

Drisha Institute for Jewish Education

From Revelation to Realization: Matan Torah & Shavuot

Part #4: Schemes, Scandals, and Shavuot: Comparing the Stories of Rut and Tamar

I. Tamar and Yehuda:**1. Breishit 38**

(1) About that time Judah left his brothers and camped near a certain Adullamite whose name was Hirah. (2) There Judah saw the daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua, and he took her [into his household as wife] and cohabited with her. (3) She conceived and bore a son, and he named him Er. (4) She conceived again and bore a son, and named him Onan. (5) Once again she bore a son, and named him Shelah; he was at Chezib when she bore him. (6) Judah got a wife for Er his first-born; her name was Tamar. (7) But Er, Judah's first-born, was displeasing to G-d, and G-d took his life. (8) Then Judah said to Onan, "Join with your brother's wife and do your duty by her as a brother-in-law, and provide offspring for your brother." (9) But Onan, knowing that the offspring would not count as his, let [the semen] go to waste whenever he joined with his brother's wife, so as not to provide offspring for his brother. (10) What he did was displeasing to G-d, who took his life also. (11) Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, "Stay as a widow in your father's house until my son Shelah grows up"—for he thought, "He too might die like his brothers." So Tamar went to live in her father's house. (12) A long time afterward, Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died. When his period of mourning was over, Judah went up to Timnah to his sheepshearers, together with his friend Hirah the Adullamite. (13) And Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law is coming up to Timnah for the sheepshearing." (14) So she took off her widow's garb, covered her face

1. בראשית לח

(א) וַיְהִי בַעַת הַהוּא וַיֵּרֶד יְהוּדָה מֵאֶת אָחִיו וַיֵּט עַד־אִישׁ עַדְלָמִי וּשְׁמוֹ חִירָה: (ב) וַיֵּרָא־שָׁם יְהוּדָה בַּת־אִישׁ כְּנַעֲנִי וּשְׁמוֹ שׁוּעַ וַיִּקְחָהּ וַיָּבֵא אֵלֶיהָ: (ג) וַתְּהַר וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ עֵר: (ד) וַתְּהַר עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ אוֹנָן: (ה) וַתִּסֶּף עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתִּקְרָא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ שְׁלֹה וְהָיָה בְכִזִּיב בְּלִדְתָהּ אֹתוֹ: (ו) וַיִּקַּח יְהוּדָה אִשָּׁה לְעֵר בְּכוֹרוֹ וּשְׁמָהּ תָמָר: (ז) וַיְהִי עַר בְּכוֹר יְהוּדָה רַע בְּעֵינֵי ה' וַיִּמְתֶּהוּ ה': (ח) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה לְאוֹנָן בֵּא אֶל־אִשְׁתְּ אָחִיךָ וַיְבַם אֹתָהּ וְהָקָם זֶרַע לְאָחִיךָ: (ט) וַיִּדַע אוֹנָן כִּי לֹא לוֹ יִהְיֶה הַזֶּרַע וְהָיָה אִם־בֵּא אֶל־אִשְׁתְּ אָחִיו וּשְׁחַת אֶרְצָה לְבִלְתִּי נִתְּר־זֶרַע לְאָחִיו: (י) וַיִּרַע בְּעֵינֵי ה' אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וַיִּמַּת גַּם־אֹתוֹ: (יא) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה לְתָמָר כְּלָתוֹ שְׁבִי אֵלַי בֵּית־אָבִיךָ עַד־יִגְדַּל שְׁלֹה בְנִי כִּי אָמַר פְּרִימֹת גַּם־הוּא כְּאָחִיו וַתֵּלֶךְ תָּמָר וַתֵּשֶׁב בֵּית אָבִיהָ: (יב) וַיִּרְבוּ הַיָּמִים וַתִּמַּת בַּת־שׁוּעַ אִשְׁתְּ יְהוּדָה וַיִּנָּחַם יְהוּדָה וַיַּעַל עַל־גִּזְזֵי צֹאנוֹ הוּא וְחִירָה רָעָהוּ הַעַדְלָמִי תִמְנָתָהּ: (יג) וַיִּגַּד לְתָמָר לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה חָמִיד עָלֶיךָ תִמְנָתָהּ לָגִז צֹאנוֹ: (יד) וַתִּסֶּר בְּגָדֵי אֲלִמְנוּתָהּ מֵעָלֶיהָ וַתִּכְסַּבְּצֵרָה וַתִּתְעַלֵּף וַתֵּשֶׁב בַּפֶּתַח עֵינַיִם אֲשֶׁר עַל־דֶּרֶךְ תִּמְנָתָהּ כִּי רָאָתָהּ כִּי־גָדַל שְׁלֹה וְהוּא לֹא־נִתְּנָה לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה: (טו) וַיִּרְאֶה יְהוּדָה וַיַּחֲשֹׁבֶה לְזוֹנָה כִּי כִסְתָהּ פְּנֵיהָ: (טז) וַיֵּט אֵלֶיהָ אֶל־הַדֶּרֶךְ וַיֹּאמֶר הֲבֵה־נָא אָבֹא אֵלֶיךָ כִּי לֹא יָדַע כִּי כְלָתוֹ הוּא וַתֹּאמֶר מַה־תַּתְּרִלִּי כִּי תָבֹא אֵלַי: (יז) וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִכִּי אֲשַׁלַּח גְּדֵי־עִזִּים מִן־הַצֹּאן וַתֹּאמֶר אִם־תָּתַן עֲרֹבוֹן עַד שְׁלַחְךָ: (יח) וַיֹּאמֶר מֶה הָעֲרֹבוֹן אֲשֶׁר אֶתְּרִלְךָ וַתֹּאמֶר חֲתָמְךָ וּפְתִילְךָ וּמִטְּךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדְךָ וַיִּתְּרֶלָהּ וַיָּבֵא אֵלֶיהָ וַתְּהַר לָהּ: (יט) וַתִּקֶּם וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתִּסֶּר צַעֲיָפָה מֵעָלֶיהָ וַתִּלְבַּשׁ בְּגָדֵי

with a veil, and, wrapping herself up, sat down at the entrance to Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown up, yet she had not been given to him as wife. (15) When Judah saw her, he took her for a harlot; for she had covered her face. (16) So he turned aside to her by the road and said, "Here, let me **sleep** with you"—for he **did not know** that she was his daughter-in-law. "What," she asked, "will you pay for sleeping with me?" (17) He replied, "I will send a kid from my flock." But she said, "You must leave a pledge until you have sent it." (18) And he said, "What pledge shall I give you?" She replied, "Your seal and cord, and the staff which you carry." So he gave them to her and slept with her, and she conceived by him. (19) Then she went on her way. She took off her veil and again put on her widow's garb. (20) Judah sent the kid by his friend the Adullamite, to redeem the pledge from the woman; but he could not find her. (21) He inquired of the council of that locale, "Where is the prostitute, the one at Enaim, by the road?" But they said, "There has been no prostitute here." (22) So he returned to Judah and said, "I could not find her; moreover, the local council said: There has been no prostitute here." (23) Judah said, "Let her keep them, lest we become a laughingstock. I did send her this kid, but you did not find her." (24) About three months later, Judah was told, "Your daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot; in fact, she is pregnant from harlotry." "Bring her out," said Judah. "She should be burned!" (25) As she was being brought out, she sent this message to her father-in-law, "It's by the man to whom these belong that I'm pregnant." And she added, "Examine these: whose seal and cord and staff are these?" (26) **Judah recognized them**, and said, "She is more in the right than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he was not intimate with

אֶלְמִנּוּתָהּ: (כ) וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוּדָה אֶת־גְּדֵי הָעִזִּים בְּיַד רָעָהוּ הָעֵדְלָמִי לְקַחַת הָעֶרְבוֹן מִיַּד הָאִשָּׁה וְלֹא מִצָּאָהּ: (כא) וַיִּשְׁאַל אֶת־אֲנָשֵׁי מְקוֹמָהּ לֵאמֹר אֵיךָ הִקְדָּשָׁה הוּא בְּעֵינֵינוּ עַל־הַדָּרֶךְ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא־הִיְתָה בָּזָה קְדֻשָּׁה: (כב) וַיָּשֶׁב אֶל־יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא מִצָּאָתִיָּה וְגַם אֲנָשֵׁי הַמָּקוֹם אָמְרוּ לֹא־הִיְתָה בָּזָה קְדֻשָּׁה: (כג) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה תִּקַּח־לָהּ פֶּן נִהְיֶה לְבוֹ הַנָּה שְׁלַחְתִּי הַגְּדִי הַזֶּה וְאַתָּה לֹא מִצָּאָתִיָּה: (כד) וַיְהִי כַּמִּשְׁלֹשׁ חֳדָשִׁים וַיִּגַּד לְיְהוּדָה לֵאמֹר זָנַתָּה תָמַר כְּלַתְּךָ וְגַם הַנָּה הִרָּה לְזִנוּנִים וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוּדָה הוֹצִיָּאוּהָ וְתִשְׂרֹף: (כה) הוּא מוֹצֵאת וְהִיא שְׁלַחָה אֶל־חַמִּיָּה לֵאמֹר לְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־אַלְהָ לּוֹ אֲנִכִּי הָרָה וְתֹאמַר הַכֶּר־נָא לְמִי הַחֲתָמָת וְהַפְּתִילִים וְהַמָּטָה הָאֵלֶּה: (כו) וַיִּכְרַר יְהוּדָה וַיֹּאמֶר צְדָקָה מִמֶּנִּי כִּי־עַל־כֵּן לֹא־נִתְּתִיָּה לְשִׁלָּה בְּנִי וְלֹא־יִסֹּף עוֹד לְדַעְתָּהּ: (כז) וַיְהִי בְּעֵת לְדַתָּהּ וְהַנָּה תְּאוֹמִים בְּבִטְנָהּ: (כח) וַיְהִי בְּלִדְתָּהּ וַיִּתְּרֶיֶד וְתִקַּח הַמִּילָדָת וְתִקְשֶׁר עַל־יָדוֹ שְׁנֵי לֵאמֹר זֶה יֵצֵא רֵאשִׁיָּה: (כט) וַיְהִי כַּמִּשְׁיֵב יָדוֹ וְהַנָּה יֵצֵא אַחִיו וְתֹאמַר מִהַּ פָּרַצְתָּ עָלַיךָ פָּרֶץ וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ פָּרֶץ: (ל) וְאַחֵר יֵצֵא אַחִיו אֲשֶׁר עַל־יָדוֹ הַשְּׁנֵי וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ זָרַח: {ס}

her again. (27) When the time came for her to give birth, there were twins in her womb! (28) While she was in labor, one of them put out a hand, and the midwife tied a crimson thread on that hand, to signify: This one came out first. (29) But just then it drew back its hand, and out came its brother; and she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" So he was named Perez. (30) Afterward his brother came out, on whose hand was the crimson thread; he was named Zerah.

II. Rut and Boaz at the גורן (threshing floor):

2. Megillat Rut, Perek 2

(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!" So she told her mother-in-law whom she had worked with, saying, "The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz." (20) Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he of the LORD, who has not failed in His kindness to the living or to the dead! For," Naomi explained to her daughter-in-law, "the man is related to us; he is one of our redeeming kinsmen." (21) Ruth the Moabite 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 annoyed 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.

2. מגילת רות, פרק ב

(יט) וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ חֲמוּתָהּ אֵיפֹה לְקַטְתְּ הַיּוֹם וְאַנֶּה עֲשִׂיתִי יְהִי מִכִּירְךָ בְרוּךְ וַתִּגַּד לְחֲמוּתָהּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר־עָשְׂתָה עִמּוֹ וַתֹּאמֶר שֵׁם הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי עִמּוֹ הַיּוֹם בְּעַזִּי: (כ) וַתֹּאמֶר נַעֲמִי לְכַלְתָּה בְרוּךְ הוּא לֵה' אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עָזַב חֲסִדּוֹ אֶת־הַחַיִּים וְאֶת־הַמֵּתִים וַתֹּאמֶר לֵה נַעֲמִי קְרוֹב לָנוּ הָאִישׁ מִגְּאֻלָּנוּ הוּא: (כא) וַתֹּאמֶר רֹוֹת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה גָּסוּ כִי־אָמַר אֵלַי עַם־הַנְּעָרִים אֲשֶׁר־לִי תִדְבְּקִין עַד אִם־כָּלוּ אֶת כָּל־הַקֶּצִיר אֲשֶׁר־לִי: (כב) וַתֹּאמֶר נַעֲמִי אֶל־רֹוֹת כָּלְתָה טוֹב בְּתִי כִי תִצְאִי עַם־נְעֻרוֹתָיו וְלֹא יִפְגְּעוּ־בְךָ בְּשָׂדֵה אַחֵר: (כג) וַתִּדְבַּק בְּנַעֲרוֹת בְּעֵז לְלַקֵּט עַד־כָּלֹוֹת קֶצֶר־הַשְּׂעִרִים וְקֶצֶר־הַחֲטָיִם וַתֵּשֶׁב אֶת־חֲמוּתָהּ:

3. Megillat Rut, Perek 3

(1) Naomi, her mother-in-law, said to her, "Daughter, I must seek a home for you, where you may be happy. (2) Now there is

3. מגילת רות, פרק ג

(א) וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ נַעֲמִי חֲמוּתָהּ בְּתִי הֲלֹא אֲבַקֶּשׁ־לְךָ מְנוּחַ אֲשֶׁר יֵיטֵב־לְךָ: (ב) וְעַתָּה הֲלֹא

our kinsman Boaz, whose girls you were close to. He will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor tonight. (3) So bathe, anoint yourself, dress up, and go down to the threshing floor. But do not **disclose yourself** to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. (4) When he **lies down**, **note** the place where he **lies down**, and go over and **uncover** his feet and **lie down**. He will tell you what you are to do.” (5) She replied, “I will do everything you tell me.” (6) She went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had instructed her. (7) Boaz ate and **drank**, and in a cheerful mood **went** to **lie down** beside the grainpile. Then she went over stealthily and **uncovered his feet** and **lay down**. (8) In the middle of the night, the man gave a start and pulled back—there was a woman **lying at his feet!** (9) “Who are you?” he asked. And she replied, “I am your handmaid Ruth. Spread your robe over your handmaid, for you are a redeeming kinsman.” (10) He exclaimed, “Be blessed of the LORD, daughter! Your latest deed of loyalty is greater than the first, in that you have not turned to younger men, whether poor or rich. (11) And now, daughter, have no fear. I will do in your behalf whatever you ask, for all the elders of my town^c **know** what a fine woman you are. (12) But while it is true I am a redeeming kinsman, there is another redeemer closer than I. (13) Stay for the night. Then in the morning, if he will act as a redeemer, good! let him redeem. But if he does not want to act as redeemer for you, I will do so myself, as the LORD lives! Lie down until morning.” (14) So she **lay** at his feet until dawn. She **rose** before one person could **distinguish another**, for he thought, “Let it not be **known** that the woman **came** to the threshing floor.”

בְּעַז מִדַּעַתְנוּ אֲשֶׁר הֵייתָ אֶת־נַעֲרוֹתַי
הַנְּהִיָּהוּ זֶרֶה אֶת־גֵּרוֹן הַשְּׁעָרִים הַלַּיְלָה: (ג)
וּרְחַצְתוּ וְסִכַּת וּשְׂמַת (שְׁמַלְתִּיךָ) [שְׁמַלְתִּיךָ]
עֲלֶיךָ (וּיְרַדְתִּי) [וּיְרַדְתִּי] הַגֵּרוֹן אֶל־תּוֹדְעִי לְאִישׁ
עַד כִּלְתּוֹ לֶאֱכַל וּלְשִׁתּוֹ: (ד) וְיִהְיֶה בְּשֹׁכְבוֹ
וְיֹדַעַת אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב־שָׁם וּבָאת
וּגְלִית מִרְגְּלֹתַי (וּשְׁכַבְתִּי) [וּשְׁכַבְתִּי] וְהוּא יִגִּיד
לָךְ אֵת אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשִׂין: (ה) וְתֹאמַר אֵלָיָהּ כָּל
אֲשֶׁר־תֹּאמְרִי [אֵלָי] אַעֲשֶׂה: (ו) וְתִרְדַּד הַגֵּרוֹן
וְתַעֲשֶׂה כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוְּתָהּ חֲמוּתָהּ: (ז) וְיֹאכַל בְּעֵז
וְיִשָּׂת וְיִיטֵב לָבוֹ וְיָבֵא לְשֹׁכֵב בַּקֶּצֶה הָעֶרְמָה
וּתְבֵא בַלֵּט וּתְגַל מִרְגְּלֹתַי וּתִשְׁכַּב: (ח) וְיִהְיֶה
בַּחֲצִי הַלַּיְלָה וְיִחַרְד הָאִישׁ וְיִלְפַת וְהִנֵּה אִשָּׁה
שֹׁכֶבֶת מִרְגְּלֹתָיו: (ט) וְיֹאמַר מִי־אַתְּ וְתֹאמַר
אֲנִכִּי רוּת אֲמַתְךָ וּפְרַשְׁתָּ כְּנַפְךָ עַל־אַמְתְּךָ כִּי
גָאַל אֶתָּה: (י) וְיֹאמַר בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ לֵה' בְּתִי
הֵיטִבְתָּ חֲסִדְךָ הָאֲחֻזָּה מִן־הָרֵאשׁוֹן
לְבַלְתִּי־לָכֶת אַחֲרֵי הַבְּחוּרִים אֲסִדֵּל
וְאִם־עָשִׂיר: (יא) וְעַתָּה בְּתִי אֶל־תִּירְאִי כָּל
אֲשֶׁר־תֹּאמְרִי אַעֲשֶׂה־לָּךְ כִּי יוֹדַע כָּל־שֹׁעַר עָמִי
כִּי אִשְׁתְּ חַיִּל אָתָּה: (יב) וְעַתָּה כִּי אֲמַנֶּם כִּי (אם)
גָּאַל אֲנִכִּי וְגַם יֵשׁ גָּאַל קָרוֹב מִמֶּנִּי: (יג) לִינִי
הַלַּיְלָה וְהִיָּה בְּבִקּוֹר אִם־יִגְאַלְךָ טוֹב יִגְאַל
וְאִם־לֹא יִחַפֵּץ לְגְאַלְךָ וּגְאַלְתִּיךָ אֲנִכִּי חַיִּה'
שְׁכַבִּי עַד־הַבֶּקֶר: (יד) וּתִשְׁכַּב מִרְגְּלוֹתָיו
עַד־הַבֶּקֶר וְתִקַּם (בְּטָרָם) [בְּטָרָם] יִכְיֹר אִישׁ
אֶת־רַעְהוּ וְיֹאמַר אֶל־יְהוָה כִּי־בָּאָה הָאִשָּׁה
הַגֵּרוֹן:

III. Similarities and Differences:

4. Similarities:	Differences:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yehuda and Elimelech leave their brothers/nation to go to a foreign land. Either they or their sons intermarry. 2. Sons die without children and unclear why sons die (we're told that Er is רע בעיני ה' and Onan spills his seed). 3. Sons have terrible names (Machlon + Kilyon = destruction, Er = barren, Onan = mourning). 4. Delay or refusal of Yibbum by Ploni Almoni/Onan, and Yehuda/Boaz. 5. Yibbum is not done by the closest redeemer. 6. Tamar and Rut both act through subterfuge to attempt a version of Yibbum: hiding identity, plan seems to be to get pregnant, morally questionable, big reveal at end. 7. Women take matters into their own hands, while men are passive. 8. Setting of a celebration with drinking: harvest or sheep shearing. 9. Yehuda tries to send Tamar home, Naomi tries to send Rut home, language of waiting until a son grows up (Rut 1:13, Breishit 38:11). 10. Common words: הקר (reveal), שכב (lie), נשקה (drink), ותבוא (come), ידע (know), ויקם (rise)... 11. The elders bless Boaz and Rut that their house should be like that of Peretz, born to Yehuda and Tamar. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Naomi devises the plan for Rut, unlike Tamar, who plans it for herself. 2. Boaz and Rut do not have relations, unlike Tamar & Yehuda. 3. Boaz & Rut's relationship is legally formalized in front of the זקנים at the שער. 4. While Boaz does not step up at first to redeem Rut (until the night at the goren), he doesn't seem to be actively pushing her off, like Yehuda and Tamar. 5. Who are Naomi and Yehuda each concerned for when they send Rut and Tamar home? 6. Who is being redeemed? Naomi or Rut? Tamar or Er? <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: right;">רות ד:יד</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ותאמרנה הנשים אל-נעמי ברוך ה' אשר לא השבית לך גאל היום ויקרא שמו בישראל:</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 5px;"> <p><u>Rut 4:14</u> And the women said to Naomi, <u>Blessed is the Lord, who has not left thee this day without a redeemer</u>, that his name may be famous in Yisrael.</p> </div>

<p>רות ד:יב ויהי ביתך כבית פרץ אשר ילדה תמר ליהודה...</p>	
<p>Rut 4:12 And may your house <u>be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah...</u></p>	

IV: Lot and his Daughters:

<p>5. Breishit 19 (30) Lot went up from Zoar and settled in the hill country with his two daughters, for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar; and he and his two daughters lived in a cave. (31) <u>And the older one said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to consort with us in the way of all the world. (32) Come, let us make our father drink wine, and let us lie with him, that we may maintain life through our father."</u> (33) That night they made their father drink wine, and the older one went in and lay with her father; he did not know when she lay down or when she rose. (34) The next day the older one said to the younger, "See, I lay with Father last night; let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go and lie with him, that we may maintain life through our father." (35) That night also they made their father drink wine, and the younger one went and lay with him; he did not know when she lay down or when she rose. (36) Thus the two daughters of Lot became pregnant by their father. (37) The older one bore a son and named him Moab; he is the father of the Moabites of today. (38) And the younger also bore a son, and she called him Ben-ammi; he is the father of the Ammonites of today.</p>	<p>5. בראשית יט (ל) וַיַּעַל לוֹט מִצְּוֹעַר וַיָּשֶׁב בְּהַר וּשְׁתֵי בָנָתָיו עִמּוֹ כִּי יָרָא לְשֵׁבֶת בְּצוֹעַר וַיֵּשֶׁב בַּמְעָרָה הוּא וּשְׁתֵי בָנָתָיו: (לא) וּתְאֹמַר הַבְּכִירָה אֶל־הַצְעִירָה אַבִּינוּ זָקֵן וְאִישׁ אֵין בְּאֶרֶץ לְבוֹא עֲלֵינוּ כְּדֹרֶךְ כָּל־הָאָרֶץ: (לב) לָכֵה נִשְׁקָה אֶת־אַבְיָנוּ יַי וְנִשְׁכַּבָּה עִמּוֹ וְנַחֲיָה מֵאַבְיָנוּ זָרַע: (לג) וּתִשְׁקִין אֶת־אַבְיָהּוֹן יַי בַּלַּיְלָה הוּא וּתְבֹא הַבְּכִירָה וּתִשְׁכַּב אֶת־אַבְיָהּ וּלֹא־יָדַע בְּשִׁכְבָּהּ וּבִקְוָמָהּ: (לד) וַיְהִי מִמַּחֲרָת וּתְאֹמַר הַבְּכִירָה אֶל־הַצְעִירָה הֲוֵי־שִׁכְבָּתִי אִמָּשׁ אֶת־אַבִּי נִשְׁקֵנוּ יַי גַּם־הַלַּיְלָה וּבְאִי שִׁכְבִּי עִמּוֹ וְנַחֲיָה מֵאַבְיָנוּ זָרַע: (לה) וּתִשְׁקִין גַּם בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא אֶת־אַבְיָהּוֹן יַי וּתִקַּם הַצְעִירָה וּתִשְׁכַּב עִמּוֹ וּלֹא־יָדַע בְּשִׁכְבָּהּ וּבִקְוָמָהּ: (לו) וּתְהָרִין שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת־לוֹט מֵאַבְיָהּוֹן: (לז) וּתֵלֵד הַבְּכִירָה בֶן וּתִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מוֹאָב הוּא אֲבִי־מוֹאָב עַד־הַיּוֹם: (לח) וְהַצְעִירָה גַּם־הוּא יֵלְדָה בֶן וּתִקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בְנֵי־עַמּוֹן הוּא אֲבִי בְנֵי־עַמּוֹן עַד־הַיּוֹם: {ס}</p>
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6. Similarities/Connections:	Differences:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lot leaves the family of Avraham to go to foreign culture of Sedom. Elimelech and family go to Moav. • Attempted version of “Yibbum” through subterfuge • Women are active and come up with the plan, men are passive. • Men are drunk or have been drinking (Lot, Boaz) • Common words: נשקה (lie), שכב (drink), ותבוא (come), ידע (know), ויקם (rise)... • Union results in the origin story of Moav. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lot leaves to Sedom, while Rut chooses to leave Moav for Israel and join Naomi. • Naomi devises the plan for the sake of Rut, unlike daughters of Lot. • Boaz and Rut do not have relations, unlike Lot & daughters. • Daughters are the ones to get Lot drunk (unlike Boaz and Yehuda).

V. Takeaway #1: Rut as a תיקון:

<p>7. Midrash Tanhuma, Behar, 8</p> <p>Naomi had said to her, “You should wash, and anoint yourself” (Ruth 3:3) and afterwards you should go down to the threshing floor... <u>She did not do as her mother-in-law said. What did Ruth do? After she went down to the threshing floor, she did [what Naomi had told her],</u> as it says, “And she went down to the threshing floor. And she did all that her mother-in-law commanded her” (Ruth 3:6). <u>Why? Because she said, “This generation is rife with licentiousness. If they see me adorned, they will say that I am a prostitute.”</u></p>	<p>7. מדרש תנחומא, בהר ח</p> <p>אמרה לה ורחצת וסכת (שם שם ג), ואחר כך וירדת הגורן (שם), וירדתי כתיב, אמרה לה זכותי תרד עמך. היא לא עשתה כמו שאמרה לה חמותה, מה עשתה רות, לאחר שירדה הגורן עשתה, שנאמר ותרד הגורן ותעש ככל אשר צותה חמותה (רות ג ו), למה, אלא אמרה הדור פרוץ בעריות הוא, שמא יראו אותי מקושטת, ויאמרו שמא זונה היא</p>
<p>8. Devarim 23:5</p> <p>(4) <u>An Ammonite or a Mo'avite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord;</u></p>	<p>8. דברים כג:ה</p> <p>(ד) <u>לא יבא עמוני ומואבי בקהל ה' גם דור עשירי לא יבא להם בקהל ה' עד-עולם: (ה) על-דבר</u></p>

even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever: (5) because they did not meet you with food and water on your journey after you left Egypt, and because they hired Balaam son of Beor, from Pethor of Aram-naharaim, to curse you.—

אֲשֶׁר לֹא־קִדְּמוּ אֶתְכֶם בְּלֶחֶם וּבַמַּיִם בְּדֶרֶךְ
בְּצֵאתְכֶם מִמִּצְרַיִם וְאֲשֶׁר שָׂכַר עֲלֵיךְ אֶת־בְּלַעַם
בֶּן־בְּעוֹר מִפֶּתוֹר אֲרָם נְהָרִים לְקַלְלֶךָ:

VI: Takeaway #2: Women Get Things Done

9. Talmud Bavli, Sotah 11b

Rav Avira taught: In the merit of the righteous women that were in that generation, the Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt. At the time when these women would go to draw water, the Holy One, Blessed be He, would materialize for them small fish that would enter into their pitchers, and they would draw pitchers that were half filled with water and half filled with fish. And they would come and place two pots on the fire, one of hot water for washing their husbands and one of fish with which to feed them. And they would then take what they prepared to their husbands, to the field, and would bathe their husbands and anoint them with oil and feed them the fish and give them to drink and bond with them in sexual intercourse between the sheepfolds, i.e., between the borders and fences of the fields...

9. תלמוד בבלי, סוטה י"א:

דרש רב עורא בשכר נשים צדקניות שהיו באותו הדור נגאלו ישראל ממצרים בשעה שהולכות לשאוב מים הקב"ה מזמן להם דגים קטנים בכדיהן ושואבות מחצה מים ומחצה דגים ובאות ושופתות שתי קדירות אחת של חמין ואחת של דגים ומוליכות אצל בעליהן לשדה ומרחיצות אותן וסכות אותן ומאכילות אותן ומשקות אותן ונזקקות להן בין שפתיים...

10. Rashi on Exodus 38:8:1

(1) OF THE MIRRORS OF THE WOMEN CROWDING – The Israelite women possessed mirrors of copper into which they used to look when they adorned themselves. Even these they did not hesitate to bring as a contribution towards the Tabernacle. Now Moses was about to reject them since they were made to pander to their vanity, but the Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, "Accept them;

10. רש"י על שמות ל"ח:ח:א'

(א) במראת הצבאת. בנות ישראל היו בידן מראות שרואות בהן כשהן מתקשטות, ואף אותן לא עכבו מלהביא לנדבת המשכן, והיה מואס משה בהן מפני שעשויים ליצר הרע, אמר לו הקב"ה קבל, כי אלו חביבין עלי מן הכל, שעל ידיהם העמידו הנשים צבאות רבות במצרים; כשהיו בעליהם יגעים בעבודת פרוך, היו הולכות ומוליכות להם מאכל ומשתה, ומאכילות אותם ונוטלות

these are dearer to Me than all the other contributions, because through them the women reared those huge hosts in Egypt! For when their husbands were tired through the crushing labor they used to bring them food and drink and induced them to eat. Then they would take the mirrors, and each gazed at herself in her mirror together with her husband, saying endearingly to him, “See, I am handsomer than you!” Thus they awakened their husbands’ affection and subsequently became the mothers of many children...

הַמְרָאוֹת, וְכָל אַחַת רוֹאָה עֵצְמָה עִם בַּעֲלָהּ
בַּמִּרְאָה, וּמְשַׁדְּלָתוּ בַדְּבָרִים, לֹמֵר אֲנִי נְאֻה
מִמֶּךָ, וּמִתּוֹךְ כִּךְ מְבִיאֹת לְבַעֲלֶיהָ לִידֵי תַאֲוָה
וּנְזֻקוֹת לָהֶם וּמִתְעַבְרוֹת וְיוֹלְדוֹת שָׁם...

VII: Takeaway #3: From Law to Lived Experience

11. Midrash Rut Rabbah, 2:

Rav Zeira said: This Megillah does not contain the laws of *tumah* (impurity) or *tahara* (purity), not what is allowed and what is forbidden. So why was it written? To teach how great the reward is for those who perform acts of *hesed* (kindness).

11. רות רבה (ויילנא) פרשה ב:
א"ר זעירא: מגילה זו אין בה לא טומאה ולא
טהרה ולא איסור ולא היתר. ולמה נכתבה?
ללמדך כמה שכר טוב לגומלי חסדים.

12. “Law and Narrative in the Book of Ruth” - The Murmuring Deep: Reflections on the Biblical Unconscious, Dr. Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg

The central message of the book of Ruth, declares R. Ze’ira, is not embodied in law but in narrative. The book tells the story about the good things that happen to good people... But R. Ze’ira is careful with his terms: he refers specifically to “those who do *chasadim*-deeds of loving kindness”... I suggest that Ruth is the narrative that displays that core meaning in dynamic form. Here, *chesed* moves and breathes and generates; here we can take the measure of its uncanny power. Here are Ruth and Orpha, in their devotion to their mother-in-law; and Ruth in relation to Boaz (and perhaps to her dead husband, Machlon). But here, too, is Boaz, encouraging Ruth to glean in his field, and instructing his reapers not to shame her but to leave the “forgotten” stalks for her gleaning... His goodness, however, is precisely an expression of the legal requirements of his situation; that is, of the “prohibitions and permissions” that the midrash maintains are not the subject of the book. The laws of the field, as they are sketched out in Leviticus (19:9-10) are given dramatic form in Boaz’s words of *chesed*.

Further Reading:

- Rav Alex Israel: “Megillat Ruth and the Story of Yehuda and Tamar - A Study in Biblical Contrast”, <https://www.alexisrael.org/shavuot-ruth-yehuda-and-tamar>
- Dr. Yael Ziegler: “Ruth and Boaz in the Goren - Realizing One’s Destiny”, <https://etzion.org.il/en/tanakh/ketuvim/megillat-ruth/ruth-and-boaz-goren-realizing-ones-destiny>
- For further parallels between the stories see מקרא דעת and מקרא לישראל

