ויען בועז ויאמר לה הנד הנד לי. למה שני פעמים הנד  
36. R.R. 5.3 הנד לי הונד לי כבית הונד לי בשדה.  
ותהי מתבורתך שלמה, שלמה בתיב רמז לה שלמה יעמד סתן. תרכ. Y. Shim. 37.



43. Ruth Rabba 5.9 ותאמר לה חסותה איפה לקצת היום. הני בשש ר' יהושע יוחר סמך שבעל הבית עושה עשהגני העני עושה עם בעל הבית.
44. Y. Shimonі חרר ותאמר נעמי ברוך הוא לה' אשר לא עזב חסדו עם החיים שונן ופרנסן, ואם המתיים שנפלו להם בתכריכיהם.
45. ibid.
46. Lekach Tov, quoted by Hartmann, Das Buch Ruth sub verse 20 p52
47. ibid.
48. Y. Shimonі חרר אמר ר' יוחנן ודאי מואביה היא שהוציאה עילה על אותו צדיק, הוא אמר לה ובה תדבקין עם נערוי והיא אומרת לחסותה עם הנערים אשר לי תדבקין, ואף נעמי אמרה ברוח הקדש מוב בתי הצאי עם נערותיו.
49. ibid.
50. Lekach Tov, quoted by Hartmann, Das Buch Ruth sub verse 1 note 2 page 55.
51. Hartmann, Das Buch Ruth Kap.III 1--page 55.
52. Ruth Rabba 5.12 ורחצת וכבשת. ורחצת מנחות ע"ז שלך
53. ibid. וכבשת אלו מצות וצדקות
54. ibi. ושבת שמלותיך עליך וכי ערומה היזה. אלא אלו בגדי שבתא
55. ibid. וירדת הנורן אמרה לה זכותי חרר עמך
56. ibid. וירדת הנורן מכאן שאין עושין נרנות אלא כנמוך שבעיר.
57. Yalkut Shimonі חרר הנה הוא (יד) זורה את הנורן, אמר ר' אבא בר בהנא מכאן לתלמיד חכם שלא יצא יחודי בלילה.
58. R.R.5.13: ויהי כשכבו וגו' ותאמר אליה כל אשר תאמרי אלי. אלף קרי: ולא כתיב אמרה לה שהא יבא אחד מן הכלבים ויזדווג לי.
59. Y. Shimonі חרר דבר אחר וייבב לבו שברך על מזונו המוב והמביב.

60. Y. Shimonî חרד ויאכל בועז וישת ויישב לבו, מלמד שאכל מיני  
מתיקה אחר כדודה, מלמד שהמתיקה מרגלת הלשון להורה.
61. Y. Shimonî חרד דיא בקש אשה שנאמר כעא אשה כעא מוכ.
62. Y. Shimonî חרה רבי יהודה הנשיא כעא קומי ר' פנחס בריה דרבי  
שמעון בועז גדול הדור הוא ואת אמת ויבא לשכב בקצה  
הערסה, אמר ליה לפי שהיה אותו דור שמוץ בעכירה והיו  
נחתנים שבר לזונות מן הגרנות שנאמר אהבת אתנן על כל גרנות דנן.  
Also Ruth Rabba 5.15.
63. Y. Shimonî חרה שהצדיקים החוקים מן הנזל לפיכך מסונג חביב  
עליהם. Also Ruth Rabba 5.15.
64. Y. Shimonî חרו ויהי בחצי הלילה. זה שנאמר הכתוב חצות לילה  
אקום להודות לך, כך אמר דוד חייב אני לקום להודות  
לך על מה שעשית לזקני וזקנתי בחצי הלילה שנאמר ויהי  
בחצי הלילה ויחרד האיש וילפת, שאילו התחיל זה ללל  
אחת מהיכן היתי עומד.
65. Y. Shimonî חרו וילפת יפפתו בחזות והתחיל לשמש בשערה ואומר  
שרוחות אין להם שער.
66. Ruth Rabba 6.3 אמר לה מי את רוח או אשה. אמרה אשה. פנויה את  
או אשת איש. אמרה לו פנויה. במאה את או מהורה.  
אמרה לו מהורה.
67. Tanch B. Behar, quoted by Hartmann, Das Buch Ruth sub verse  
9 note 4 page 63.
68. Y. Shimonî חרו אמר רבי ברכיה ערורים הרשעים להלן ותחפשנהו  
בכגדו ותאמר שכמה עמי כמהמה, כרם הכא ופרשת כנפך על אמתך.

69. Ruth Rabba 6.4 ר"ל אמר רות בת מ' שנה היתה ולא נפקדה כיון שנשאת למחלון וכיון שהתפלל עליה אותו צדיק נפקדה.
70. Ruth Rabba 6.4 ורבנן אמרין שניהם לא נפקדו אלא מברכותיהן של צדיקים
71. Ruth Rabba 6.4 ר"י אמר לעולם אל ימנע אדם עצמו מליילך אצל זקן לברכו. כועז היה בן מ' שנה ולא נפקד. וכיון שהתפללה עליו אותה צדקת מיד נפקד.
72. Targum Ruth 10.3 ואמר בריכה אנת מן קדם יי בראי אושבת מיכותיך בתרא מן קדמא קדמא דאתנירת ובתרא דעברת גרסיך באתמא דנמרה יבם קליל עד זמן דירבי
73. Ruth Rabba 6.4 אייר שמואל בר רב יצחק האשה אוהבת בחור מסכן בזקן עשיר:
74. Lekaon Tov, quoted by Hartmann, Das Buch Ruth sub 3:11 p.65.
75. Jellinek, Bet ha-Midr. v 30 sub Hartmann p.67 לא יחפץ ואם לא יחפץ Hartmann p.67 note 5.
76. Ruth Rabba 6.6 ליני הלילה. הלילה הזו את לנה בלא איש ואין את לנה לילה אחרת בלא איש.
77. Tanenl. B. Quoted by Hartmann sub 3.13 p.68.
78. Y. Shimoni רישב"ל אמר מוב ואלימלך ושלמון אחים היו, וכוזן חרו לאחינו. אשר לאחינו לאלימלך, מכאן שמורא אדם לרודו אחיו.
79. Ruth Rabba 6.7 ר"י אומר כל אותו הלילה היה יצרו מקברנו ואמר את פנוי ומבקש אשה והיא פנוי ומבקשת איש עסוד וכוזלה ותהיה לך לאשה ונשבע ליצרו ואמר חי י"י שאינו נזנע בה.
80. R.R. 7.1 ויאמר אל יודע כי באה האשה הנזרן למי אמר. אייר מאיר לכן ביתו אמר.



81. Ruth Rabba 7.1 ר' חנניא ור' ירמיה בשיר שמואל בר רב יצחק כל  
אותו הלילה היה בועז שמוח על פניו ואומר רבון  
העולמים גלוי וידוע לפניך שלא ננקתי בה כן יהי רצון  
מלפניך אל יודע כי באה האשה הנרן ולא יתחלל בי שם שמים:  
82. R.R. 7.2 ויאמר הכי המפפחת אשר עליך. הבה כתיב. מלמד שהיה  
מדבר עמה בלשון זכר שלא ירגיש בו בריה.  
83. R.R. 7.2 אמר ר' יהודה בר ר"ס בזכות ויסד שש שעורים וישת  
עליה זבה ויערדו מבנה ו' צדיקים וכאז"א בהן שש מדות.  
דוד חזקיהו יאשיהו חנניה מישאל ועזריה דניאל ומלך המשיח.  
84. Targum Ruth 3.15 ואמר הכי כודרא די עליך ואחידה בה ואחידה בה  
ובל שית כאין דכעורין ושני עלהא ואייתי לה בח  
מן קדם יי.  
85. R.R. 7.2 ויבא העיר ולא היה צריך למימר אלא ותבא העיר ואח  
אמרה ויבא העיר. 'אלא מלמד שהיה מהלך עמה שלא יבנעו בה  
אחד מן הבחורים:  
86. R.R. 7.3 והבא אל חסותה ותאמר מי את כתי. ובי לא היתה מכירה.  
אלא אמרה לה מה את פנויה או אשת איש אמרה לה פנויה  
87. Midras' Suta, quoted by Hartmann, Das Buch Ruth sub 3.18 p74  
88. Ruth Rabba 7.6 א"ר שמואל בר נחמן אפי' היה בכוף העולם הטיכו  
הקביה והביאו לשם כדי שלא יהא אותו צדיק יושב  
ומצער סתוך ישובו.  
89. ibid. ר"א אומר בועז עשה את שלו ורות עשתה שם שלה ונעמי  
עשתה את שלה אמר הקביה אף אני אעשה את שלי.  
90. ibid. ר' יהושע אומר פלוני אלמוני שמו.

91. ibid. ר' שמואל בר נחמן אמר אלה היה מד"ת
92. ibid. אמר הראשונים לא סתו אלא שנמלו אותו ואני הולך לימלה  
חל לי לימלה לית אני מערבב זרעיימי איני מערבב פכולת בבני
93. ibid. ולא היה יודע שכבר נהחדשה הלכה עמוני ולא עמונית מואבי  
ולא מואבית:
94. R.R. 7.7 א"ר אלעזר בר' יומי מיכן לורכת חתנים בי.
95. ibid. א"ר יודן בן פזי לא כיף דבר בחור לבתולה אלא אפי' אלמן  
לאלמנה עד שתהקה בעשרה:
96. R.R. 7.8 אם תנאל נאל. יגואל אמר. ואם לא ינאל לבית דין אמר. R.R. 7.8
97. R.R. 7.9 קניתי בתיב והא מביינא לההיא דא"ר שמואל בר נחמן אלה  
היה מד"ת
98. Targum and Lekach Tov, quoted by Hartmann, Das Buch Ruth sub  
4.6 page 81.
99. Targum Ruth 4.6 לית אנא יכיל למפרוק לי על דאית לי אחתא לית  
לי רשו למכב אוחרניתא עלהא דלמא תהי למצו בביתי
100. R.R. 7.11 רב ולוי. ה"א נעלו של בועז וחרינו אמר נעלי של נואל. R.R. 7.11
101. ibid. נראין הדברים כמ"ד נעלי של בועז שדרך הלוקח להיות  
נותן ערבון.
102. Lekach Tov, quoted by Hartmann-Das Buch Ruth, sub 4.9 p.85.
103. Y. Shimoni יתן ה' את האשה הבאה אל ביתך ונול', לא הנה  
צריך קרא למימר אלא בלאה וברחל, אלא אע"פ שיצא בועז  
וכל כנהדרין שלו בלאה היו מודים שעקר הבית הייתה רחל שלא  
נשתעבד בבית לבן אלא בשביל רחל.
104. R.R. 7.14 ור' תנחומא בש"ר שמואל אמר שמה בתיב ונחיה מאבינו זרע R.R. 7.14  
אביב בן אלא זרע אותו הזרע שהוא בא ממקום אחר. ואיזה זה  
זה מלך המשיח:

105. Hs Jem 168a ויקח בעז בבזזבה וקידושין את רות אחר שנתיירה  
Quoted by Hartmann, Das Buch Ruth sub 4.13 page 88 note 6.
106. Hs Jem 168a [ויקח] בעז את רות זו היא הברכה ששע עליה  
ibid. note 7.
107. Hs Jem 168a ויבא אליה כשהתבונן במעשיה המוכים בא אליה ביאה  
ibid. page 89 note 3 של מצוה.
108. Ruth Rabba 7.13 ויקח בעז את רות ותהי לו לאימו ארשב"ל עיקר  
מוכרין לא היה לה וגלף לה הקב"ה ציקר מוכרין.
109. R. R. 7.14 א"ר חוניא מברכותיהן של נשים לא נתקעקה ביצתו  
של דוד בימי עתליהו.
110. ibid. מה היום הזה רודה ברקיע כך יהא בזרעך רודה ושלום בישראל  
לעולם.
111. R. R. 7.15 ר' יהודה ור"ג. ר"י אומר משנקה ראשי האבות האמורין  
להלן אצם הששי דוד השביעי:
112. Y. Shimonī קבא בדברי ינאי דאמר רבי ינאי כל המגדל יהום בחוך  
ביתו מעלה עליו הכתוב כאלו ילדו שנאמר זאת חמשת בני  
מיכא אשר ילדה וכי מיכל ילדה והלא מרב ילדה אלא מרב  
ילדה ומיכל גדלה לפיכך נקרא על שמה.
113. R. R. 8, 1 כ"מ שנאמר אלה פכל את הראשונים ואלה מוכיף על  
הראשונים וכו'.
114. Y. Shimonī חרמ ואלה תולדות פרץ. כל תולדות השמים והארץ, ודין,  
ומה אינזן חסרין, ר' יודן בשם ר' ראובן ו' כנגד ששה דברים  
שנמלו מאדם הראשון, זיוו, וחיוו, ולומחו, ופדות הארץ, ופירות  
האיין, ומאורות... ועוד אין חוזרין למקומן עד שיבא בן פרץ.

115. Ruth Rabba 1:1 ויהי בימי שפוט השופטים. אזי לדור ששפמו את שופמיהם ואוח לדור ששופמיו צריכין להשפם.
116. Ruth Rabba 1.4 ויהי רעב בארץ עשרה רעבון באו לעולם. אחד בימי אהר"ר אחד בימי למך ואחד בימי אברהם ואחד בימי יצחק ואחד בימי יעקב ואחד בימי אליהו ואחד בימי אלישע ואחד בימי דוד ואחד בימי שפוט השופטים ואחד שסנלגל ובא לעולם.
117. See Note 5
118. " " 3
119. " " 6
120. " " 4
121. Targum Ruth 1.2 ואחז עד חקל מואב והזו חמן רופילין:
122. Ruth Rabba 2.9 רות וערפה בנותי של עגלון היו
123. See Note 3
124. " " 9
125. " " 9
126. " " 15
127. Y. Shimoni חרא ארבע טילין הלכה ערפה עם חמותה ועמדו א"ר יצחק ארבע טילין הלכה ערפה עם חמותה ועמדו חסנה ארבעה נבורים ואת ארבעת אלה יולדו להרפה בנת.
128. See Note 18
129. " " 18
130. " " 18
131. " " 21
132. " " 22
133. See Note 30
134. " " 27
135. " " 33

136. Ruth Rabba 4.8 ויען הנער הנצב על הקוצרים ויאמר נערה מואבית  
היא. זאת אמרת מעשיה נאים ונעימיה אלא רבתי רפתי לה:

137. See Note 34

138. " " 35

139. " " 54

140. " " 62

141. " " 65

142. " " 65

143. " " 64

144. " " 79

145. " " 85.

146. See Note 38

147. " " 90

148. " " 91

149. " " 92

150. " " 93

151. " " 98

152. " " 70

153. Ruth Rabba 8.3 ולא דיו שבאחי אלא במגלה ובכפר כתוב עלי.  
במגלה פרץ חצרון רם עמינדב נחשון בועז עובר ישי דוד.



### CHAPTER III

#### RABBINIC ATTITUDES REFLECTED IN THE MIDRASHIC LITERATURE TO RUTH AND AN EXPOSITION OF THE HOMILETIC INTRODUCTION

##### A. The Characters of the Story.

The Midrash speaks of Ruth with the greatest respect and, although she is of heathen descent, association with whom Scripture expressly forbids in Deuteronomy 23:4, the Rabbis interpret this prohibition to refer only to the male descendents,<sup>1</sup> thus removing all stigma from the character of the woman and making the subsequent association of Boaz with Ruth in every respect acceptable. Here we find a striking incident of a type of legalistic procedure often used by the Rabbis wherein a strict insistence on the letter of the law makes for a liberal rather than a restricted legislation.

The moral character of Ruth is of the finest. In many ways does the Midrash describe her fidelity, modesty and decency. Thus, for example, special attention is given to her behavior when picking sheaves in the field of Boaz. Because of the striking contrast between the modesty of Ruth and the boldness of the other women in the field,<sup>2</sup> and because of the wide-spread reputation she had attained as a virtuous woman who had remained faithful to her mother-in-law during times of hardship,<sup>3</sup> ~~was she~~ attractive to Boaz. It is, however, claimed that modesty was not native to

Ruth but acquired through her association with Naomi.<sup>4</sup> Indeed one direct reflection of her integrity is cast by Rabbi Chanin bar Levi when he refers to her as "truly a Moabiteess" because she failed to be accurate in restating the command given her by Boaz.<sup>5</sup> While he told her to glean together with his women, she recounted it as though he placed her with his men.

According to the haggadah, Ruth was supposed to have been the daughter of a King<sup>6</sup> and although when she went forth from Palestine she was already forty years old,<sup>7</sup> she is said to have been of unparalleled beauty.<sup>8</sup> The name רוּת is a derivative of הַרְוֵה and indicates that she observed and followed the way of her mother-in-law.<sup>9</sup>

As for Boaz, he is considered by the Midrash to be one of the outstanding men of his day.<sup>10</sup> As has already been stated he was identified with the judge Ibzan<sup>11</sup> and designated as president of the court.<sup>12</sup> Through his prayers he is supposed to have softened God's heart and thus to have put an end to the famine.<sup>13</sup> To Boaz is attributed the modification of the law in Deuteronomy 23:4, as relating only to the male descendants,<sup>14</sup> and also the command to greet people with God's name.<sup>15</sup> Of him the Rabbis speak only with words of praise.

Naomi is presented as a noble woman who, by instruction and example, led Ruth on the path of morality and virtue,<sup>16</sup> and with maternal solicitude sought the welfare of Ruth after the death of her own husband and two sons. Her name is derived from the word נָחַם meaning pleasant.<sup>17</sup>

Elimelech is the antithesis of Boaz. Also pictured as a powerful figure in the community,<sup>18</sup> he fails his countrymen in a time of crisis and shows them an example of cowardice. Afraid lest the people might look to him for sustenance, and thus his wealth might be depleted,<sup>19</sup> he flees the country. His selfish nature is brought out in his very name which is interpreted as a combination of 'למ and 'למ meaning mine is the kingdom.<sup>20</sup>

As for Machlon and Chilion they are unfortunate creatures whose fates are forecast in the very names they bear.<sup>21</sup>

Orpah is placed in a very bad light. To be sure, she is called, together with Ruth, the daughter of Eglon,<sup>22</sup> but for the rest she is represented as diametrically opposed to the latter.<sup>23</sup> Especially is she suspected of leaving her mother-in-law and returning to idol worship.<sup>24</sup> Her name is also indicative of her personality being nothing more than the Hebrew word 'למ meaning to show the neck, which she did when parting company with Naomi and Ruth.<sup>25</sup> She is, however, credited with being the ancestor of Goliath, a reward for the little fidelity she did display toward Naomi.<sup>26</sup>

#### B. Textual Exegesis in the Midrash to Ruth.

Midrashic literature in general pays special attention<sup>to</sup>/syn-tactical and linguistic peculiarities in the text, basing many of its interpretations upon words, phrases, and letters. Indeed the book of Ruth opens with just such observations. Hence no study would be adequate unless this phase of the literature be considered.

The very first word of our text is treated thus by Rabbi Tanchuma and Rabbi Berachya who have traditions from Rabi and Rabbi Eleazer respectively to the effect that every instance where the word **וַיְהִי** occurs, it was a tragic event in the history of Israel.<sup>27</sup> Rabbi Simon ben Abba in the name of Rabbi Jochanan asserts that the word according to the context in which it is used indicates both joy as well as sadness, and indeed the deepest joy as well as the deepest sadness.<sup>28</sup> Rabbi Samuel ben Nachman claims that **וַיְהִי** indicates only a sad event while **וַיֵּלֶךְ** on the other hand a joyous one.<sup>29</sup>

The word **וַיֵּלֶךְ** (1:1) used in connection with journeying instead of some such word as **וַיֵּצֵא** which is usually denotes travel for a distance, indicates that Elimelech went like a dependent.<sup>30</sup>

Special meanings are attached to repetitions as for example in the phrase **וַיִּשְׁמַע ה' וַיִּשְׁמַע** (2:11) the first word is taken to indicate that Elimelech heard of Ruth's kind deeds from the people at home, while the second word includes that he also heard of her virtue from people of the surrounding district,<sup>31</sup> making the implication clear that Ruth's reputation as a kind and virtuous girl had spread far and wide over the land.

Superfluous words, as well as striking juxtapositions of words and phrases call forth special comment. The phrase **וַיְהִי כִּשְׁנָה** gives opportunity for the interesting observation of the Midrash that in the case of the wicked the word **וַיְהִי** always follows follows their name, i.e. **וַיְהִי לְפָאֵר** (indicating arrogance) while as for the righteous it always precedes their name, i.e. **וַיְהִי לְאַלְפָּנָה**

showing their kinship in character to the creator of whom it is also written (Ex. 6:3) 32  
וְאֵלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ לֹא נִוְדָעוֹתֵי לָהֶם

The keri and kethib lend themselves readily to the interpretation of the Midrash. Thus the word בִּשְׁלֹשׁ which occurs in Ruth 3:4 בִּשְׁלֹשׁ שָׁעִים, with the superfluous letter ש, indicates that Ruth slept six hours at the feet of Boaz.<sup>33</sup>

Many words derive a different meaning through vocalization מַאֲמָלוֹת meaning maidservants becomes מֵאֲמָלוֹת mothers.<sup>34</sup> Thus the Midrash seeks to honor Ruth and count her among the mothers of Israel. Still other words change their meaning by the context in which they occur that passages are cited where עִירָה means city, עִיר means province, and מְיֻנָּה means climate.<sup>35</sup>

These interpretations are to be taken only as haggadic. We cannot expect to find either grammatical or lexicographical accuracy. Now and then we may come across among a host of fanciful interpretations, some which indicate the beginnings of scientific exegesis, but for the most part they are interesting only as demonstrative of genius in mental gymnastics peculiar to the medieval Rabbi.

#### C. Legalisms Reflected in the Midrash to Ruth.

We have already spoken of the conversion of Ruth in chapter two. It seems that the entire legal procedure was fixed and the Rabbis of the Midrash have but to indicate how each requirement of the ceremony was executed. This they do by the use of allegorical interpretations as we have seen. The readiness on the part of Israel to accept proselytes is illustrated in the sentiment



of Rabbi Isaac who said: "put them off with your left hand but draw them nigh with your right."<sup>36</sup> According to the Yalkut, quoting Talmudic injunction, when one expressed the desire to become a convert to Judaism, the following questions are put to him: "What do you see in Judaism that you wish to become converted? Do you not know that Israel is in trouble, preyed upon by other nations?" If he says I know and yet I am not worthy of becoming a member of Israel, then he is accepted immediately. He is next informed of some of the lenient commandments and some of the stringent ones. He is told of the guilt of Liket, shikhah and Peah. He is told: "Know that when you were not a Jew you ate forbidden fat and was not punished with extinction כִּי, you desecrated the Sabbath and were not punished with stoning לְמָוֶת. Now if you do these things you will be thus punished. But just as the convert is informed of the punishments so is he informed of the rewards and told that the world is not prepared except for righteous men. The convert may yet change his mind, if, however, he does not, then the ceremony proceeds (with the circumcision, ritual bath and sacrifice) and they do not overburden him with commandments."<sup>37</sup>

Two interesting reflections on contemporary Rabbinic attitudes are drawn from the book of Ruth in this connection. It seems there was a complete separation of Jew and heathen, as far as their social life was concerned, for when Naomi warns Ruth of the restrictions she assumes when entering Judaism, one of the

strongest is that she must not attend the places of amusement of the heathen,<sup>38</sup> obviously because of their immoral presentations. The favorable attitude of the Rabbis of this era toward those who proselyte to Judaism is also clearly voiced in the statement that "as soon as Ruth expressed the desire to embrace Judaism she became equal with Naomi in the eyes of God."<sup>39</sup> Perhaps we might also infer that at the time of the composition of Ruth Rabbah Moabite women were actually admitted into the household of Israel, and that the innovation attributed to Boaz<sup>40</sup> was more than the mere rationalization of a detail in the story.

In connection with the procedure involved in the redemption of Ruth by Boaz, the Midrash gives an historical account of the ancient customs used in the business of buying and selling property.

Aforetime when one acquired property either by גאולה redemption or קנין exchange, and he wanted to make certain the transaction would remain binding, one would remove his shoe and give it to the other<sup>41</sup> in the presence of witnesses. Later (in post Biblical times) the custom of גזירה (being cut off, separated) was instituted. When anyone sold his field, i.e. outside his own family, his relatives would bring vessels which they filled with parched corn and nuts, break them in the presence of little children. The children would pick up the corn and nuts while calling out: so and so has been parted from his property. In the event that the original owner should buy back the property

the same scene would be reenacted and the children would call out: so and so has again acquired his property.<sup>42</sup> This was done as a safeguard for posterity since adults were permitted to testify that as children they ate nuts at so and so's hetzazah.<sup>43</sup>

The same procedure is said to have taken place when one married an unworthy wife. Only then it would be proclaimed: so and so because of his marriage is parted from his family. If, however, he divorces his wife, the children would proclaim: so and so has been restored to his family.<sup>44</sup> In later times they again returned to the custom of removing the shoe and sandal.<sup>45</sup> While in still more recent times the sale was validated with pesut (money) ketav (a written document) and mapin (taking possession).<sup>46</sup>

Rabbi Jose said in the name of Rabbi Jochanan "a coin of a value less than a perutah is not sufficient to make an acquisition valid."<sup>47</sup>

Rabbi Eliezer expresses the opinion that if one passes through the length and breadth of a field (with the intention of purchasing it) he has acquired it, following the principle of acquisition by trespass. While the sages say one does not acquire a field except by mapin actual possession (which implies making improvements.)<sup>48</sup>

We also learn from the book of Ruth the halacha that marriage ceremonies, whether of a man and maid, or of a widow and widower, must be performed in the presence of ten men.<sup>49</sup>

#### D. Cultural-Historical Implications in the Midrash.

The agricultural setting of the book of Ruth gives the Rabbis of the Midrash an opportunity to picture for us their conceptions of certain customs of Bible times, for example, we learn that on the day of the barley harvest, around Pesach,<sup>50</sup> all the inhabitants of the adjacent cities came together to celebrate the beginning of the harvest with great pomp.<sup>51</sup> We are also informed that the threshing floors were always built in low places,<sup>52</sup> and that because of moral depravity the owner had to guard his grain by sleeping at the threshing-floor lest it be stolen and paid as hire for lewdness.<sup>53</sup>

A military question arises involving the relative value of fields of grain and is thoroughly discussed. The Israelites in their fight with the Philistines trampled down a barley field (1 Chron. 11,13) or according to 2 Sam. 23 a lentile field and "rescued it" which means they restored it to their owners. From these passages the question is evoked whether the owners of a lentile field destroyed by an army may be indemnified by a barley field or vice versa. The Rabbis disagree and no definite discussion is given.<sup>54</sup> The Midrash tells us that King David would accept neither of the Rabbis arguments and renders his own decision that a king may make a path destroying any field regardless of the type of grain upon it.<sup>55</sup>

The kissing at the departure of Orpah from Naomi and Ruth provokes the remark that all kisses are indecent except three, the kiss of grace (favor) the kiss of greeting and the kiss of

departure. That these kisses are permitted is indicated by three such incidents in the Bible where kissing took place.<sup>56</sup>

Further we are apprised from the command given Ruth to change her clothes (Ruth 3:3) of the prescription that one must dress differently on the Sabbath than on week days, which makes it necessary for each person to have at least two suits of clothes.<sup>57</sup> Rabbi Simlai discoursing on this same theme tells that his students came to him complaining that they were too poor to comply with this command to have at least one change of garment. He answered them it was merely to insure that one would clean his garments for the Sabbath if he could not afford a change.<sup>58</sup>

#### E. Rabbinic Sentiments.

##### 1. Theological.

###### (a.) God and Israel.

The records of man's deeds which was formerly kept by the prophets is now kept by Elijah and the Messiah, and sealed by God himself.<sup>59</sup> Israel is stubborn in their sinfulness yet God is generous and long-suffering with them. Though Israel is rebellious God says: "It is impossible to destroy them, it is impossible to return them to Egypt, it is impossible to exchange them for another people, therefore I will punish them with chastisement and discipline them with famine."<sup>60</sup> This cannot be interpreted that God does not possess the power to destroy or exchange Israel for indeed God for the Rabbis was all powerful.



But rather this indicates that Israel has the special favor of God, hence He is patient with them. In the sentiment of Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai, "Though God has dominion over all the world yet He has shown special favor to Israel in being known as "the God of the people Israel."<sup>61</sup>

Psalm 94:14 reads, "For the Lord will not cast off His people, neither will He forsake His inheritance." While 1 Sam. 12:22 reads, "For the Lord will not forsake His people for His great name's sake..." The significant difference between these two passages, namely that the reason for God's fidelity to Israel is not the same in both instances, leads Rabbi Samuel bar Nachman to the following opinion: "There are times when God is favorable to Israel because of Israel and there are times when He is favorable to Israel for His own great name's sake."<sup>62</sup> Rabbi Ebo says in the same connection: "When the Israelites are meritorious in their own right God favors them 'for the sake of His people,' but when Israel is not worthy then God favors them for 'His great name's sake.'<sup>63</sup> The Rabbis claim "God is favorable to Israel in Palestine for their own sake while He favors Israel in the diaspora for His great name's sake."<sup>64</sup> Since God shows favor to the proselyte who draws nigh unto Him, how much the more is He favorably disposed to Israel who have kept His Torah for all time.<sup>65</sup>

(b.) Torah.

The Torah is likened unto bread; for commenting on *וַיִּשְׂבֵּי לֶחֶם* the Midrash tells us Ruth clove to Israel who received the Torah,

(which is like bread) as it is written כֹּל לֶחֶם כִּלְמָתִי  
come eat of my bread.<sup>66</sup>

When Israel accepted the Torah it created itself, since had they not accepted it, God would have turned the world to chaos again.<sup>67</sup> Though guilty of all the transgressions that the other peoples of the world committed, Israel went to heaven because it accepted the Torah.<sup>68</sup>

One of the conditions under which the people at Sinai were granted custody of the Torah was that they should neither add nor detract from its mitzvot. The Rabbis ask: did not Mordechai and Esther add to them when they decreed that the Megillah should be read on Purim? The apparent difficulty is resolved by the old principle that since there is no fixed order for the books of the Bible ( אֵין סֵדֶר וְאִחֻד בְּזִמְרָה ) and since it is written

מִמֶּנּוּ קָבַל מֹשֶׁה we learn that Moses undertook to keep Purim and we know that whatever Moses did God sanctioned.<sup>69</sup> Hence there was no violation of the commandment and it is still valid.

The Midrash tells us that one of the names of the sons of Elimelech was אֶלֶף "an incendiary" because they burned the Torah. Rabbi Menachma in the name of Rabbi Acha asked: "And did they actually burn the Torah? No, it teaches you that when a person transgresses one mitzvah from the Torah it is as if he had burned it."<sup>70</sup>

(c.) Reward and Punishment in this World and in the Future  
World.

God will always do His part if man but does his.<sup>71</sup> Every

good deed that man performs is rewarded. Because Orpah accompanied her mother-in-law and Ruth, according to the one tradition, for four miles she was rewarded with four Giant sons;<sup>72</sup> according to another tradition she traveled with them for forty days, for which she was rewarded in that her son Goliath received a stay of sentence for forty days and was allowed to taunt Israel for that period before David arose to slay him.<sup>73</sup> Since Boaz gave Ruth six sheaves he merited that six righteous men should descend from him.<sup>74</sup>

As for punishment it never comes except to the one who can bear it. According to Rabbi Hama who spoke in the name of Rabbi Samuel: The famine which occurred in the time of David was destined to appear during the reign of Saul but because Saul was like sycamore wood (i.e. weak) and would have probably turned to idol worship, God postponed the famine and brought it during the time of David who was sturdy like olive wood and could withstand the burden without losing faith.<sup>75</sup> Rabbi Chiyu Raba in the name of Rabbi Samuel b. Rabbi Elazar, in the same connection, relates the parable of a dealer in glassware who carried a box of glasses but when he wanted to hang it up he brought along a hook strong enough to hold the box, drove it into the wall and hung the box upon it. Thus no one is placed under a burden too great for him to bear.<sup>76</sup>

While a man is yet on this world he may change his lot for the better or for the worse, but once he has reached the world

to come he can no longer change it. A man who is great may become small and one who is small may become great.<sup>77</sup> Figuratively, a dog may become a lion and vice versa.<sup>78</sup> A man who is crooked may become straight and one who is straight may become crooked. Man's chance to establish his status is in this world. Once he reaches the world to come it remains always the same.<sup>79</sup> By way of illustration the story is told of two wicked men who were friends in this world. One repented while he was alive and the other refused to repent. When they came to the next world the one who refused to repent and found himself in the company of the wicked, saw his former friend in the congregation of the righteous. He complained, "What injustice. We robbed together, we committed murder together and here I am among the wicked and he is among the righteous." The heavenly hosts answered: "But he repented and you refused to repent." So he said give me a chance and I will repent." They answered him: "Fool, do you not know that this (heaven) world is like the Sabbath and the world from which you came (earth) is like Erev Shabbath. If one does not prepare food on Erev Shabbath, what will he eat on Shabbath? Do you not know that this world (heaven) is like a sea and the world from which you came (earth) is like dry land. If one does not prepare food while on dry land, what shall he eat when at sea. Do you not know that this world (heaven) is like a desert, and the world from which you came (earth) is like fertile soil. If one does not prepare food while on fertile soil what shall he eat when he journeys into the desert?<sup>80</sup>

The death penalty as punishment for sins committed is exacted as a last resort. Even person afflictions are delayed until last. God strikes first at the things which a man possesses then at the man himself. He always shows His displeasure with the conduct of an individual by a series of afflictions of ever increasing severity, giving ample opportunity for the sinner to repent and mend his ways. The Rabbis use the case of the affliction of Job as the classic example. First God destroyed Job's cattle, then his house, then his children and lastly He afflicted Job.<sup>81</sup> The same procedure holds in the case of Egypt. First the vineyard and fig trees were destroyed, then hail descended on the cities and finally the first born were slain.<sup>82</sup> Plagues likewise afflict first the house, then a man's clothes and lastly his body.<sup>83</sup> In the case of Machlon and Chilion the same thing transpired. First their horses, asses and camels died, then their father Elimelech died and finally they themselves died.<sup>84</sup>

The Rabbis' view of death, however, was that it is a natural phenomenon, and should be dealt with as such. All are born to die, of extreme importance, however, is that a man departs from this world with a good name.<sup>85</sup>

(d.) Judgment and Judges.

The Rabbis of the Midrash have such high regard for that which is just that amid all the sentiments of mercy and long-suffering Resh Lakish puts into the very mouth of God the utterance, "Even though I am your redeemer what help can my redemption be in the face of judgment."<sup>86</sup>



As for the judges, God honored them by calling them gods, but the Jews despised them, therefore, "woe to the generation that judges its judges."<sup>87</sup>

The Book of Ruth must have been written, according to the Rabbis, at a time when the judges had little control over the people because they were in no position to demand the respect of the masses. If an Israelite was guilty of idol worship and a judge tried to sentence him, he beat the judge and said: "What he sought to do to me I did to him."<sup>88</sup>

Men refer to a judge who perverts justice by five names: perverse one, hated one, horrible one, excommunicated one and abominable one,<sup>89</sup> whereas God calls him five other names: evil one, abuser, breaker of the covenant, one who enrages and contrary one.<sup>90</sup>

One who is ~~im~~partial in judgment causes five things to befall the world. He makes the land unclean, he curses the name of God, causes the Shechina to depart from the world, causes Jews to perish by the sword of their enemies, and causes Jews to be exiled from Palestine.<sup>91</sup>

In connection with rendering decisions the Rabbis tell us, do not infer from one set of circumstances what you would do on another occasion, because no two sets of circumstances are the same.<sup>92</sup>

## 2. Social

### (a.) The Family.

There are several expressions of opinion in our Midrash relating to the inner circle of the family which deserve mention in

our study. An interesting story illustrative of the fact that children are naturally disposed to loving their mother more dearly than their father, is told by Rabbi Meir. On the occasion of the death of the mother of Avnimos the Gardite Rabbi Meir went to visit him, and found the entire household seated in mourning. Some years later Avnimos' father died, and again Rabbi Meir went to visit him. This time the entire household were busy with their daily tasks. Rabbi Meir, astounded, said to Avnimos, "It seems to me your mother was more beloved by you than your father." "That is as should be," answered Avnimos, for is it not written, "to your mother's house," and not to your father's house. Rabbi Meir agreed, showing that as for a household the mother is more important than the father.<sup>94</sup>

Rabbi Joshua tells us, "never have I referred to my wife as my wife, and my house as my house, but rather my wife is my house and my house, my wife." In truth a man's wife is his house for the actual physical dwelling-place makes little difference. The wife makes the actual surroundings what they really are. she gives meaning to them.<sup>94</sup>

Rabbi Acha says: "Anyone who marries a virtuous woman, it is as though he fulfilled the entire Torah from the beginning to the end. About such a one Scripture says: (Ps. 28:2) "Your wife is like a fruitful vine." Therefore the לֵב נָחַם Prov. 31:10 ff. is written from א to נ; and the generations would not be redeemed were it not for the righteous women therein as

it is said in Ps. 98:3, "He remembers His goodness and faithfulness to the house of Israel." It is not written to the children of Israel but to the house of Israel.<sup>95</sup>

Though the woman is most important in the family circle, the place of man is never minimized by the Rabbis. It is written in Ruth 1:9, "The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband." For according to Rabbi Jochanan a woman finds no contentment excepting in the house of her husband.<sup>96</sup> In truth, man and wife are equally dependent upon each other. When a man dies, who misses him most, his wife. That is why it is written (Ruth 1:3) "And Elimelech, Naomi's husband died." When a woman dies, who misses her most, her husband, for Jacob says: (Gen. 48:7) "As for me when I came from Padan, Rachel died unto me..."<sup>97</sup>

The wife's advice should always be asked. The story is told of a certain pious man who became impoverished to such a degree that he was compelled to hire himself out. One day as he was plowing in the field, Elijah the prophet met him in the guise of an Arab. Elijah said to him: "You have six good years, when do you want them, now or later?" The man answered: "You are nothing but a sorcerer, depart from me." Elijah went his way but returned again, and again he was repulsed by the poor man. But Elijah returned yet a third time with the same query. This time the poor man answered, "I will go and consult with my wife. He went to her and told her what had transpired. She advised him to return and tell the Arab to give them the six good years now. So he returned to Elijah and did as his wife

bid him. Elijah promised him that as he reached the gate of his home on his return he would behold blessing spread over his household. That day while his children were digging in the yard they uncovered enough money to sustain them for six years which they gave to their mother. When the poor man came home, his wife told him the news. Immediately they gave thanks unto God and the good woman said to her husband, "Let us engage in doing good deeds during these years of plenty that the Lord might reward us. So they did. At the expiration of six years, Elijah came to the man and said: "The time has come when I am to take back the money." The man answered Elijah, "When I took the money I did not do so except upon the advice of my wife." He went to her and said: "The old man has come to take what belongs to him." She answered: "Go to him and tell him that if he has found people more faithful than we are to give the money to them." God saw the truth of these words and added to that family boon upon boon that the scriptural verse (Isaiah 32:17) may be fulfilled, "and the work of righteousness will be peace."<sup>98</sup>

Rabbi Samuel ben Isaac apprizes us of the significant fact that a woman loves a poor young man better than a rich old man.<sup>99</sup>

As for Machlon and Chilion they sought wives of their own miserly nature that is why Moabite women appealed to them.<sup>100</sup>

One of the important functions of the family as a social unit, according to the Midrash, is its mutual concern for its members and the restraining influence of one member upon the other.

Scripture does not name Elimelech, Naomi, Machlon and Chilion as a family group but rather as individuals because one did not restrain the other from miserliness. For if in a family group one of the members is unwilling to transgress then the decree is reversed.<sup>101</sup>

(b.) Manners.

Commenting on Ruth 4:2, "And he (Boaz) took ten men of the elders of the city," Rabbi Alexander says, "from this we learn that a person of inferior rank never sits down in the presence of a superior person unless given permission by that person."<sup>102</sup> The comment has bearing only with reference to social or scholastic rank and cannot include age, for from the remainder of the verse we learn that Boaz tells the elders to sit down, then they proceed to do so; and it is conceivable that since they were "elders of the city" some were older in years than Boaz. As for rank we know that Boaz was a judge since the Midrash has already identified him with Ibzan and claims for him the position of president of the court.<sup>103</sup>

Rabbi Jochanan translating Ruth 2:12 נָתַן הָיָתִי הַלַּיְלָה לְאִישׁ "Were I to have intercourse this very night with a man" comments that from this verse we learn manners, one does not have sexual intercourse during the day; the only proper time for such things is at night.<sup>104</sup>

Rabbi Jochanan further tells us that though a person be young he should never refrain from blessing an older person.<sup>105</sup> Though



Boaz was eighty years old and Ruth was only forty; because of her blessing, his strength was renewed and he was able to have children.<sup>106</sup>

(c.) Poverty and Charity.

Bar Kapara says: "there is not a man who does not experience poverty. If it does not visit him directly then it comes upon his sons, if not upon his sons then upon his grandsons. There is no escaping it".<sup>107</sup>

Rabbi Nachman likens poverty to a wheel that rolls over the entire world.<sup>108</sup>

Rabbi Jose expounds: that since the word *anav* however has the same letters as *an* poor, we learn that a man may easily become poor if he does not answer the call of the poverty stricken with aid.<sup>109</sup>

Rabbi Abin says: "A poor man stands at your door and God stands at his right hand. If you give him something God blesses you, if you deny him God punishes you in the future."<sup>110</sup>

Among beggars there are always those who really are not in need, for which fact, according to Rabbi Abahu, we should be duly grateful. The story is told of Rabbi Jochanan and Rabbi Levi that on one occasion when they were on their way to a bath-house in Tiberias they were approached by a beggar asking for alms. They told him they would attend his needs when they returned from the bath. When they came out, however, they found the man dead. Naturally they undertook to prepare him for burial and during the process they found in his possession a bag of money. Rabbi

Ababu says were it not for these imposters if ever a man refused a beggar charity, he would be immediately punished with death.<sup>111</sup> As it is, a man can always plead that he thought the beggar an impostor.

The general sentiment of the Rabbis is that the poor man who takes charity does more for the wealthy man than does the latter for the former, since, because of the poor man the wealthy one earns a mitzvah.<sup>112</sup>

Charity, says the Rabbis should be given secretly, so that the recipient will not feel self-conscious about accepting it. The Midrash relates how Rabbi Jochanan used to drop coins along the road which Rabbi Simeon the son of Ba used to traverse so that the latter, who was a very poor man, would gather them, thinking he had found them and thus never realizing he was accepting charity. Rabbi Judah did the same thing with regard to Rabbi Simeon son of Halaftah.<sup>113</sup>

The Rabbis never felt poverty to be a disgrace but thought of it rather as an excellent discipline which made for humility and pity, for that reason the Torah in speaking to God says: "Make my portion in a place of poverty."<sup>114</sup>

Wealth, on the other hand, makes for arrogance. Thus the story is told of a poor man who was very pious but yet so hard pressed that his very garments rotted on his back. Elijah the prophet thinking to do him a good turn gave him two pieces of silver with which to do business. The man prospered and in time

became very wealthy. With the increase of his business he forgot his piety and no longer had time or felt the need of prayer. God said to Elijah: "I once had a pious man in my world but you perverted him." So Elijah returned and demanded his two pieces of silver. Very soon the man became impoverished again. He wept and prayed. Elijah returned and asked. "What is the old man doing," whereupon came the reply: "Woe unto that man upon whom the wheel of fortune has turned." After making the man promise he would always remain pious Elijah returned the two pieces of silver to him and again he prospered.<sup>115</sup>

Rabbi Chiyah is of the opinion that one can never forget the suffering of poverty. He claims that in the case of every other affliction, when it is over, the prior state is again attained, but poverty always leaves a permanent mark, as it is written in Psalm 88:10. "My eye is dulled because of poverty."<sup>116</sup>

(d.) Kindness.

No matter how busy a person might be he should always take time to be kind to others. Because Israel was too busy to give Joshua a decent burial, i.e. to deal kindly with him God sought to make the earth quake over them.<sup>117</sup>

Great honor is bestowed upon those who are kind to their fellowmen. Such do not take shelter under the wings of the earth, nor under the wings of the sun, not even under the wings of the Cherubim but under the wings of that one who uttered the words by which the world was created.<sup>118</sup>

According to Rabbi Zerah the only reason the Book of Ruth was written<sup>was</sup> to illustrate the great reward for kindness.<sup>119</sup>

## F. The Homiletic Introduction

The proems, which give clear evidence of a deliberate arrangement in the haggadic Midrashim,<sup>120</sup> appear in the nature of introductions to the exposition of a lesson, as the name Pesikta clearly implies.<sup>121</sup> In the form of exordia they lead to the lesson proper by means of the interpretation of an extraneous text known as the proemial text taken from any other Biblical source and used as a "tendenz" verse ultimately implying a related meaning to that of the text in the lesson proper.<sup>122</sup> In form they are either simple, consisting of a direct exposition of the proem-text amplified throughout with quotations and parables but always giving evidence of being a unit structure, or they may be composite consisting of different interpretations of the same extraneous verse by one or more authors variously connected but always so that the last interpretation, or the last component part of the proem leads logically to the interpretation of the text of the scriptural lesson.<sup>123</sup> The transition is often made by the use of the common conjunctive formula appearing in the structure of the proem itself.<sup>124</sup>

The homiletical artistry of the preacher is displayed by the technique with which he employs extraneous exegetical material, the interesting combinations of interpretations which he forms into a uniform structure to the end that the last member brings him to expound the Pentateuchal lesson.

The collection of proems to Ruth Rabbah which preface the

Midrash appear with the formulae "כי נדב ... or simply נדב ...". Occasionally, the abbreviated formula ה"רז ze sheasher ha Katub is used, but as often as not the proems appear without any formula to introduce them. They quote the extraneous text and proceed directly to the interpretation thereof.<sup>125</sup>

By the method of selecting extraneous texts for the proems many non Pentateuchal, especially Hagiographic verses were expounded, thus bringing to the people interpretations of books rarely read in public service, making these homilies excellent sources for the collectors of non Pentateuchal Midrashim.<sup>126</sup>

While proems are characteristic of all the homiletic Midrashim, due to the popularity of this form, they were added to old Midrashim which were originally only running commentaries to the Scriptural text. Occasionally also haggadic discourses were prefaced with the discussion of simple halachic questions.<sup>127</sup> The reason for the disproportionate length of the proems to the lessons is still a moot question among the scholars.<sup>128</sup> With this brief account of the nature and function of the proem, a subject itself worthy of a thesis, let us proceed to the examination of the introduction to Ruth Rabbah.

As mentioned in Chapter one, the introduction forms a special preface to that part of the Midrash which expounds the text proper of the Book of Ruth. The introduction itself is divided into seven sections, each a complete proem. We shall proceed to examine a typical section.



one: The Proem.

Rabbi Jochanan quoting part of the opening verse of the Book of Ruth, "And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged," opens with the proem text, Ps. 50:7. "Hear, O my people, and I shall speak." He interprets it to mean one does not testify against a man except within that man's hearing. Rabbi Judah b. Simon interprets the proem text: Before the Exodus, Israel was referred to like all other nations; after the Exodus they were called "My people," which interpretation he derives from the phrase in the proem text "vaadabera," and its parallel phrase of Ex. 24:7 spoken by Israel at Sinai when they accepted the Torah.

Rabbi Jochanan continued: "Hear ye my people" pertains to the past while "and I will speak" refers to the future. "Hear, O my people" in this world "and I will speak" in the world to come, so that I may refute the champions of the other nations who will complain that Israel committed all the sins that the other nations committed and yet their reward is heaven while the others go to purgatory. Then the Jewish advocate will remain silent as it is written  
וְהָיָה (formula) Dan. 12:1 "And at that time shall Michael stand up."

Rabbi Jochanan interprets Dan. 12:1: He says there is no sitting in heaven as it is written  
וְהָיָה (formula) Isaiah 6:2 "And Seraphim stood around him and it is written  
וְהָיָה (formula) 2 Ch. 18:18 "And all the hosts of heaven standing on P's right hand on his left." And you say "he will stand." "What is the meaning of stand?" He will remain silent, as it is written  
כִּמְהָרָא (formula) Job 32:16. "And shall I wait because they speak not, ~~because they speak not~~, because they answer not." God said to Michael: "You have become quiet and you do not give any defense for my children." "I swear upon your life I shall ~~not~~ speak with righteousness and save my people." With what righteousness? Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Jochanan have an argument. One contends that righteousness is that you (Israel) established my word in that you accepted my Torah. For

had you not accepted my Torah I would have returned the world to a state of chaos.

Rabbi Huna said in the name of Rabbi Acha Ps. 75:4 "When the earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved I, Myself established the pillars of it." The world would have been dissolved were it not for the fact that Israel stood before Mount Sinai (and accepted the Torah). Who strengthened the world? 'נין established the pillars of it. With the merit of 'נין did I establish its pillars. The other rabbi argues that the righteousness is, that you created yourselves when you accepted the Torah. For were it not so, I would have destroyed you from the peoples of the earth. "The Lord your God am I." (no connecting formula) Rabbi Jochanan states that God meant: It is enough for you that I am your Redeemer. Resh Lakish said that He meant by this that "even though I am your Redeemer what help is my redemption in the face of judgment?"

Rabbi Simeon ben Yochai taught: I am God to all the world, yet my name was not given to any but my people Israel, for I am called "the God of Israel. The Lord your God am I." Rabbi Jochanan interprets the verse with reference to Moses. God said to Moses "even though I called your God before Pharaoh, your God am I"-- I am above you.

The Rabbis interpret the verse with reference to the judges: Even though I called you God, I am your God. Know that I am above you as it is said: Ex. 22:27 "Thou shalt not reproach God nor curse a ruler of thy people." Afterward God said to Israel, "I honored the judges and called them God and they (that generation) despised them. Woe unto the generation that judges its judges.

In analyzing the above proem we notice that it opens with the first verse of the lesson to which it is an introduction and immediately the first Rabbi who interprets, Rabbi Jochanan, quotes the proemial text which in this instance is a verse from

the Psalms (50:7) giving his homiletical application of the extraneous text. The second Rabbi, Judah ben Simeon gives his interpretation without citing the proem text, quoting it only at the close of his presentation to show how it applies.

The first Rabbi continues with another interpretation of the proemial text and quotes a verse from Daniel (12:1), in support of his second interpretation, which he introduces with the frequent formula Ha Da Hu Dichesiv. Since the verse in Daniel speaks of Michael standing up, and since there is no sitting in heaven, as indicated by Isaiah 6:2 and 2 Ch. 18:18 which are introduced here with the formula Dichesiv; the Rabbi is obliged to seek a meaning for the verse in Daniel which he does by interpreting 'stand up' to mean 'remain silent'. Continuing, he quotes Job 32:16, "And shall I wait because they speak not, they answer not," which he claims indicates that God upbraided Michael for not having a defense in behalf of Israel, swearing He will speak with righteousness and save His people.

This leads to the question: with what is righteousness? Rabbi Jochanan and two other Rabbis offer different explanations. Rabbi Jochanan, Resh Lakish, Simeon ben Yochai, Rabbi Judan and his son Abba interpret the last phrase of the proem text אלהים אלהך אנכי to refer to God, Israel and various other individuals, while the Rabbis interpret it with reference to the Judges, bringing about a sort of transition to the text of the lesson proper, i.e. Ruth:1:1.

In regard to this particular proem, <sup>ch</sup>Bader comments: "The analysis of the psalm verse 50:7 comprises the kernel of the proem and Rabbi Jochanan is named on several occasions as the authority for a number of individual analyses. But the explanation of the verse which forms the transition to the text of Ruth 1:1 is not ascribed to him but rather to the Rabbis generally. Originally this entire pesikta appeared as anonymous and only later was the authorship of Rabbi Jochanan inserted.<sup>129</sup>

The proem as we have it in our editions of the Midrash is then a series of Rabbinical interpretations of a central Biblical quotation consisting of the comments of eight different individual authorities and one which is anonymously attributed to the Rabbis. The contention that the simple proem represents the record of an academic discussion of the subject in which these participated is altogether untenable, since in this particular case among the authorities are Rabbi Judah ben Simeon, a Palestinian Amora of the fourth century, and Rabbi Jochanan and Resh Lakish who were contemporaries, of the second century. The likelihood then is that this proem in its present form is the work of one or more redactors.

In speaking of the anonymous proem, Bacher, observes that many statements which appear in one book anonymously are elsewhere ascribed to a particular author.<sup>130</sup> Throughout the book of Ruth there are nine anonymous proems and again Bacher makes the interesting observation that all of them employ hagiographical texts.<sup>131</sup>

Examining 1180 anonymous proems of the Pentateuchal Midrashim and the two Pesiktas, Bacher claims that four fifths of them have

hagiographical texts, a proportion which holds good for proems of all types.<sup>132</sup> The frequent use of introductory formulae is quite evident.

The remaining six sections have similar structures so that a detailed analysis of them would offer no new light on the subject.

For the sake of completeness, however, we list their proem texts in order:

Section 2: Prov. 19:15. "Laziness casteth into a deep sleep and the idle soul shall suffer hunger."

Section 3: Prov. 21:8. "The way of a man is perverse and strange."

Section 4: Deut. 32:20. "And he said I will hide my face from them."

Section 5: Ezekiel 13:4. "O Israel thy prophets have been like foxes in ruins."

Section 6: Ps. 144:14. "Whose oxen are well laden."

Section 7: Is a restatement of a Midrash which according to its authors they brought from the Babylonian exile explaining the meaning of *וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם* and *וַיְהִי זָמַן*, which we have treated elsewhere.

The internal proems:

Essentially the internal proems, and by that we mean those directly preceding the text exegesis, present the same features as those of the preface to Ruth. One striking difference, however,



is that the internal proems are all compound, being composed of many small proems each having a separate proemial text.<sup>133</sup> The connection between proems is very loose; sometimes they are joined with a formula<sup>134</sup> and at other times they are just placed in juxtaposition to each other.<sup>135</sup> Of the six sections in the book which open with proems, three appear with introductory formulae and three appear without them, bearing out the general statement made by Theodor concerning the use of formulae.<sup>137</sup>

It is largely in the proems to Ruth Rabbah that we find expressed the very fine spiritual and ethical sentiments of the Rabbis contained in the book. . Of another type of long sections we may single out the sixfold interpretation of R.2:14 as referring to David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Menasseh, the Messiah and Boaz.<sup>138</sup>

#### Conclusion

As we bring this study to a close we feel that there is yet much that might be written on the subject. Of many phases we were only able to touch the surface, still others are altogether beyond the reach of the writer. To deal adequately with the many problems involved, a lifetime of scholastic endeavor is essential.

The research of scholars in the field of Midrashic literature has been used liberally but the writer has been careful to credit all quotations. Statements made herein have always been documented and where there was a difference of opinion among the scholars, the various points of view were presented, since we

felt incompetent to be selective because of an inadequate background. An earnest effort has been made to investigate the literature and to present a clear exposition so that the reader might gain an insight into the sources employed, an acquaintance with the material involved, and a general conception of the particular type of Midrashic literature written to the Book of Ruth.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3.

1. See Chap. 2, note 35.
2. " " 2 " 33
3. " " 2 " 36
4. " " 2 " 136
5. See Chap. 2, note 48
6. " " 2 " 41
7. " " 2 " 69
8. " " 2 " 69
9. Ruth Rabbah 2.9
10. See Chap. 1, note 29
11. " " 1 " 29
12. " " 1 " 40
13. Targum Ruth 1.6
14. Ruth Rabbah 4.1
15. Lekach Tov 4, quoted by Hartmann p.35
16. See Chap. 2 note 136.
17. Ruth Rabbah 2.5
18. See Chap. 2 note 3
19. " " 2 " 4.
20. Ruth Rabbah 2.5
21. Ruth Rabbah 2.5
22. Ruth Rabbah 2.9
23. Sota 42b Lekach Tov, quoted by Hartmann sub. p.12.
24. See Chap. 2 note 15.
25. Same as note 23.
26. See Chap. 2 notes 13 and 14.

ושם השנית רות שראתה בדברי הסוטה

בנין זכותה דאבצן ננידא ובצלוחיה דצלי קדם יי הוא  
בועז הכודא.

(זה"א ה) חושבים ואז בקרא נשיו ויש אדם מוליד נשיו  
אלא שחם כנמר ובאר את ההלכה עסוני ולא עסונית מואבי ולא מואבית.

ושם אשתו נעמי שהיו מעשיה נאים ונעימים.

ושם האיש אלימלך שהיה אומר אלי תבא מלכות.

ושם שני בניו מחלון וכליון מחלון שנמחו מן העולם.  
וכליון שכלו מן העולם.

ר' ביבי בש"ר ראובן אמר רות וערפה בנחתיו של עגלון היו.

27. Pesikta Ruth Rabbah 7 ר' תנחומא כש"ר חייה רבה ור' ברכיה כש"ר  
אליעזר המדרש הזה עלה בידיו מן הנולה כ"ט שנצטר ויהי צרה.
28. Pesikta Ruth Rabbah 7
29. " " " 7
30. Ruth Rabbah 1.6. וילך איש גרדום
31. See Chap. 2 note 36.
32. Ruth Rabbah 4.5
33. Ruth Rabbah 7.1 ותשכב מרגלותיו עד הבקר. אי"ר ברכיה במרם יכיר איש  
במרומ בתיב. מלמד שנשתתחה שש שעות במנן הוי"ו.
34. R.R. 5.5. ותאמר אמצא הן בעיניך אדני וגוי ואנכי לא אהיה כאחת  
שפחותיך וגוי. אי"ל ח"ו אין את מן האמהות אלא מן האימהות.
35. R.R. 1.6. אי"ר לוי כ"ט שאתה מוצא שדה עיר. עיר מדינה. מדינה אפרכיא.  
שדה עיר (כ"א ב) ענתות לך על שדה. עיר מדינה (יהוקול מ)  
עבר בתוך העיר בתוך ירושלים מדינה אפרכיא.
36. R.R. 2.17. אי"ר יצחק... יהא אדם דוחה בשמאל ומקרב בימין.
37. Yalkut Shimoni חר"א
38. See Chap. 2 note 13
39. See Chap. 2 note 20.
40. Concerning the interpretation of Amonite and Moabite. Chap. 2 note 35.
41. Ruth Rabbah 7.10 בראשונה היו קונין במנעל ובסנדל שנא' שלף איש נעלו.
42. " " 7.10. חזרו להיות קונין בקצצה.
43. Cf. Jastrow sub. קצצה
44. Ruth Rabbah 7.10 כך כל מי שנושא אשה שאינה הוננת לו היו הקרובים  
מביאין חביות מלכות קליות ואגוזים ושוכרין לפני התינוקות  
מלקטין ואומדין אבוד פלוני ממשפחתו גרשה היו אומרים חזר  
פלוני למשפחתו.

45. R.R. 7.10 חזרו להיות קוננין במנעל ובכנדל שלף איש נעלו ונתן לרעהו.
46. R.R. 7.10 חזרו להיות קוננים בכסף ובשטר ובחזקה.
47. R.R. 7.10 ר' יוחי כשי"ר יוחנן אין כסף נקנית פחות משה פרומה בכף
48. R.R. 7.10 ר"א אומר הילוך קנה. דתני יום הלך בשדה בין לארבה בין לרחבה קנה עד מקום שהלך.
49. See Chap. 2 notes 94 and 95.
50. Targum Ruth 1.22 ואיננו אתו בית לחם במעלי יוסא דפחא ובהליא יוסא שריאו בני ישראל למחצד ית עזרא דארסותא דהוה מן שעורין.
51. See Chap. 2 note 21
52. " " 2 " 56
53. See Chap. 2 note 62
54. Ruth Rabbah 5.1
55. Ruth Raobah 5.1 ויביאו אל דויד ולא אבה דויד לשתותם ולא אבה שחקבץ הלכה לשמן. עשאה מכבא וקבעה הלכה לדורות כלך פורין לעשות לו דרך ואין ממחין בידו.
56. Ruth Rabbah 8.22 ותשק ערפם לחמותה. כל נשיקה של תפל' בר מן חלת. נשיקה של גדולה ונשיק' של פוקים ונשיקה של פרישות.
57. R.R. 5.12 א"ר חנינא צריך אדם להיות לו ב" עפפים א' לחול וא' לשבת.
58. R.R. 5.12 וכך דרשה ר' שמלאי בצבורא. כבון חבריא אמרו כעמיפתנו בחול כך עמיפתנו בשבתא. אמר להון צריכין גנו לשנות.
59. R.R. 5.6 ר' כהן ור' יהושע דבבבין כשי"ר דוי לשעבר היה אדם עושה יצוה והנביא כותבה ועכשיו כשארם עושה כצוה מי כותבה עליהו כותבה ומלך המשיח והקב"ה חותם על ידיהם.
60. Pesikta R.R. 5 באותה שעה אמר הקב"ה בני ברבנין הן לכלותן אי אפשר להחזירין למצרים א"א להחליפן באומה אחרת איני יכול. אלא מה אעשה להם הריני מיימרן ביסורין ומצרפן ברעבון.
61. Pesikta R.R. 1 תנאי רשב"י אלהים אנכי לכל באי עולם ולא ייחדתי שמי אלא על עמי ישראל. אין אני נקרא אלהי כל האומות אלא אלהי ישראל.



62. Ruth Rabbah 2.11 א"ר שמואל בר נחמני פעמים שהוא עושה בעבור עמו ונחלתו. ופעמים שהוא עושה בשביל שמו הנדול.
63. R.R. 2.11 א"ר איבי כשישראל זכאים בעבור עמו ונחלתו וכשאינן ישראל זכאין בעבור שמו הנדול.
64. R.R. 2.11 ורננן אמרו נא"י בשביל עמו ונחלתו בח"ל בעבור שמו הנדול.
65. Yalkut Shimoni תר ומה אם אלו שהיו מעם שנחייבו כליה ומעם שנעמר בהם לא יבואו בכם ואחם לא תבואו בהם ועל שקרבו עצמם קרבם המקום, ישראל שעושים את התורה על אחת כמה וכמה.
66. R.R. 2.1 וישבי לחם שנדבקה בישראל שקבלו את התורה שכתוב בה (משלי ט) לכו לחמו בלחמי.
67. Pesikta R.R. 1 וח"א בצדקה שעשיתם את עצמיכם על שקבלתם את תורתי.
68. " " 1 אלו עובדין ע"ז ואלו עובדין ע"ז אלו נלו עריות ואלו נלו עריות אלו שפכו דמים ואלו שפכו דמים. אלו יורדין לג"ע ואלו יורדין לגיהנם.
69. Ruth Rabbah 4.7 מנלל אמתר מנין
70. R.R. 2.4 ושרף ששרפו את התורה. ר' מנחםא בש"ר אחא וכי שרפה אלא ללמדך שכל מי שבבל מן התורה דבר אחד כאילו שרפה.
71. See Chap. 2 note 89
72. " " 2 " 13
73. See Chap. 2 note 14
74. " " 2 " 83
75. R.R. 1.4 ר' חונא בשם ר' שמואל עיקר אוונתמיה שלהם היה ראוי לבא בימי שואל ולא היה ראוי לבא בימי דוד. ועל ידי שהיה שואל גרופית של שקמה ולא יכול לעמוד בו.
76. R.R. 1.4.
77. R.R. 3.1 קמן וגדול שם הוא העוה"ז מי שהוא קמן יכול להעשות גדול ומי שהוא גדול יכול להעשות קמן. אבל לע"ל מי שהוא קמן אינו יכול להעשות גדול ומי שהוא גדול אינו יכול להעשות קמן.

78. Ruth Rabbah 3.1
79. " " 3.3 אמר (קהל א) מעות לא יכול לתקן וחכרון לא יכול להסנות. בעו"ז מי שהוא מעות יכול לתקן ומי שהוא מחוקן יכול לעוות. אבל לע"ל מי שהוא מעות אין יכול לתקן ומי שהוא מחוקן אין יכול לעוות.
80. Ruth Rabbah 3.3
81. " " 2.10 דר' לוי לעולם אין בעל הרחמים פורע מן הנפשות תחלה ממי שלמד מאיוב.
82. Ruth Rabbah 2.10 אף במצרים כך היה.
83. " " 2.10 ואף בגנעים
84. " " 2.10 ואף במחלון וכליון כך היה
85. R.R. 2.7 הכל לכות והכב למיתה ואשריו לאדם שיצא בשם טוב מן העולם.
86. Pesikta R.R. 1 ר'א' אמר אע"פ שאני פמרונך מה פמרוני מהני בידינא
87. " " 1 וחזר ואמר לישראל אני חלקתי כבוד לדיינים וקראתי אותם אלהים והן מבזים אותם.
88. Pes. R.R. 7 כך בימי שפוט השופטים היה אדם מישראל עובר ע"ז והיה הדיין מבקש לעשות בו דין והיה הוא בא ומלקה הדיין ואמר מה דבעא מעבד לי עבדתי ליה.
89. R.R. 1.2 מלמד שהדיין שמקלקל הדין קרוי ה' שמות. עול שנוי משוקץ חרם תועבה.
90. R.R. 1.2 והקבי"ה קורא עליו ה' רע מנאץ ספר ברית מכעית ומסרה.
91. R.R. 1.2 ונורם ה' דברים לעולם. ממא את הערץ ומחלל את השם ומכבד את השכינה ומפיל ישראל בחרב ומגלה מארצם.
92. R.R. 5.1
93. R.R. 2.14 Story of R. Meir's visit to Amos the Gardite.

94. Ruth Rabbah 2.8 אר"י בן חלפתא מימי לא קריתי לאשתי אשתי ולביתי בייתי  
שלא לאשתי בייתי ולביתי אשתי.
95. Y.Shimoni חרו א"ר אחא כל הנושא אשה כשרה כאלו קיים כל התורה מראש  
ועד כוף, ועליו הוא אומר אשתך כנפן פוריה, לפיכך נכתבה  
אשת חיל כאל"ף ועד תי"ו.
96. Y.Shimoni אשה בית אישה אמר ר' יוחנן מכאן שאין לאשה קורת רוח אלא חרא  
בבית בעלה.
97. R.R. 2.7 מתה האשה מי מחברה אלא בעלה שנא' (בראשית כח) ואני בבואי  
מפרן מתה עלי רחל.
98. Y.Shimoni חרו Story of Elijah's visit to a poor man.
99. See Chap. 2 note 73
100. Y.Shimoni חר מי נרם להם לישא נשים מואביות, אלא שעשו כעסון ומואב  
בצרות עין.
101. Y.Shimoni חקעם בזמן שהאיש רוצה ואשה ובניה אינם רוצים או איפכא הנזרה  
מכתלקת.
102. R.R. 7.7 א"ר אלכסנדר מ"בן שאין רשות לקמן לישב עד שיתן הנדול רשות.
103. See Chap. 1 notes 29 and 30.
104. R.R. 2.17 ד"א שאין חשמים פיוס אלא כלילה.
105. See Chap. 2 note 71
106. See Chap 2 Note 71
107. R.R. 5.9. בר קפרא אמר אין לך אדם שאינו בא למדה זו ואם לא הוא בא בנו  
בא בנו.
108. R.R. 5.9. א"ר נחמן כתיב (דברים פו) כי בגלל הדבר הזה גלגל הוא שחזור  
בעולם על הכל.
109. R.R. 5.9. א"ר יוסי יען וביען הוא יען הוא עני.
110. R.R. 5.9. א"ר אבין העני הזה עומד על פתחך והקביה עומד על ימינו אם נתת  
לו זה שעומד על ימינו מכרך ואם לאו הוא עתיד להיפרע מאותו האיש.

111. R.R. 5.9 א"ר אבהו צריכין אנו להחזיר בונה לרמאים שבהם.
112. See Chap. 2 note 43
113. R.R. 5.7 רבי יוחנן היה מכבד סלעים כדי לזכות בהם ר' שמעון בר בא.
114. Y.Shimoni חקצו חקצו לפני הקבי"ה רבש"ע תן חלקי בשבט של עוני.
115. Y.Shimoni חרא
116. See Chap. 2 note 25.
117. Pesikta R.R. 2 באותה שעה נחלקה ארץ ישראל והיתה חלוקה חביבה עליהם יוחר מדאי והיו ישראל עובדין במלאכתן... נחנעו שו מעשות נחילות חכד ליהושוע ובקש הקב"ה להרעיש את העולם כולו על יושביו.
118. R.R. 5.4. Discourse of Rabbi Abin.
119. R.R. 2.15 א"ר זעירא מנלה זו אין בה לא מומאה ולא מהרה ולא איבור ולא דיתר ולמה נכתבה ללמדנו כמה שבר טוב לנומלי חכדים.
120. Monatschrift F.G.W.J. p.97
121. ערכי המדרש p.2
122. Monatschrift F.G.W.J. p.93
123. " " p.93
124. " " p.98
125. " " p.112
126. Monatschrift F.G.W.J. p.100
127. " " p.100
128. " " p.100
129. Die Proemien der alten Judischen Homilie p.40
130. " " " " " p.109
131. " " " " " p.113
132. " " " " " p.114
133. See proem to section 2
134. " " " " 2
135. " " " " 2
136. See proem to section 3,4,8
137. " " " " 2,5,6
138. R.R. 5.6. Interpretation of נשי הלום.

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