

# Zera Shimshon

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## Chapter LVI: Ruth

### Essay 11. Ruth's second act of kindness

**פסוק** "היטבת ססדך האחרון מן הראשון לבלתי לקחת אחרי הבחורים אס-דל ואם עשיר". קשה היאך נאמר שעשיתה יותר טוב "לבלתי לקחת" וכו' מהראשון אשר באה להתגייר, כמו שפירש המתרגם "קדמאי דאתגיירת" וכו'.

There is a verse: “[Boaz] exclaimed, “Be blessed of the L-rd, daughter! **Your last deed of kindness is greater than the first, in that you have not gone after younger men, whether poor or rich**” (Ruth 3:10). A difficulty is how it is said that she did better with her last deed of kindness [in that she] “**did not go [after younger men]**” than in the first [act of kindness], which was that she came to convert, as the Targum explains.<sup>1</sup>

ויובן עם מה שאמרו בפרק ב' דברכות גדולה הבטחה שהבטיחון הקב"ה לנשים יותר מכל האנשים, שנאמר "נשים שאננות", אמר ליה רב ל' ר' חייא: נשים במאי זכיין? באקרוזי בגייהו בי כנשתא, ובאתגווי גברייהו בי רבנו, ומנטרון לגברייהו עד דאתו מבי רבנו ע"כ.

**This will be understood by what it says in the second chapter of tractate Berachot:**

**Greater is the promise [for the future] made by the Holy One, Blessed be He, to women than to men, as it is stated: “[Rise up,] women at ease[; hear My voice, confident daughters, listen to what I say]” (Isaiah 32:9).” [This promise of ease and confidence is not given to men.] Rab said to Rabbi Chiyya: How do women merit [to receive this reward? Rabbi Chiyya answered: For bringing their children to read [the Torah] in the synagogue, and for sending their husbands to study [Mishna] in the study hall, and for waiting for their husbands until they return from the study hall.**

- Berachot 17a

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<sup>1</sup> The Aramaic Targum reads: “Blessed be you before the L-rd, my daughter. The last good deed which you have done is better than the first. The first was that you became a proselyte, and the last, that you made yourself like a woman who waits for a small brother-in-law until he grows up, refraining from following young men, whether poor or wealthy, in order to carry on immoral relations with them.”

ואם כן רות, כשנתגיירה הנה לה שכר כמו ישראלית. אמנם אחר שהלכה להנשא לבועז שהוא תלמיד חכם ותהנה צריכה להמתין לו עד שיבוא מבית המדרש, הנה עתה נתרבה שכרה מכל האנשים גדולה הבטחה וכו'. וזהו שאמר "לבית־לקת אחרי הבחורים אס־דל ואם־עשיר"—רק אחרי התלמידי חכמים.

**If so, then Ruth, when she converted, which was her first act of kindness, had the same merit as any Jewish woman.** How did her second act of kindness, choosing Boaz instead of a younger man, gain her greater merit? **Indeed, after she went to marry Boaz, who was a Torah scholar, and she needed to wait for him until he returned from the study hall—thus now her merits increased from those of the men, as it says, “Greater is the promise [for the future] made by the Holy One, Blessed be He, to women than to men.” This is why it says [that she] “did not go after younger men, whether poor or rich”—[she] only [wanted to go] after Torah scholars.**

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