



An Immodest Proposal: Ruth and Boaz at the Threshing Floor

1) Yerushalmi Peah 8

ורחצת וסכת ושמת...וירדת הגורן וירדתי כתיב אמרה לה זכותי תרד עמך.
You shall bathe and anoint yourself and done [your garments]...and you shall go down to the threshing floor. The term 'vyardit' is written with an extra yud, conveying, "I" shall go down. She said to [Ruth], "my merit shall go down with you."

2) Ruth 2:8, 21-22

(ח) וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעֵז אֶל רוּת הַלּוֹא שְׁמַעְתְּ בְּתִי אֵל תִּלְכִּי לְלֶקֶט בְּשָׂדֵה אַחֵר וְגַם לֹא תַעֲבוּרִי מִזֶּה וְכֹה תִדְבְּקִין עִם נַעֲרָתִי :

Then said Boaz to Ruth, Do you not hear, my daughter? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go away from here, but stay here close to my maiden
(כא) וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה גַם כִּי אֶמַר אֵלַי עִם הַנְּעָרִים אֲשֶׁר לִי תִדְבְּקִין עַד אִם כָּלוּ אֶת כָּל הַקִּצִּיר אֲשֶׁר לִי :

And Ruth the Moabite said, He also said to me, You shall keep close to my young men, until they have ended all my harvest
(כב) וַתֹּאמֶר נַעֲמִי אֶל רוּת כִּלְתָּה טוֹב בְּתִי כִּי תִצְאִי עִם נַעֲרוֹתָיו....

And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his maidens, that you should not be molested in any other field

3) Ruth Rabba 5:11

ותאמר רות המואביה גם כי אמר אלי עם הנערים אשר לי תדבקין א"ר חנין בר לוי בודאי מואביה היא זו הוא אמר וכה תדבקין עם נערותי והיא אמרה עם הנערים אשר לי ותדבק בנערות בעז.

AND RUTH THE MOABITNESS SAID: YEA, HE SAID UNTO ME: THOU SHALT KEEP FAST BY MY YOUNG MEN (II, 21). R. Hanin b. Levi said: In truth she was a Moabite, for Boaz said to her, Abide here fast by my maidens (II, 8), while she said, BY MY YOUNG MEN. SO SHE KEPT FAST BY THE MAIDENS OF BOAZ

4) Ruth 2:12 and 3:9

(יב) יְשַׁלֵּם יְקֹוֹק פְּעֻלָּךְ וְתִהְיֶי מִשְׁפָּרְתָּךְ שְׁלָמָה מֵעַם יְקֹוֹק אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר בָּאת לְחַסוֹת תַּחַת כְּנָפָיו :

.12The Lord will recompense your work, and a full reward shall be given to you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge



(ט) ...וַתֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי רוּת אֲמִתְךָ וּפְרִשֶׁת כַּנּוֹף עַל אֲמִתְךָ כִּי גֹאֵל אֶתָּה :

"I am your servant Ruth," she said. "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer of our family."

5) Genesis 19

(ו) וַיַּעַל לוֹט מִצּוּעַר וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּהַר וַיִּשְׁתִּי בְנֹתָיו עִמּוֹ כִּי יָרָא לְשֵׁבֶת בְּצוּעַר וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּמַעְרָה הוּא וַיִּשְׁתִּי בְנֹתָיו : (זא) וַתֹּאמֶר הַבְּכִירָה אֶל הַצְּעִירָה אָבִינוּ זָקֵן וְאִישׁ אֵין בְּאֶרֶץ לְבוֹא עֲלֵינוּ כְּדָרְךָ כָּל הָאֶרֶץ : (זב) לָכֵּה נִשְׁקָה אֶת אָבִינוּ יַיִן וְנִשְׁכְּבָה עִמּוֹ וְנַחֲיָה מֵאָבִינוּ זָרַע : (זג) וַתִּשְׁקִינָן אֶת אָבִיהֶן יַיִן בַּלַּיְלָה הוּא וַתֵּבֵא הַבְּכִירָה וַתִּשְׁכַּב אֶת אָבִיהָ וְלֹא יָדַע בְּשֹׁכְבָהּ וּבְקוּמָהּ : (זד) וַיְהִי מִמָּחָרֶת וַתֹּאמֶר הַבְּכִירָה אֶל הַצְּעִירָה הֵן שָׁכַבְתִּי אִמְשׁ אֶת אָבִי נִשְׁקָנוּ יַיִן גַּם הַלַּיְלָה וּבֹאִי שִׁכְבִּי עִמּוֹ וְנַחֲיָה מֵאָבִינוּ זָרַע : (זה) וַתִּשְׁקִינָן גַּם בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא אֶת אָבִיהֶן יַיִן וַתִּקַּם הַצְּעִירָה וַתִּשְׁכַּב עִמּוֹ וְלֹא יָדַע בְּשֹׁכְבָהּ וּבְקוּמָהּ : (זו) וַתִּהְיֶינָן שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת לוֹט מֵאָבִיהֶן : (זי) וַתֵּלֶד הַבְּכִירָה בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ מוֹאָב הוּא אָבִי מוֹאָב עַד הַיּוֹם : (לח) וְהַצְּעִירָה גַּם הוּא יָלְדָה בֵּן וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בֵּן עַמִּי הוּא אָבִי בְנֵי עַמּוֹן עַד הַיּוֹם :

30 And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar; and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.**31** And the first-born said unto the younger: 'Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth. **32** Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.'**33** And they made their father drink wine that night. And the first-born went in, and lay with her father; and he knew not when she lay down, nor when she arose. **34** And it came to pass on the morrow, that the first-born said unto the younger: 'Behold, I lay yesternight with my father. Let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.'**35** And they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose, and lay with him; and he knew not when she lay down, nor when she arose. **36** Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. **38** And the younger, she also bore a son, and called his name Ben-ammi--the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

6) Genesis 38

(א) וַיְהִי בַעֲת הַהוּא וַיֵּרֶד יְהוּדָה מֵאֵת אֶחָיו וַיֵּט עַד אִישׁ עַדְלָמִי וְשֵׁמוֹ חִירָה : (ב) וַיֵּרָא שָׁם יְהוּדָה בֵּת אִישׁ כְּנַעֲנִי וְשֵׁמוֹ שׁוּעַ וַיִּקְחָהּ וַיֵּבֵא אֵלֶיהָ : (ג) וַתֵּהָר וַתֵּלֶד בֵּן וַיִּקְרָא אֶת שְׁמוֹ עֵר :

1 And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah. **2** And Judah saw there a daughter of a certain Canaanite whose name was Shua; and he took her, and went in unto her. **3** And she conceived, and bore a son; and he called his name Er.

... (יב) וַיִּרְבוּ הַיָּמִים וַתָּמָת בֵּת שׁוּעַ אִשְׁתִּי יְהוּדָה וַיִּנָּחַם יְהוּדָה וַיַּעַל עַל גִּזְזֵי צֹאנוֹ הוּא וְחִירָה רָעָהוּ הַעַדְלָמִי תִמְנָתָה : (יג) וַיִּגַּד לְתַמָּר לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה חֲמִידָה עִלָּה תִמְנָתָה לָנוּ צֹאנוֹ : (יד) וַתִּסָּר בְּגָדֵי אֱלִמְנוּתָהּ מֵעֲלֶיהָ וַתִּכְסַּב בְּצַעֲרֶיהָ וַתִּתְעַלֶּף וַתֵּשֶׁב בַּפֶּתַח עֵינִים אֲשֶׁר עַל דָּרְךָ תִמְנָתָה כִּי רָאָתָה כִּי גָדַל שְׁלָהּ וְהוּא לֹא נִתְּנָה לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה : (טו) וַיִּרְאָהּ יְהוּדָה וַיִּחַשְׁבָּהּ לְזוֹנָה כִּי כִסְתָהּ פְּנֵיהָ : (טז) וַיֵּט אֵלֶיהָ אֶל הַדָּרְךָ וַיֹּאמֶר הֲבָה נָא אָבוֹא אֵלֶיךָ כִּי לֹא יָדַע כִּי כִלְתּוֹ הוּא וַתֹּאמֶר מַה תִּתֵּן לִי כִּי תָבוֹא אֵלַי : (יז) וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי אֲשַׁלַּח גְּדֵי עֲזִים מִן הַצֹּאן וַתֹּאמֶר אִם תִּתֵּן עֲרָבוֹן עַד שְׁלֹחֶךָ : (יח) וַיֹּאמֶר מָה הָעֲרָבוֹן אֲשֶׁר אֶתֵּן לָךְ וַתֹּאמֶר חֲתָמְךָ וּפְתִילְךָ וּמִטְףֶךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדְךָ וַיִּתֵּן לָהּ וַיֵּבֵא אֵלֶיהָ וַתֵּהָר לוֹ .



12 And in process of time Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died; and Judah was comforted, and went up unto his sheep-shearers to Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. **13** And it was told Tamar, saying: 'Behold, thy father-in-law goeth up to Timnah to shear his sheep.'**14** And she put off from her the garments of her widowhood, and covered herself with her veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the entrance of Enaim, which is by the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she was not given unto him to wife. **15** When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a harlot; for she had covered her face. **16** And he turned unto her by the way, and said: 'Come, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee'; for he knew not that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said: 'What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me?' **17** And he said: 'I will send thee a kid of the goats from the flock.' And she said: 'Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it?' **18** And he said: 'What pledge shall I give thee?' And she said: 'Thy signet and thy cord, and thy staff that is in thy hand.' And he gave them to her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him.

7) Comparative Chart (Genesis 19; 38; Ruth 3)

| | <u>Lot and his Daughters (Genesis 19)</u> | <u>Tamar and Yehuda (Genesis 38)</u> | <u>Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 3)</u> |
|---|--|--|---|
| <u>Separation between brothers (abandonment of Avraham):</u> | Lot goes to Sodom: (ויפרדו איש מעל אחיו) | Yehuda leaves his brothers, marries a Canaanite: (וירד יהודה מאת אחיו) | Elimelekh goes to Moav: (וילך איש מבית לחם יהודה) |
| <u>Destruction and Death, Danger to the Family Line:</u> | Destruction of the Cities of Sodom and Amarah. | Death of Yehuda's Sons. Yehuda Refuses to Allow Tamar to Marry Shela. | Death of Elimelekh and his Sons. |
| <u>The Fear:</u> | Lot's daughters believe that there is no man left in the land who can procreate with them. | Tamar understands that Yehuda does not intend to allow her to marry Shela. | Naomi knows that she is too old to have a child and that Ruth will not find a husband in Bethlehem. |
| <u>The Deception:</u> | Lot's daughters get him drunk. | Tamar disguises herself as a prostitute. | Naomi sends Ruth to the threshing floor to Boaz. |
| <u>The Man "Does not Know."</u> | Lot does not know when he lies down or gets up. | Yehuda does not know that the "prostitute" is his daughter-in-law. | Naomi tells Ruth not to let Boaz know that she is there until he has eaten and drunk. |



8) Nazir 23a-23b

מאי דכתיב: +הושע יד+ כי ישרים דרכי ה' וצדיקים ילכו בם ופושעים יכשלו בם?
...אלא, משל ללוט ושתי בנותיו עמו, הן שנתכוונו לשם מצוה - וצדיקים ילכו בם,
הוא שנתכוין לשם עבירה - ופושעים יכשלו בם. ודלמא הוא נמי לשום מצוה
איכווין! ... והא מינס אנסי! תנא משום רבי יוסי בר רב חוני: למה נקוד על ויין
+בראשית יט+ ובקומה של בכירה? לומר, שבשכבה לא ידע, אבל בקומה ידע...

אמר עולא: תמר זינתה, זמרי זינה, תמר זינתה - יצאו ממנה מלכים ונביאים, זמרי
זינה - נפלו עליו כמה רבבות מישראל. אמר ר"נ בר יצחק: גדולה עבירה לשמה
ממצוה שלא לשמה.

What is meant by the verse, "For the ways of the Lord are right, and the just do walk in them," but transgressors do stumble therein," ... Rather is it illustrated by Lot when his two daughters were with him. To these [the daughters], whose intention it was to do right, [applies], 'the just do walk in them', whereas to him [Lot] whose intention it was to commit the transgression [applies], 'but transgressors do stumble therein'. But perhaps Lot too intended to fulfill a commandment? ... [Lot] was the victim of compulsion! It had been taught on behalf of R. Jose son of R. Honi that the dot over the letter vav [and] [in the word U-bekumah ['and when she arose' occurring in [the story of] the elder daughter, is to signify that it was her lying down that he did not notice, but he did notice when she arose...

Ulla said: Both Tamar and Zimri committed adultery. Tamar committed adultery and gave birth to kings and prophets. Zimri committed adultery and on his account many tens of thousands of Israel perished.

R. Nahman b. Isaac said: A transgression performed with good intention is better than a precept performed with evil intention

9) Ruth Rabba 6:4

ר' יהודה אומר כל אותו הלילה היה יצרו מקטרגו ואומר את פנוי ומבקש אשה והיא פנויה ומבקשת איש עמוד ובועלה ותהיה לך לאשה.

Rabbi Judah said: All that night his Evil Inclination contended with him saying, 'you are unmarried and seek a wife, and she is unmarried and seeks a husband. Arise and have intercourse with her and make her your wife.'