

I Left Here Full and Have Returned Empty : Loss and Recovery in the Book of Ruth

Chapter 2

1. Ruth chapter 2

1. Now Naomi had a kinsman on her husband's side, a man of substance, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.
2. Ruth the Moavite said to Naomi, "I would like to go to the fields and glean among the ears of grain, behind someone who may show me kindness." "Yes, daughter, go," she replied;
3. She went and came and gleaned in a field, behind the reapers; it happened that it was the piece of land belonging to Boaz, who was of Elimelech's family.
4. Presently Boaz arrived from Bethlehem. He greeted the reapers, "God be with you!" And they responded, "God bless you!"
5. Boaz said to the servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose damsel is that?"
6. The servant in charge of the reapers replied, "She is a Moavite girl who came back with Naomi from the country of Moav.
7. She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the reapers.' She has been on her feet ever since she came this morning. She has rested but little in the hut."
8. Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen to me, daughter. Don't go to glean in another field. Don't go elsewhere, but stay here close to my girls.
9. Keep your eyes on the field they are reaping, and follow them. I have ordered the men not to molest you. And when you are thirsty, go to the jars and drink some of [the water] that the men have drawn."
10. She prostrated herself with her face to the ground, and said to him, "Why are you so kind as to single me out, when I am a foreigner?"
11. Boaz answered, "I have been told of all that you did for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband, how you left your father and mother and the land of your birth and came to a people you had not known before.
12. May God reward your deeds. May you have a full recompense from God, the God of Israel, under

(א) וְלִנְעָמִי מִידַע מוֹדַע לְאִישׁ גִּבּוֹר חָיִל מִמְשַׁפַּחַת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ וְשָׁמוּ בְּעוֹ:
(ב) וְתֹאמַר רֹוֹת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה אֶל־נְעָמִי אֶלְכֶּה־נָּא הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֶלְקַטְתִּי בַשִּׁבְלִים אַחֲרֵי אֲשֶׁר אֲמַצְא־חֹן בְּעֵינָיו וְתֹאמַר לָהּ לְכִי בְתִי:
(ג) וְתִלְוֶה וְתִבּוֹא וְתִלְקַט בַּשָּׂדֶה אַחֲרֵי הַקְּצֹרִים וַיִּקַּר מִקְרָהּ חִלְקַת הַשָּׂדֶה לְבַעֲזֵי אֲשֶׁר מִמְשַׁפַּחַת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ:
(ד) וַהֲנִה־בְּעוֹז בָּא מִבֵּית לָחֶם וַיֹּאמֶר לְקוֹצְרִים יִקְנוּ עִמָּכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ יְבָרְכֶךָ יְקוּן:
(ה) וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעוֹז לְנַעֲרֹו הַנֹּצֵב עַל־הַקּוֹצְרִים לָמִי הַנְּעָרָה הַזֹּאת:
(ו) וַיַּעַן הַנְּעָרָה הַנֹּצֵב עַל־הַקּוֹצְרִים וַיֹּאמֶר נְעָרָה מוֹאֲבִיָּה הִיא הַנְּשֻׁבָה עִם־נְעָמִי מִשָּׂדֶה מוֹאֲב:
(ז) וְתֹאמַר אֶלְקַטְתֶּה־נָּא וְאֶסְפְּתִי בְּעַמְרִים אַחֲרֵי הַקּוֹצְרִים וְתִבּוֹא וְתַעֲמוֹד מֵאַזּוּ הַבִּקְרָו וְעַד־עֶמֶת זֶה שִׁבְתֶּהָ הַבַּיִת מְעֻט:
(ח) וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעוֹז אֶל־רֹוֹת הַלֹּוֹא שְׁמַעְתְּ בְּתִי אֶל־תִּלְכִי לְקַטְּ בַּשָּׂדֶה אַחֲרַי וְגַם לֹא תַעֲבוּרִי מִגֵּזֶה וְכֹה תִדְבְּקִינוּ עִם־נְעָרֹותַי:
(ט) עֵינָיו בַּשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר־יִקְצְרוּ וְהִלְכֶת אַחֲרֵיהֶן הַלֹּוֹא צְנִיתִי אֶת־הַנְּעָרִים לְבִלְתִּי נִגְעָה וְצִמְת וְהִלְכֶתְךָ אֶל־הַכִּלִּים וְשִׁתִּית מֵאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁאַבוּן הַנְּעָרִים:
(י) וְתַפֵּל עַל־כַּפְיָהּ וְתִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אַרְצָה וְתֹאמַר אֵלָיו מְדוּעָ מִצִּאתִי חֹן בְּעֵינָיֶךָ לְהַכִּירָנִי וְאַנְכִי נִכְרִיָּה:
(יא) וַיַּעַן וַיַּעַז בְּעוֹז וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ הֲגַדְתְּ לִי כָּל אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂיתְּ אֶת־חַמּוֹתַי אַחֲרַי מוֹת אִישׁוֹ וְתַעֲזָבִי אֲבִיךָ וְאִמְךָ וְאֶרְצְךָ מוֹלְדָתְךָ וְתִלְכִי אֶל־עַם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יַדְעֶתָ תְּמוֹל שְׁלִשׁוֹם:

whose wings you have sought refuge!”
13. She answered, “May I find favor in your eyes sir, for you have comforted me and spoken to the heart of your maidservant—though I am not one of your maidservants.”

14. At mealtime, Boaz said to her, “Come over here and partake of the meal, and dip your morsel in the vinegar.” So she sat down beside the reapers. He handed her roasted grain, and she ate her fill and had some left over.

15. When she got up again to glean, Boaz gave orders to his workers, “You are not only to let her glean among the sheaves, and do not shame her

16. And also, pull some [stalks] out of the heaps and leave them for her to glean, and not scold her.”

17. She gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned—it was about an *ephah* of barley—

18. [Ruth] carried it back with her to the town. When her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned, and when she also took out and gave her what she had left over after eating her fill,

19. Her mother-in-law asked her, “Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be he who took such generous notice of you!” She told her mother-in-law whom she had worked with, saying, “The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz.”

20. Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “Blessed be he of God, who has not failed in God’s kindness to the living or to the dead!” Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “the man is related to us; he is one of our redeeming kinsmen.”

21. Ruth the Moavite said, “He even told me, ‘Stay close by my workers until all my harvest is finished.’”

22. And Naomi answered her daughter-in-law Ruth, “It is best, daughter, that you go out with his girls, and not be molested in some other field.”

23. So she stayed close to the maidservants of Boaz, and gleaned until the barley harvest and the wheat harvest were finished. Then she stayed at home with her mother-in-law.

(יב) ישלם יקנוק פּעֵלָהּ וּתְהִי מִשְׁכַּרְתָּהּ שְׁלֵמָה מֵעַם יְקוֹק אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר-בָּאת לְחַסוֹת תַּחַת-כְּנָפָיו:

(יג) וְתֹאמַר אֲמַצְאֶחֶן בְּעֵינַי אֲדוֹנִי כִּי גַחְמִתָּנִי וְכִי דִבַּרְתָּ עֲלַי לֵב שְׂפָתַי וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא אֶהְיֶה כְּאִתָּה שְׂפָחַתִּי:

(יד) וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ בְּעֵז לַעֲת הָאֵכֶל גִּשְׂי הַלֶּם וְאֶכְלָתְמוֹ-הַלֶּחֶם וְטִבַּלְתְּ פִּתְּוֹ בַּחֲמִץ וּתִשְׂבַּח מִצַּד הַקּוֹצֵרִים וַיִּצְבֹּט-לָהּ קֶלַי וּתְאָכַל וּתִשְׁבַּע וּתְתַר:

(טו) וּתְתַקֵּם לְלֶקֶט וַיִּצֹר וַיַּעַז אֶת-נַעֲרָיו לֵאמֹר גַּם בֵּין הַעֲמָרִים תִּלְקַט וְלֹא תְכַלְמוּהָ:

(טז) וְגַם שְׁלֹת־שָׁלוֹךְ לָהּ מִן-הַצִּבְתִּים וַעֲזוּבֹתֶם וְלֶקְטָהּ וְלֹא תִגְעַרוּ-בָּהּ:

(יז) וּתְלַקַּט בַּשָּׂדֶה עַד-הָעֶרֶב וּתִקַּבֵּט אֶת אֲשֶׁר-לֶקְטָהּ וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר שָׁעָרִים:

(יח) וּתִשָּׂא וּתִבּוֹא הָעִיר וּתִמְרָא חֲמוּתָהּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר-לֶקְטָהּ וּתּוֹצֵא וּתְתוֹן-לָהּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר-הוֹתֵרָה מִשְׂבָּעָה:

(יט) וּתֹאמַר לָהּ חֲמוּתָהּ אֵיפֹה לֶקַטְתְּ הַיּוֹם וְאַנְהָ עֲשִׂיתְּ יְהִי מִכִּירָךְ בְּרוּךְ וּתְמַגֵּד לְחֲמוּתָהּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂתָה עִמּוֹ וּתֹאמַר שָׁם הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי עִמּוֹ הַיּוֹם בְּעֵז:

(כ) וּתֹאמַר נַעֲמִי לְכֻלְתָּהּ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לִיקוּק אֲשֶׁר לֹא-עָזַב חֲסִדוֹ אֶת-הַחַיִּים וְאֶת-הַמֵּתִים וּתֹאמַר לָהּ נַעֲמִי קְרוֹב לְנֹו הָאִישׁ מִגְּאֻלָּנוּ הוּא:

(כא) וּתֹאמַר רֹוֹת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה גַם כִּי-אָמַר אֵלַי עַם-הַנְּעָרִים אֲשֶׁר-לִי תִדְבְּקוּן עַד אִם-כִּלּוֹ אֶת כָּל-

הַקֶּצִיר אֲשֶׁר-לִי:

(כב) וּתֹאמַר נַעֲמִי אֶל-רֹוֹת כָּל-תָּהּ טוֹב בְּתִי כִּי תִצְאֵל עַם-בְּנוֹתָיו וְלֹא יִפְגְּעוּ-בָּךְ בַּשָּׂדֶה אַחֵר:

(כג) וּתְדַבֵּק בְּנוֹעֲרוֹת בְּעֵז לְלֶקֶט עַד-כָּלוֹת קֶצִיר-הַשָּׁעָרִים וּקֶצִיר הַחֲטָיִם וּתִשָּׁב אֶת-חֲמוּתָהּ:

2. Mishnah Berachot 9:5

And they established that a person should greet his/her friend using God's name, as it is said (Ruth 2:4), *And he said to the reapers God be with you and they said, May God bless you.*

והתקינו שיהא אדם שואל את שלום חברו בשם
שנאמר (רות ב:ד) וַיֹּאמֶר לְקוֹצְרִים יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם
וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה:

3. Ruth Rabbah 5.6

R. Yitzchak bar Maryon said, the text comes to teach us that if a person does a mitzvah, s/he should do it with a full heart. Because if Reuven had known that God would write about him, (Genesis 37:21) *And Reuven heard and saved him from their hands*, he would have brought him back to his father on his shoulders. And if Aharon had known that had known that God would write about him, (Exodus 4:14) *And [Aharon] is coming out to greet you and he will see you and rejoice in his heart*, with tambourines and dances he would have gone out to greet him. And if Boaz had known that God would write about him, (Ruth 2:14) *And he measured for her some toasted grain and she ate and was sated and had some left over*, he would have fed her fatted calves.

R. Cohen and R. Yehoshua of Sikhnin taught: in the past a person would do a mitzvah and the prophet would write it, and now when a person does a mitzvah, who writes it? Elijah writes it and the messiah king and God place their seal upon it, as it is said (Malachi 3:16) *And then those who feared God spoke one to another and God listened and heard and wrote in the book of memories. . .*

א"ר יצחק בר מריון בא הכתוב ללמדך שאם
אדם עושה מצוה יעשנה בלבב שלם שאלו
היה ראובן יודע שהקב"ה מכתוב עליו
(בראשית לז:כא) וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיִּצְלְהוּ מִיָּדָם
[וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא נִגְנְנוּ נַפְשׁוֹ], בכתפו היה מוליכו
אצל אביו, ואילו היה יודע אהרן שהקב"ה
מכתוב עליו (שמות ד:יד) וְגַם הִנֵּה הוּא יֵצֵא
לְקִרְאתְךָ [וְרָצָךָ וְשָׂמַח בְּלִבּוֹ], בתופים
ובמחולות היה יוצא לקראתו, ואלו היה יודע
בעז שהקב"ה מכתוב עליו (רות ב:יד) וַיִּצְבֹּט
לָהּ קִלְי וְתֹאכַל וְתִשְׂבַּע וְתִתֵּר, עגלות מפותמות
היה מאכילה, ר' כהן ור' יהושע דסכנין בשם
ר' לוי לשעבר היה אדם עושה מצוה והנביא
כותבה ועכשיו כשאדם עושה מצוה מי
כותבה, אליהו כותבה ומלך המשיח והקדוש
ב"ה חותם על ידיהם, הה"ד (מלאכי ג:טז) אֵז
נִדְבְּרוּ יְרֵאִי יְהוָה אִישׁ אֶת רֵעֵהוּ [וַיִּקְשֹׁב יְהוָה
וַיִּשְׁמַע וַיִּכְתֹּב סֵפֶר זָכְרוֹן לְפָנָיו לְיִרְאֵי יְהוָה
וְלַחֲשָׁבֵי שְׁמוֹ]