

# Zera Shimshon

by Rabbi Shimshon Chaim Nachmani zt"l

Published Mantua 1778\*

## Chapter LVI: Ruth

### Essay 10. Commonalities between Ruth and Tamar

**פסוק** "מדוע מצאתי חן בעיניך להפירני ואנכי נכריה". קשה למה תלה החן על שהפירה, הנה לה לומר בסתם "מדוע מצאתי חן בעיניך" ותו לא, שהרי לפי האמת לא הפירה הוא, אלא ששאל עליה מי היא ואמרו לו "נערה מואבית היא השבה עם-נעמי משדי מואב", ובדאי שפנה ידע מי היא ומה מעשיה. ועוד מה צורך לומר "ואנכי נכריה" שהרי עתה גיורת היא, ואם מפני שקודם זה הייתה נכרית, אדרבא היא הנותנת שגמול חסד עמה, ועוד קרא קתיב "ואהבתם את-הגר".

There is a verse: **"Why have I found favor in your eyes, to recognize me, for I am a foreigner?"**<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to understand why the favor depended on him recognizing her. She could have said simply, **"Why have I found favor in your eyes,"** and nothing else, because the truth is, he did not recognize her. Rather, he asked who she was, and they told him, **"She is a Moabite girl who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab,"**<sup>2</sup> and certainly by this he knew who she was and what she had done.

Also, what was the need to say, **"for I am a foreigner,"** for now she was a convert, and if it's because prior to that she was a foreigner, to the contrary, that is why he should show kindness to her. Also, the verse states, **"You shall love the convert."**<sup>3</sup>

ויש לומר דלעיל פרשנו על פסוק "עם-הנערים אשר-לי תדבקין" שפונת בועז כשואמר לה "וכה תדבקין עם-נערתי" היתה לרמז לה שרוצה ליקח אותה לאשה ורוצה לבדקה בקרובותיו. ובפרק ג' דהוריות אמרין מפני מה הפל רצים לישא גיורת, ואין רצים לישא משוחררת וכו', ופרש רש"י גיורת כיון דאיתגזירא איגלאי מילתא למפרע דמעיקרא הנה דעתה לאיגורי ונהה מינטרא נפשה וכו'. וכתב מהרש"א דלפי זה גרסינן "רוצין" לישא גיורת. ועוד יש לומר רצין לשון ריצה ממש, שהכל תפצים לישא גיורת יותר מישא ארלית, הואיל שהיא בתוקת שימור על דרך חות דרגא וסיב איתתא עכ"ל ועיי"ש.

One can say, as explained above (essay 8), regarding the verse where Ruth told Naomi that Boaz had said, **"Stay close by my young men until all my harvest is finished,"**<sup>4</sup> that Boaz's intent when he had actually said to her, **"Don't go elsewhere, but stay here close to my young**

\* English translation: Copyright © 2025 by Charles S. Stein. Additional essays available at <https://zstora.com>

<sup>1</sup> Ruth 2:10.

<sup>2</sup> Ruth 2:6.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. 10:19.

<sup>4</sup> Ruth 2:21.

women,”<sup>5</sup> was to hint to her that he wanted to take her as a wife, and wanted to check her out with his female relatives.

In tractate Horayot, it is said:

The students of Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Tzadok, asked: **Why does everyone run to marry a female convert, and not everyone runs to marry an emancipated** [Canaanite maidservant]? He said to them: This [Canaanite maidservant] was in the category of the curse, and that [convert] was not in the category of the curse. Alternatively, this convert has the presumptive status of being guarded [from sexual immorality], and that [Canaanite maidservant] does not have the presumptive status of being guarded [from sexual immorality].

- Horayot 13a

Rashi explained: “A convert—since she has converted, it becomes retroactively clear that from the beginning her intention was to convert, and she therefore guarded herself, etc.”<sup>6</sup>

The Maharsha writes that based on this, the proper textual version of the Gemara is “they want [רוצין] [*rotzin*] to marry a convert,” rather than “run” [רצין] [*ratzin*]. But one can say that “everyone runs” is literally the language of running: Everyone desires to marry a convert more than a native-born Israelite woman, since she is assumed to have guarded herself, following the saying: “Descend a rung, and take a wife.”<sup>7</sup> See there in the Maharsha.

"מדוע מצאתי חן בעיניך להכירני", שאני שמרתי את עצמי הואיל שהייתה דעתי להתגייר, ואף על פי שנתגיירתי לאחר שהיו לי שלוש שנים וקנימא לן סתם נכרית זונה היא, וזהו "ואנכי נכריה".

“Why have I found favor in your eyes, to recognize me?” You recognize that I guarded myself from sexual immorality, since I had the intention to convert, even though I converted after I was three years old, and it is established that a typical gentile woman is considered promiscuous,<sup>8</sup> and this is the meaning of “for I am a foreigner.”

ועוד יש לומר דאיתא בזהר תרין נשין הוו ומנייהו אתבגין ורעא דיהודה, ואתא מנייהו דוד מלכא ושלמה מלכא ומלכא משיחא. ואלין תרין דא בגוונא דא, תמר ורות דמיתו בעלייהו בקדמיתא וכו'. וכתב השפתי כהן ששם תמר היינו רות, שהם במילואה עולה פ', ופ' בא"ת ב"ש ו', ורות באה בחילוף כמספר האחדים לפי שבאה מעגלון שמספרו קט"ו עכ"ל.

It can further be said, as stated in the Zohar:

There were two women from whom the seed of Judah was to be built up, from whom were to descend King David, King Solomon, and the Messiah, viz. Tamar [from Genesis, chapter 38] and Ruth. These two women had much in common. Both lost their first husbands, and both took similar steps to replace them [to ensure the continuation of the House of Judah].

- Zohar I:188b (Vayeshev 18:191)

<sup>5</sup> Ruth 2:8.

<sup>6</sup> Rashi on Horayot 13a.

<sup>7</sup> *Sefer Hasidim* 375:1, derived from Yevamot 63a.

<sup>8</sup> Yevamot 35a.

**The *Siftei Kohen*<sup>9</sup> wrote that the name Tamar is the same as Ruth, for the *mem* in its full spelling [מ"ם] is equal to 40 + 40 = 80, represented by the letter פ, and the letter פ, in turn, with the *Atbash* letter substitution<sup>10</sup> is ו, which has a value of 6. Ruth comes as a substitute to Tamar by transformation as the ones digits<sup>11</sup>, viz, Ruth has a Gematria of 406, and the value of the ones column is 6. This selection of the ones digit is because she came from Eglon, king of Moab,<sup>12</sup> whose numerical Gematria value is 159, the same as the word קט"ן, meaning "small." Thus, Tamar, תמר, is spelled *tav*, *mem*, *reish*, and if the *mem* is replaced by a *vav*, we have the letters *tav*, *vav*, *reish*, which can be rearranged as רות, Ruth.**

וידוע שהטפות היותר קדושות באו על זה הדרך, כדי שתבאנה בהיסח הדעת מהמקטרג. וידוע שכל תיקון העולם תלוי בתיקון הש"ך גיצוץ הידועים, וכל פונתינו בעשיית המצות היא לבררם ולהעלותם. ואלו הש"ך הם כפולים לזכר העליון ולנקבה העליונה, דהיינו שמש וירח, ושם"ש גימטריא שתי פעמים ש"ך, ואלו הש"ך הם בחינת דינים וכל הדינים נרמזים בלשון נקבה. ובו עז מתחלה אמר לרות "וכה תדבקין עמ-נערתי", שנע"ר גימטריא ש"ך בסוד נער ונערה כנודע, ואמר "נערתי" בלשון רבים דמשמע שתי פעמים ש"ך שהוא גימטריא תמ"ר, ומשום הכי השבתו "מדוע מצאתי חן בעיניך להפירני" שאני הנני תמר עצמה, אף על פי שנתחלה המ"ם בשמי והיא נא"ו, לפי שאנכי נכריה שגולדתי מעגלון.

**It is known to Kabbalists that the holiest emissions of seed came about in this manner, so that they would divert the attention of the Accuser. Also, it is known that the entire rectification of the world depends on the rectification of the well-known 320 sparks, and our entire intention in performing the commandments is to refine and elevate them.<sup>13</sup>**

**These 320 sparks are doubled, corresponding to the upper male and the upper female, that is, the sun and the moon. And the word שמש [shemesh] ["sun"] has the numerical value of twice 320. These 320 represent aspects of judgment, and all judgments are alluded to in feminine language.**

**Boaz at first said to Ruth, "but stay here close to my young women"—for נער ["youth"] has the numerical value of 320, in the esoteric secret of male and female youth, as is known to Kabbalists. He said "my young women" in the plural, implying two times 320, which is 640, the numerical value of Tamar. For this reason, she responded to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, to recognize me," as if to say, "that I am Tamar herself, even though the *mem* in my name was exchanged for a *vav*, as explained above, for I am a foreigner, having been born from Eglon.**

\* \* \*

<sup>9</sup> Shabbatai ben Meir HaKohen (1621–62), *Siftei Kohen on the Torah*, Vayeshev.

<sup>10</sup> Mapping the first letter of the alphabet to the last, the second letter of the alphabet to the second to last, etc.

<sup>11</sup> An uncommon Gematria method.

<sup>12</sup> Ruth Rabbah 2:9, based on Judges, chapter 3.

<sup>13</sup> Lurianic Kabbalah recognizes a total of 320 sparks, which is 32 associated with each of the ten Sefirot. Of those sparks, 288 can be directly clarified. The remaining 32 sparks, belonging to the Sefira of Malchut, would then be automatically be clarified. The translator has not found Zera Shimshon's source for this.