

“Who Has Not Forgotten His Hesed”

Doing Theology (and Ethics) with the Book of Ruth

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Rabbinic Yeshiva Intensive 2023 / 5783

I. Providence or Coincidence?

1. Ruth 2:1-3	1. רות ב:א-ג
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 Moabite 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 and off she went. She came and gleaned in a field, behind the reapers; and, as luck would have it, it was the piece of land belonging to Boaz, who was of Elimelech's family.	¹ וְלִנְעָמִי (מִידֶע) [מוֹדֶע] לְאִישָׁהּ אִישׁ גְּבוֹר חֵיל מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ וְשֵׁמוֹ בְּעַז׃ ² וְתֹאמַר רֹות הַמּוֹאבִיָּה אֶל־נְעָמִי אֵלֶכָה־נָּא הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֶלְקָטָה בַּשִּׁבְלִים אַחֵר אֲשֶׁר אֶמְצָא־חֵן בְּעֵינָיו וְתֹאמַר לָהּ לְכִי בְתִי׃ ³ וְתֵלֶךְ וְתִבּוֹא וְתִלְקָט בַּשָּׂדֶה אַחֲרֵי הַקְצִירִים וְיִקָּר מִקֶּרֶה חֲלֻקַּת הַשָּׂדֶה לְבַעַז אֲשֶׁר מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ׃
2. I Samuel 6:9	2. שמואל א ו:ט
Then watch: If it goes up the road to Beth-shemesh, to His own territory, it was He who has inflicted this great harm on us. But if not, we shall know that it was not His hand that struck us; it just happened to us by chance.”	וְרֹאִיתֶם אִם־דֶּרֶךְ גְּבוּלוֹ יַעֲלֶה בֵּית שֶׁמֶשׁ הוּא עָשָׂה לָנוּ אֶת־הָרָעָה הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת וְאִם־לֹא יֵדְעֶנּוּ כִּי לֹא יָדוּ נִגְעָה בָּנוּ מִקֶּרֶה הוּא הָיָה לָנוּ׃



3. Genesis 24:12 and 27:20	3. בראשית כד:יב, כז:כ
^{24:12} And he said, "O יהוה, God of my master Abraham's [house], grant me good fortune this day, and deal graciously with my master Abraham. ^{27:20} Isaac said to his son, "How did you succeed so quickly, my son?" And he said, "Because your God יהוה granted me good fortune."	^{24:12} וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנִי אֲבְרָהָם הַקְרָה־נָּא לִפְנֵי הַיּוֹם וַעֲשֵׂה־חֶסֶד עִם אֲדֹנִי אֲבְרָהָם: ^{27:20} וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל־בְּנוֹ מִהֲזָה מְהֵרָתָ לְמַצָּא בְנִי וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי הַקְרָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לִפְנֵי:

4. Ecclesiastes 2:14	4. קהלת ב:יד
A wise man has his eyes in his head, Whereas a fool walks in darkness. But I also realized that the same fate awaits them both.	הַחֶכֶם עֵינָיו בְּרֹאשׁוֹ וְהַכְסִיל בְּחֹשֶׁךְ הוֹלֵךְ וַיֵּדַעְתִּי גַם־אֲנִי שִׁמְקָרָה אֶחָד יִקְרָה אֶת־כָּלָם:

5. Ronald Hals, The Theology of the Book of Ruth, p. 12
The labeling of Ruth's meeting with Boaz as 'chance' is nothing more than a way of saying that no human intent was involved. For Ruth and Boaz it was an accident, but not for God. The tenor of the whole story makes it clear that the narrator sees God's hand throughout. In fact, the very secularism of his expression here is his way of stressing that conviction. It is a kind of underplaying for effect. By calling this meeting an accident, the writer enables himself subtly to point out that even the 'accidental' is directed by God.

6. L. Daniel Hawk, Ruth, p. 78
The language of the report intimates that her arrival at the field is a matter of happenstance. This has led many commentators (e.g. Nielsen 1997: 55) to propose that the narrator is sending a subliminal message; specifically, that YHWH is guiding Ruth without her awareness. When taken at face value, however, the narrator's report prompts the reader to see Ruth's arrival in the field as sheer coincidence. The phrase <i>wayyiqer miqreha</i> corresponds to a similar phrase in Eccl. 2:14 that refers to the wise and foolish suffering the same fate. The noun <i>miqrê</i> stands over against the notion of divine guidance in 1 Sam. 6:9, when the Philistine priests and diviners place the ark of YHWH on a cart pulled by oxen and declare that the direction the oxen take will reveal whether the calamity they have suffered has come from YHWH or has been a random act. In short the narrator presents Ruth's arrival at the field of Boaz as a coincidence and leaves it to the reader to impute divine involvement.



7. Tamar Eskenazi and Tikva Frymer-Kensky, *Ruth*, p. 31

Which meaning is intended in Ruth? The narrator does not say. This ambiguity is one of several in Ruth where the reader is left to choose.

II. Blessings Fulfilled

8. Ruth 1:9 and 3:1	7. רות א:ט, ג:א
^{1:9} May the LORD grant that each of you find security in the house of a husband!" And she kissed them farewell. They broke into weeping. ^{3:1} Naomi, her mother-in-law, said to her, "Daughter, I must seek a home for you, where you may be happy.	^{1:9} יִתֵּן יְהוָה לָכֶם וּמִצָּאֻן מְנוּחָה אִשָּׁה בֵּית אִשָּׁה וְתִשְׁקֶה לָהֶן וְתִשְׁאֲנֶה קוֹלָן וְתִבְכִּינָה: ^{3:1} וְתֹאמַר לָהּ נָעֲמִי חֲמוּתָהּ בְּתִי הֲלֹא אֲבַקֶּשׁ-לָךְ מְנוּחָה אֲשֶׁר יִיטַב-לָךְ:
9. Ruth 2:11-12 and 3:9	8. רות ב:יא-יב, ג:ט
^{2:11} Boaz said in reply, "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 the LORD reward your deeds. May you have a full recompense from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have sought refuge!" ^{3:9} "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."	^{2:11} וַיַּעַן בְּעֵז וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ הִגַּדְתְּ לִי כָל אֲשֶׁר-עָשִׂיתְ אֶת-חֲמוּתְךָ אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אִישִׁיךָ וְתַעֲזְבִי אָבִיךָ וְאִמְךָ וְאֶרֶץ מוֹלַדְתְּךָ וְתֵלְכִי אֶל-עַם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדַעְתְּ תְּמוּל שְׁלִשׁוֹם: ¹² יִשְׁלַם יְהוָה פְּעֻלָּךְ וְתִהְיִי מְשֻׁכְּרֶתָ שְׂלֵמָה מֵעַם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר-בָּאת לְחַסּוֹת תַּחַת-כְּנָפָיו: ^{3:9} וַיֹּאמֶר מִי-אַתְּ וְתֹאמַר אֲנֹכִי רוּת אֲמָתְךָ וּפְרַשְׁתְּ כְנָפְךָ עַל-אֲמָתְךָ כִּי גָאֵל אֶתָּה:
10. Eskenazi and Frymer-Kensky, <i>Ruth</i>, pp. li-lii	
This narrative pattern typifies this book: what one person wishes for another comes to fruition principally through the actions of the well-wishes. Thus, although people frequently invoke God's intercession, it is they who actually intercede in setting things right. As Frymer-Kensky observes,	



“the characters in Book of Ruth themselves act to fulfill the blessing that they bestow on one another in God’s name.

Other examples of this are even more readily discernible: Naomi wishes that God would help her daughters-in-law find security, or a home (*menuḥah*), with a new husband (1:9). Yet it is Naomi herself who acts to make such security or a home (*manoah*) possible for Ruth by urging her to approach Boaz at night (3:1-4). Similarly, when Boaz meets Ruth, he invokes God’s blessings on her as a reward for what she has done for her mother-in-law (2:12); at that point he expresses the hope that she will find shelter under God’s wings. And it is such words that Ruth later pronounces to Boaz when she asks him to take her under his wings (see “robe” in 3:9). Indeed, Boaz rewards Ruth when he first meets her and ultimately provides shelter for her through marriage.

The protagonists’ references to God’s *hesed* (1:8, 2:20) or care (4:14) in the book are then an activating agent in and of themselves. Alicia Ostriker writes: “God’s kindness, invoked by human beings, is also enacted by them. To put it another way, the kindness of human beings reveals the kindness of a God.” Or, as Hubbard has it: God “acts through human agents...when people act with *hesed*, God is acting in them.

Although other biblical books explicitly enjoin Israel to emulate God (e.g. Lev. 19:2), Ruth seems to say more: it is almost as if human action and words bring God into the world. God-centered people prompt God to show up, as it were. This bold theological view is made explicit in *Pesikta de-Rav Kahana*, which daringly represents Boaz’s actions as a role model for God. It has God explain: “Boaz comforts! Will I not comfort?!” At the very least, God expects people to do their part in “repairing the world”: ‘Boaz did his [part], and Ruth did hers, and Naomi did hers; [then] the Holy One said: ‘I too will do mine.’”

The book seems to teach that the capacities and actions initially projected upon God by the book’s protagonists, in turn, empower people to emulate God. It helps them sustain one another through their blessings and wisdom, enabling them to act in God’s stead. Human happiness and success are essentially the consequence of such personal actions in response to presumed divine providence. And it is only when people have taken care of one another that God intervenes.

Yes when we consider some of the book’s ambiguities, we discern an even more complex theology at play. For in a book so elegantly and carefully crafted, it is indeed surprising that so many striking ambiguities remain, often occurring at key moments in the narrative. The most glaring ones are in 3:9, when Ruth either proposes marriage or simply asks for Boaz’s protection; and in 4:5, when Boaz either expects the unnamed redeemer to take Ruth or announces his own intention to do so. Other



ambiguities concern the role of God in the unfolding events. For example, to what extent is God responsible for the deaths of Elimelech and his sons? Do the famine and the deaths of these men signal sin and punishment (as the Rabbinic sages conclude)? If so, why doesn't the book explicitly state this theological point?

What about the meeting between Boaz and Ruth? Is the phrase *va-yikker mikreha* ("as luck would have it") in 2:3 a hint of God's providence, as is the case with a related term in Gen. 24:12? Or is it simply an indication of coincidence, as is true with the related term in I Sam. 6:9?... Ruth's narrator leaves these questions unanswered.

As Hayyim Angel shows, these textual ambiguities render the book and its protagonists more complex and evocative). Such complexity shows that the book is not simply an idealized representation of an idyllic world. Furthermore, as Angel also points out, midrashic interpretations of Ruth, by ramifying the different possibilities suggested by these ambiguities, make ambiguities even more visible. Ruth's distinctive narrative technique has profound implications; its textual ambiguities hold significant theological import. With God's role in the narrative as ambiguous, the text (with one exception in 4:13) provides the interpreter no authoritative confirmation of divine intercession. Affirming God's presence is a hermeneutical stance rather than a given fact.

11. Hawk, *Ruth*, pp. 40-43

The work of Ronald Hals (1969) has exerted a significant influence on the way many contemporary Protestant interpreters discern the theological message of the book. Hals views the final reference to God (4:13) as the key interpretative statement that signals the basic orientation of the book. He notes that the report immediately follows references to God's gift of children (4:11-12), which bring the story to a close on a note of happiness in counterpoint to its sorrowful beginning. Hals concludes that the singular report of God's involvement at the point of completion signals God's work throughout the narrative. This affirms, in his view, that 'the story is about the providence of God' (6), a distinct expression of what Hals describes as 'the basic Israelite belief in YHWH's all-causality . . . That which happens comes from the Lord' (9). The narrator of the story, he proposes, refrains from pointing out or commenting on YHWH's activity in order to convey a sense of the hiddenness of God in human affairs. In contrast to the surrounding books, where God's activity is dramatic and episodic, Ruth's restrained view of divine activity confirms the continuity of God's presence and work within the ordinary events of life. Thus, Hals argues, Ruth offers an important reflection on the vital truth that God is always at work in seen and unseen ways to bring about divine purposes through faithful servants.



Hals's assertion that Ruth presents the 'hiddenness and continuousness' of God's providential guidance has been taken up by many subsequent commentators. Nielsen notes that the plans of the human agents in the book are never fully coordinated; it must therefore be God who carries out a larger plan through the decisions each individual makes. She writes, 'God guides and controls events, but from beneath the surface' (1997: 31). Block declares that Ruth 'must be interpreted as a glorious account of divine providence' (1999: 610) that reveals God's determination to 'orchestrate events so that David could emerge' from the chaotic days of the judges (2008: 682). Bush asserts that 'not only Boaz's faithfulness and Naomi's risky plan (chap. 3) but also Ruth's accidental steps are part of the control God effects over his world behind the scenes and in the shadows' (1996: 47). 'God's all-causality', he adds, 'is implicit, acting through the ordinary hopes, intentions, and purpose of the human protagonists' (55). Hubbard offers a more nuanced reading that sees in Ruth both 'God's continuous, hidden all causality and his cosmic role as rewarder'. He suggests that the narrative's indirectness regarding God does not downplay God's providence but rather heightens the reader's awareness of it. Human deeds are the way God exercises his rule throughout the book, and his hidden activity in human agents 'is presumed to be the implicit, immanent cause of events' (1988a: 69, 70).

The assumption that Ruth depicts God's 'hidden all causality' owes much to the theology of providence that informs the hermeneutic of the commentators. A straightforward reading of the book, on the other hand, suggests a more nuanced and multifaceted theological vision focused instead on human perception and action. In this respect the thematic centrality of *hesed* comes to the fore. *Hesed* may be understood as passionate devotion, an unqualified decision for someone else expressed by specific and tangible actions. The word occurs only three times within the book, but the disposition and practice it signifies pervades the story. Naomi acclaims YHWH by blessing (1:8) and acclamation (2:20) as a God who bestows *hesed*. Boaz, however, affirms Ruth as a human practitioner of *hesed* both to him and to Naomi (3:10; cf. 2:11–12). Ruth's devotion to Naomi issues in concrete acts: she forsakes her family, people and land for Naomi's sake and cares for Naomi's needs by gleaning in Boaz's field. Her devotion to Boaz, at least in the latter's eyes, is demonstrated over against more attractive alternatives. The narrator associates these human acts of *hesed* with those of YHWH through a deft wordplay. In the field Boaz invokes the blessing of 'YHWH, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge' (2:12). At the threshing floor Ruth appeals to Boaz to 'spread your wing over your servant' (3:9). Boaz's agreement to do so thus implicitly casts his decision for Ruth as a human expression of YHWH's *hesed*.

Eskenazi and Frymer-Kensky (2011) reflect on the many ways the characters' invocations of divine blessing and intercession are fulfilled by human agents. They comment, 'This narrative pattern typifies this book: what one person wishes for another comes to fruition principally through the



actions of the well-wisher. Thus, although people frequently invoke God's intercession, it is they who actually intercede in setting things right' (li). Naomi, for example, looks to God to help her daughters-in-law find a home (1:9) but later orchestrates this outcome for Ruth by directing her to approach Boaz on the threshing floor (3:1–4), just as Boaz becomes the answer to his own prayer for Ruth. They continue, 'it is almost as if human actions and words bring God into the world. God-centered people prompt God to show up, as it were' (2011: li–lii).

Eskenazi and Frymer-Kensky draw attention to an important theological characteristic of Ruth. That is, Ruth focuses the theological lens on human agency rather than divine agency, and human initiative rather than divine initiative. In the ancestral narratives of Genesis YHWH appears directly to human beings, initiates events through promises and carries them through to fulfilment. In Ruth, however, God remains in the background. Human agents mediate the divine presence through their prayers and actions. Human initiative overcomes the real-life challenges the characters face and propels the story towards a satisfying resolution. YHWH's sole action, giving Ruth pregnancy, comes in the final scene and can be seen as a divine 'amen' to the magnanimous faithfulness and devotion that members of the human community have displayed towards each other. This story, in other words, portrays YHWH's acting in response to rather than as the director of what human beings do, as a God who gives 'payment in full' to those who devote themselves to the good of others (2:12).

The mediation of God's presence through the words of others draws attention to the role others play, specifically those of the community, in interpreting his ways and character. Ruth's theology, in short, is constructed not so much by the narrator as by individuals in a God-centered community who speak about God. Native-born residents of Bethlehem speak of YHWH's blessing: the men by invoking blessing (the field hands and Boaz in 2:4 and 3:10 respectively) and the women by affirming blessing (Naomi and the community women in 2:20 and 4:14). Characters also appeal to YHWH to bring about particular benefits. Naomi appeals to YHWH to show devotion to her daughters-in-law and secure a home for them (1:8–9). Boaz invokes YHWH to reward Ruth and repay her for caring for Naomi (2:12). The council of elders appeals to YHWH to establish a lineage through Ruth of equal stature to those established through Rachel, Leah and Tamar (4:11–12). Finally, Ruth and Boaz call on YHWH to oversee and guarantee promises (1:17; 3:13).

On a broader scale Naomi attributes both weal and woe to YHWH. Three times she speaks of YHWH as a benefactor (1:8–9; 2:20), and three times as an opponent who brings calamity and loss (1:13, 20–21). Ruth the Moabite, for her part, speaks of YHWH in a confessional mode, as a contingent object of her devotion to Naomi (1:16–17). It is left to the narrator to portray YHWH as the source of sustenance (1:6) and life itself (4:13).



The narrator's focus on human agency, in sum, underscores and validates human initiative and actions in relationship to God. Threaded through the book are human deeds of blessing, kindness and hospitality taken voluntarily and for the good of the other. These occur alongside acclamations of divine blessing and kindness. As the story progresses, words of blessing find fulfilment through the acts of *hesed* that people display to others. If one reads the story through a theology of providential 'all-causality', then human agency in the story may be viewed as a demonstration that 'YHWH moves through human actions which please him because he is sovereignly immanent in them' (Hubbard 1988a: 72). Yet seeing God's presence and work in the story does not necessarily lead to an affirmation of his causality. As reflected by the characters' theological utterances, Ruth seems rather 'to teach that the capacities and actions initially projected upon God by the book's protagonists, in turn, empower people to emulate God' (Eskenazi and Frymer-Kensky 2011: lii).

By foregrounding human agency, Ruth portrays God at work in response to rather than as the cause of human acts of blessing and *hesed*, played out against the frame of his role as the author of life and provision. Read Introduction in this way, Ruth becomes the theological complement of the patriarchal narratives. The ancestral narratives of Genesis portray a God who consistently enters the lives of human beings with promise and direction, and human beings whose response consists of dependence. Ruth, on the other hand, depicts human beings who care for others in the context of a God- oriented community, and a God who blesses human caring with fullness and security. The theology that configures the book equates devotion to others with devotion to YHWH and suggests that faithful living in the context of ordinary affairs results in well-being, blessing and a glorious future.



III. Whose Hesed? Between Boaz and God Part 1

12. Ruth 2:19-20	11. רות ב:יט-כ
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.”	¹⁹ וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ חֲמוּתָה אִיפֹה לִקְטֹתָ הַיּוֹם וְאַנֶּה עָשִׂיתָ יְהִי מְכִירָךְ בְּרוּךְ וַתִּגְדַּל לַחֲמוּתָה אֶת אֲשֶׁר-עָשְׂתָה עִמּוֹ וַתֹּאמֶר שֵׁם הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי עִמּוֹ הַיּוֹם בְּעֵז: ²⁰ וַתֹּאמֶר נָעֲמִי לְכַלְתָּה בְּרוּךְ הוּא לַיהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא-עָזַב חֲסִדּוֹ אֶת-הַחַיִּים וְאֶת-הַמֵּתִים וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ נָעֲמִי קָרוֹב לָנוּ הָאִישׁ מִגְאֻלָּנוּ הוּא:
13. II Samuel 2:5	12. שמואל ב ב:ה
So David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead and said to them, “May you be blessed of the LORD because you performed this act of faithfulness to your lord Saul and buried him.	וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד מַלְאָכִים אֶל-אֲנָשֵׁי יַבִּישׁ גִּלְעָד וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם בְּרָכִים אַתֶּם לַיהוָה אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתֶם הַחֲסִד הַזֶּה עִם-אֲדֹנֵיכֶם עִם-שָׂאוֹל וַתִּקְבְּרוּ אֹתוֹ:
14. Genesis 24:27	13. בראשית כד:כז
And he said, “Blessed be יהוה, the God of my master Abraham’s [house], who has not withheld steadfast faithfulness from my master. For I have been guided on my errand by יהוה, to the house of my master’s kin.”	וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנִי אַבְרָהָם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-עָזַב חֲסִדּוֹ וְאַמְתּוֹ מִעַם אֲדֹנִי אֲנִי בַדֶּרֶךְ נִחְנִי יְהוָה בֵּית אָחִי אֲדֹנִי:
15. Judy Fentress-Williams, <i>Ruth</i>, p. 82	
Ruth tells Naomi all that happened that day, ending with the name of the man, Boaz, which gives Naomi cause to praise YHWH "whose kindness/hesed has not forsaken the living or the dead!"	



16. Yair Zakovitch, *Rut: Peirush Mada'i La-Mikra*, p. 83

Boaz's *hesed* with the living and the dead is a revelation of God's own *hesed*.

17. Hawk, *Ruth*, p. 86

The antecedent could be either Boaz or YHWH. The ambiguity has prompted a number of attempts to clarify the phrase. The ambiguity, however, is probably intentional, suggesting that Naomi sees Boaz and YHWH acting in concert as agents of blessing.

IV. Boaz and God Part 2

A.

18. Ruth 2:13	17. רות ב:יג
She answered, "You are most kind, my lord, to comfort me and to speak gently to your maidservant—though I am not so much as one of your maidservants."	וְתֹאמַר אֶמְצָא־חַן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אֲדֹנָי כִּי נַחֲמָתְנִי וְכִי דְבַרְתָּ עֲלֵי לֵב שְׁפָחֶתְךָ וְאֹנֹכִי לֹא אֶהְיֶה כְּאַחַת שְׁפָחֶיךָ:
19. Psalm 71:21	18. תהלים עא:כא
You will grant me much greatness, You will turn and comfort me.	תִּרְבַּ גְּדֹלְתִי וְתִסָּב תִּנְחַמְנִי:
20. Psalm 119:82	19. תהלים קיט:פב
My eyes pine away for Your promise; I say, "When will You comfort me?"	כָּלֹ עֵינֵי לֹא־מָרְתִּךָ לֵאמֹר מָתַי תִּנְחַמְנִי:
21. Psalm 23:4	20. תהלים כג:ד
Though I walk through a valley of deepest darkness, I fear no harm, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff—they comfort me.	גַּם כִּי־אֵלֶךְ בְּגִיא צִלְמוֹת לֹא־אִירָא רָע כִּי־אַתָּה עִמָּדִי שִׁבְטְךָ וּמִשְׁעֶנְתְּךָ הֵמָּה יִנְחַמְנִי:



B.

22. Ruth 2:14	21. רות ב:יד
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.	וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ בְּעֵז לֵעֵת הָאֲכָל גִּשִּׁי הַלֶּם וְאָכַלְתְּ מִן־הַלֶּחֶם וְטַבַּלְתְּ פִּתְּךָ בַּחֲמֹץ וַתֵּשֶׁב מִצַּד הַקְצָרִים וַיַּצֵּב־לָהּ קָלִי וַתֹּאכַל וַתִּשְׂבַּע וַתֵּתֶר:

23. Deuteronomy 8:10	22. דברים ח:י
When you have eaten your fill, give thanks to your God יהוה for the good land given to you.	וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לְךָ:

C.

24. Ruth 3:11	23. רותג:יא
And now, daughter, have no fear. I will do in your behalf whatever you ask, for all the elders of my town know what a fine woman you are.	וְעַתָּה בְּתִי אֶל־תִּירָאִי כָל אֲשֶׁר־תֹּאמְרִי אֶעֱשֶׂה־לְךָ כִּי יוֹדַע כָּל־שַׁעַר עָמִי כִּי אִשָּׁה חַיִּל אַתָּ:

25. Genesis 26:24	24. בראשית כו:כד
That night יהוה appeared to him and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham's [house]. Fear not, for I am with you, and I will bless you and increase your offspring for the sake of My servant Abraham."	וַיֵּרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹרָהִם אָבִיךָ אֶל־תִּירָא כִּי־אֲנִי עִמָּךְ וּבֵרַכְתִּיךָ וְהִרְבֵּיתִי אֶת־זַרְעֲךָ בְּעֵבוֹר אֲבֹרָהִם עַבְדִּי:

26. Deuteronomy 1:21	25. דברים א:כא
See, your God יהוה has placed the land at your disposal. Go up, take possession, as יהוה, the God of your fathers, promised you. Fear not and be not dismayed."	רְאֵה נָתַן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְפָנֶיךָ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ עֲלֶה רֶשׁ כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֶיךָ לְךָ אֶל־תִּירָא וְאַל־תִּתַּחַת:



V. Lessons in the Hesed-Driven Life

27. Ruth 2:2 Ruth the Moabite 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.	26. רות ב:ב וַתֹּאמֶר רוּת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה אֶל-נָעֲמִי אֵלֶּכָּה-נָּא הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֶלְקָטָה בַּשִּׁבְלִים אַחֵר אֲשֶׁר אֲמָצֵא־חַן בְּעֵינָיו וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ לְכִי בְתִי:
28. Ruth 2:15-16 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, without interference, ¹⁶ but you must also pull some [stalks] out of the heaps and leave them for her to glean, and not scold her.”	27. רות ב:טו-טז ¹⁵ וַתָּקָם לְלָקֵט וַיִּצֹו בְּעַז אֶת-נְעָרָיו לֵאמֹר גַּם בֵּין הָעֹמְרִים תִּלְקָט וְלֹא תְכַלִּימוּהָ: ¹⁶ וְגַם שֵׁל-תִשְׁלֹו לָהּ מִן-הַצִּבְתִּים וְעַזְבֹתֵם וְלִקְטָה וְלֹא תִגְעְרוּ-בָּהּ:
29. Ruth 3:10 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.	28. רות ג:י וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ לַיהוָה בְּתִי הַיְטַבְתְּ חֲסִידָךְ הָאֲחֵרוֹן מִן-הָרִאשׁוֹן לְבִלְתִּי-לָקֵת אַחֵרִי הַבְּחוּרִים אִם-דָּל וְאִם-עָשִׁיר:
30. Ruth 3:16-17 ¹⁶ She came to her mother-in-law, who asked, “How is it with you, daughter?” She told her all that the man had done for her; ¹⁷ and she added, “He gave me these six measures of barley, saying to me, ‘Do not go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.’”	29. רות ג:טז-יז ¹⁶ וַתָּבוֹא אֶל-חֲמוּתָהּ וַתֹּאמֶר מִי-אַתְּ בְּתִי וַתַּגֵּד-לָהּ אֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה-לָּהּ הָאִישׁ: ¹⁷ וַתֹּאמֶר שֵׁשׁ-הַשְּׁעָרִים הָאֵלֶּה נָתַן לִי כִי אָמַר [אֵלַי] אֶל-תָּבוֹאִי רִיקָם אֶל-חֲמוּתָךְ:

