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THE UNKNOWN WOMAN: BECOMING RUTH

Dr. Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg

1. The Unknown Woman: Becoming Ruth

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(1) מדרשربع והרחבה הפסקת ב
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(2) מדרשربع והרחבה הפסקת ט

(3) מדרשربع והרחבה הפסקת א

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(5) מדרשربع והרחבה הפסקת ד

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Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies
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1) Midrash Rabbah - Ruth 5:2
THEN SHE FELL ON HER FACE AND BOWED DOWN TO THE GROUND, AND SAID: WHY HAVE I FOUND FAVOUR IN THY SIGHT THAT THOU TAKEST COGNISANCE OF ME (II, 10). This teaches that she prophesied that he would make her his wife.

2) Midrash Rabbah - Ruth 5:9
AND HER MOTHER-IN-LAW SAID UNTO HER: WHERE HAST THOU GLEANED TO-DAY? (ib. 19). It was taught in the name of R. Joshua: More than the householder does for the poor man does the poor man do for the householder, for Ruth said to Naomi: THE MAN'S NAME FOR WHOM I WROUGHT TO-DAY. She did not say, 'who wrought for me,' but FOR WHOM I WROUGHT. I wrought him many benefits in return for the one morsel of food which he gave me.

3) Midrash Rabbah - Ruth 6:1
At midnight I will rise to give thanks to Thee because of Thy righteous judgments (Ps. CXIX, 62). R. Phinehas commented in the name of R. Eliezer b. Jacob: A harp and lyre were suspended over David's head, and when the hour of midnight came he used to rise and play on them... Another interpretation: ’Because of Thy righteous ordinances’; the judgments which Thou didst bring upon the Ammonites and Moabites, and the righteousness which Thou wroughtest for my grandfather and grandmother, for had he hasty cursed her, but once, whence should I have come? But Thou didst inspire him to bless her, as it is said, BLESSED BE THOU OF THE LORD, MY DAUGHTER (III, 10).
4) Midrash Rabbah - Ruth 6:1
The fear of man bringeth a snare.’... [The verse also refers to] the fear which Jacob caused Isaac to fear, as it is written, And Isaac trembled very exceedingly (Gen. XXVII, 33), and he might easily have cursed him, but ‘ Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be set up on high’, and God put it in his heart to bless him, as it is said, Yea, he shall be blessed (ib.). [It may also refer to] the fear which Ruth caused Boaz to fear, as it is written, AND IT CAME TO PASS AT MIDNIGHT, THAT THE MAN WAS STARTLED (III 8), and he might easily have cursed her, but ‘ Whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be set up on high’. But God put it in his heart to bless her, as it is said, BLESSED BE THOU OF THE LORD, MY DAUGHTER (ib. 10).

5) Midrash Rabbah - Ruth 8:1
R. Isaac opened his exposition with the verse Then said I: Lo, I am come (Ps. XL, 8). I ought to have sung a song that I have come, since the word az (lo!) refers to song, as it is said, Then (az) sang Moses (Ex. XV, 1). I was included in the verse An Ammonite and a Moaibite shall not come into the assembly of the Lord (Deut. XXIII, 4), but I have come with the roll of a book which is prescribed for me (Ps. loc. cit.). ’ With the roll’2 refers to the verse, Concerning whom Thou didst command that they should not enter into Thy congregation (Lam. I, 10). ‘In the book,’ as it is said, ‘An Ammonite and a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord’ (Deut. XXIII, 4). And not only have I been allowed to enter, but in the roll and the book it is written concerning me. ’ In the roll ‘- Perez, Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David; ‘in the book’; And the Lord said: Arise, anoint him; for this is he (I Sam. XVI, 12).

6) Babylonian Talmud - Brachot 7b
Ruth. What is the meaning of Ruth? R. Johanan said: Because she was privileged to be the ancestress of David, who saturated the Holy One, blessed be He, with songs and hymns.

7) Babylonian Talmud - Shabbat 113b
Said R. Eleazar, He intimated to her, The royal house of David is destined to come forth from thee, [the house] whereof ‘hither’ is written, as it is said, Then David the king went in, and sat before the Lord, — and he said, Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hither?

8) Beur HaGra 2:10 – not available in English
9) Midrash Rabbah - Ruth 5:6
R. Isaac b. Marion said: This verse can teach us that if a man is about to perform a good deed, he should do it with all his heart. For had Reuben known that Scripture would record of him, And Reuben heard it, and delivered him out of their hand (Gen. XXXVII, 21), he would have borne Joseph on his shoulder to his father; and had Aaron known that Scripture would record of him, And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee (Ex. IV, 14), he would have gone forth to meet him with timbrels and dances. And had Boaz known that Scripture would record of him, And he reached her parched corn, and she did eat and was satisfied and left thereof, he would have fed her with fatted calves. R. Cohen and R. Joshua of Siknin said in the name of R. Levi: In the past when a man performed a good deed, the prophet placed it on record; but nowadays when a man performs a good deed, who records it? Elijah records it and the Messiah and the Holy One, blessed be He, subscribe their seal to it. This is the meaning of the verse, Then they that feared the Lord spoke with one another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him (Mal. III, 16).

10) Midrash Rabbah - Ruth 2:2
There they dwelt, occupied in the king's work.’ On the strength of this verse they said that Ruth the Moabitess did not die until she saw her descendant Solomon sitting and judging the case of the harlots. That is the meaning of the verse, And caused a throne to be set for the king's mother, i.e. Bath Sheba, And she sat at his right hand (I Kings II, 19), referring to Ruth the Moabitess.

11) Babylonian Talmud - Kiddushin 30a
R. Joshua b. Levi said: He who teaches his grandson Torah, the Writ regards him as though he had received it [direct] from Mount Sinai, for it is said; ‘and thou shalt make them known unto your sons and your sons’ sons’, which is followed by, that is the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb.