

# Zera Shimshon

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## Chapter LVI: Ruth

Essay 3. May your reward be complete

**פְּסוּק** "ישלם ה' פְּעֻלָּתְךָ וְתַהֲיִי מִשְׁכַּרְתְּךָ שְׂלֵמָה" וְכֹו'. קִשָּׁה מֵהוּ הַכֶּפֶל שֶׁל "וְתַהֲיִי מִשְׁכַּרְתְּךָ שְׂלֵמָה" לְאַסֵּר שֶׁאָמַר "ישלם ה' פְּעֻלָּתְךָ". וְעוֹד אֵיךְ תִּיֻסַּק אֲדַעְתִּין שְׂלֵמָה? תַּן לָהּ הַקַּב"ה שְׂכָרָהּ שְׂלֵמָה וּמֵה צוּרָךְ בְּדִבְרֵי הַגָּזָה לְתַפְלָהּ. וְעוֹד מֵהוּ "מַעַם ה' אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל", הֲלֹא הִנֵּה דִי לֹמַר "מַעַם ה' " וְתוֹ לֹא.

There is a verse: **“May the L-rd repay your deed, and may your reward be complete from the L-rd, G-d of Israel, under whose wings you have sought refuge.”**<sup>1</sup>

**A difficulty is: What is the need for the duplication of “and may your reward be complete” after it already said, May the L-rd repay your deed”?**

**Furthermore, how could it enter our mind that the Holy One, Blessed be He, would not give her complete reward to her, and what need is there for prayer regarding this matter?**

**Furthermore, what is the meaning of “from the L-rd, G-d of Israel”? Was it not enough to say “from the L-rd” and no more?**

וְגַם לֹמַר דְּאִיתָא בְּמִדְרַשׁ גִּלְקוּט עַל פְּסוּק "לָךְ טַל יִלְדָּתִיךָ", לְפִי שְׁהֵיָה אֲבִירָהּ אֲבִירָהּ מִתַּפְסֵד וְאֹמַר תֹּאמַר שֶׁיֵּשׁ בְּיַד עוֹן עֲבוּדָה זָרָה שֶׁעֲבַדְתִּי כָּל הַשָּׁנִים הַלְלוּ, לָכֵךְ אָמַר לוֹ הַקַּב"ה "לָךְ טַל יִלְדָּתִיךָ", מֵה טַל הַגָּזָה פּוֹרֵס אֶף עוֹנוֹתֶיךָ פּוֹרְחִין. וּמֵה טַל הַגָּזָה סִימָן בְּרָכָה לְעוֹלָם אֶף אֵתָה סִימָן בְּרָכָה לְעוֹלָם עַכ"ל.

**It may be said that it is brought in the Midrash Yalkut Shimoni (Psalms, remez 869) on the verse, “Yours is the dew of your youth:”**<sup>2</sup>

**Because our father Abraham was afraid and said, “Perhaps I have a sin on my hands because I was an idol worshipper all those years?” Therefore the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him: “Yours is the dew of your youth.” Just as this dew evaporates, so too your sins evaporate; and just as this dew is a sign of blessing to the world, so too you are a sign of blessing to the world.**

- Yalkut Shimoni, Psalms 869<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ruth 2:12.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 110:3.

<sup>3</sup> This also appears in Gen. Rabbah 39:8.

ואף כּאן לאַחר שאַמְרָה נְעָמִי "יִשְׁלַם ה' פְּעֻלָּךְ" הִנֵּה מִשְׁמַע מִהַמְצִוֹת שֶׁתַּעֲשֶׂה מִכָּאן וְלִהְבָּא, אֲבָל לְעוֹלָם שְׂיִהְיֶה בְּיָדָה עוֹן מִהַשָּׁנִים שֶׁעָבְרוּ קוֹדֵם שֶׁנִּתְגַּיְרָה, לְכַף הוֹסִיפָה לומר לָהּ "וַיְהִי מִשְׁבְּרִתָּךְ שְׁלֵמָה", כְּלוּמַר שֶׁעוֹנוֹתֶיךָ הֵרָאשׁוּנִים יִהְיוּ פוֹרְחִין, וַיִּתֵּן לָךְ שְׂכָרְךָ מִשְׁלָם כְּמוֹ אִם גּוֹלְדָתְךָ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, וְזֶהוּ "מַעַם ה' אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל", וַיְכַשֵּׁם שֶׁאַבְרָהָם הִנֵּה סִימָן בְּרִכָּה לְעוֹלָם כִּי רוּת תִּהְיֶה סִימָן בְּרִכָּה לְעוֹלָם, שְׂפָל הַלְכוֹת קַבְּלַת גְּרִים אָנוּ לומְדִים אוֹתָם מֵרוּת, כִּדְאִיתָא בְּיַבְמוֹת "בְּאַשְׁרֵי תִּמּוּתֵי אֲמוֹת" וְכוּ' אֵין מְרַבִּין עָלָיו וְאֵין מְדַקְדְּקִין עָלָיו וְכוּ'.

**Here too, after Naomi said, “May the L-rd repay your deed,” the implication was from the commandments that you will do from now onward. But still, as there would remain in her hand sin from the years that passed before she converted, therefore she added to say to her, “and may your reward be complete,” meaning that your former sins shall evaporate, and He shall give you your reward in full as though you had been born in Israel. This is the meaning of “from the L-rd, G-d of Israel.” Just as Abraham was a sign of blessing to the world, so Ruth shall be a sign of blessing to the world, for all the laws of acceptance of converts we learn from Ruth. This is as is brought in Yevamot (47b) on the verse, “Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried,”<sup>4</sup> “we neither overwhelm [a prospective convert] [with threats], nor are we exacting with him [regarding details of the mitzvot],” etc.**

ואם תאמר ומאי שָׁנָא רות שְׂדוּמָה לְאַבְרָהָם יוֹתֵר מִשְׁאַר גְּרִים. וְהֵלֵא בְּאַבְרָהָם כְּתִיב "לָךְ טַל יִלְחַתֶּיךָ", דְּמִשְׁמַע "לָךְ" דְּוָקָא וְלֹא לְאַחֵרִים. וְיָמָּה רָאִתָּה נְעָמִי לְהַתְפַּלֵּל עַל רוּת שֶׁתִּהְיֶה כְּאַבְרָהָם. לְכֵן פִּירַשׁ הַטַּעַם "אֲשֶׁר-בָּאת לְחַסוֹת" וְכוּ', לְפִי שְׂרוּת לֹא בָּאת לְהִתְגַּיֵּיר מִשׁוּם מָמוֹן שֶׁהָרִי אֲדַרְבָּא נְעָמִי הִנֵּתָה עֲנִיָּה וְדָלָה, וְלֹא לְשׁוּם אִישׁוּת דְּכְתִיב "הֲלֵהוּ תִּשְׁבְּרָנָה" וְכוּ', וְלֹא בָּאת אֲלֵא בְּאַהֲבָה גְּמוּרָה וּבִשְׁבִיל שְׂהִיָּתָה בְּהַּ הַפְּרִיָּדָה טוֹבָה שֶׁל דָּוִד וּמְשִׁיחַ שְׁהֵם סוּף הַתִּיקוֹן שֶׁל הָעוֹלָם מִתְּמַת הַקְּלָקוּל שֶׁל אָדָם הֵרָאשׁוֹן, וְזֹאת הַפְּרִיָּדָה לְקַחָה לֹוֹט מֵאַבְרָהָם כִּדְלַקְמֵן עַל פִּסּוּק "שִׁשְׁ-הַשְּׁעָרִים הָאֵלֶּה נָתַן לִי" וְעֵי"ש, וְלָכֵן מִן הֵרָאוּי הוּא שֶׁתִּהְיֶה דוּמָה לְאַבְרָהָם שֶׁהִנֵּה הֵרָאשׁוֹן שֶׁהִתְחִיל לְתַמְנֵן כְּנֹדָע.

**If you would say: what is different about Ruth, that she resembles Abraham more than other converts? For concerning Abraham it is written, “Yours is the dew of your youth,” which implies specifically “yours” and not others. What did Naomi see to pray concerning Ruth that she should be like Abraham?**

**Therefore, he explained the reason: “under whose wings you have sought refuge,” etc. For Ruth did not come to convert because of money, for on the contrary Naomi was poor and destitute; nor for the sake of marriage, as it is written regarding the possibility of an actual Levirate marriage, “Turn back, my daughters, for I am too old to be married. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I were married tonight and I also bore sons, should you wait for them to grow up? Should you on their account debar yourselves from marriage?”<sup>5</sup>**

**She came with Naomi only with complete love, and because within her was that “good separation” of David and Messiah, who are the end of the repair of the world because of the corruption of the first Adam. This “good separation” Lot took from Abraham, as will be**

<sup>4</sup> Ruth 1:17.

<sup>5</sup> Ruth 1:13–14.

explained later (Essay 12) on the verse, “These six measures of barley he gave me,”<sup>6</sup> and see there. The “good separation” concept refers to the idea that holy sparks — here, the soul-root of David and the Messiah — can be embedded within impure lineages, requiring a series of breaks and transitions to extract and elevate them. Just as Lot’s separation from Abraham was the necessary first link in a chain that would eventually produce Ruth, so Ruth’s own rupture from Moab was the final link.<sup>7</sup> The “good” in “good separation” signals that what appears to be loss or severance is in fact providential movement toward repair.

**Therefore, it is fitting that she should resemble Abraham, who was the first to begin the repair, as is known.**

וַעֲדִינּוּ יֵשׁ לְדַקְדָּק לָמָּה אָמַר "מִשְׁכַּרְתֶּךָ שְׁלָמָה" בְּלִשׁוֹן נְקֻבָּה, וְלֹא אָמַר "שְׁכַרְךָ שְׁלָמָה" בְּלִשׁוֹן זָכָר. וַיֵּשׁ לוֹמַר שְׁעָרָה הַנִּיצוֹץ שֶׁל נִשְׁמַת דָּוִד הִנֵּה גָּנוּז בְּתוֹכָהּ דְּוָקָא כְּדֹאֲמַרִּינָן בְּמִדְרָשׁ "מִצְאָתִי דָּוִד עֲבָדִי" הֵיכָן מִצְאָתִיו בְּסֻדּוֹם דְּכַתִּיב הֵתָם "וְאֶת־שְׂתֵי בְּנֹתֶיךָ הַנִּמְצָאֹת".

**Still, one must examine why it says “and may your reward [משְׁכַרְתֶּךָ] [mascurtech] be complete” in the feminine form of the word “reward,” *mascura*, and did not say “and may your reward [שְׁכַרְךָ] [secharech] be complete” in the masculine form of the word “reward,” *sechar*. It may be explained that the essence of the spark of the soul of David was hidden specifically within her, as we say in the Midrash Gen. Rabbah 50:10: “I have found David My servant”<sup>8</sup> — where did I find him? In Sodom, as it is written there, “and your two daughters who are found.”<sup>9</sup>**

וְעוֹד בְּדֶרֶךְ אַחַר שֶׁהִנֵּה כְּתוּבוֹ הַמְּפָרְשִׁים שֶׁטַעַם קִבְּלַת הַגְּרִים הוּא מְשׁוּם דִּישְׁרָאֵל הֵם קְדוּשִׁים וְכָל דְּבָר שֶׁבְּקִדּוּשָׁה צָרִיךְ תּוֹסֶפֶת כְּמוֹ שֶׁבַת יוֹם הַכִּיפּוּרִים. וְלָכֵן צָרִיכִים יִשְׂרָאֵל לְתוֹסֶפֶת גְּרִים, וְאֲמַרִּינָן בְּמִכִּילְתָּא "זְכוֹר" וְ"שְׁמוֹר" בְּדִיבּוּר אֶחָד נֶאֱמָרוּ, זְכוֹר מִלְּפָנָיו וְשְׁמוֹר מִלְּאַחֲרָיו, מִכָּאֵן שְׁמוֹסִיפִים מְחוּל עַל הַקֹּדֶשׁ. וּבִגְמָרָא דְּבִרְכוֹת יֵשׁ לִימוּד אַחַר עַל "זְכוֹר" וְ"שְׁמוֹר" שֶׁהַנְּשִׂים חַיִּיבוֹת בְּקִדּוּשׁ הַיּוֹם דְּבַר תּוֹרָה, דְּכַתִּיב "זְכוֹר" זְכָרְהוּ עַל הַיּוֹם וְהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה נִשְׂי הוֹאֵיל וְאִיתְּנָהוּ בְּשִׁמְרָה אִיתְּנָהוּ נְמִי בְּזִכְרָהּ. וְכִבְרָ יְדַעְנוּ שֶׁיֵּשׁ מְחֻלּוֹקַת בֵּין הַפּוֹסְקִים אִם שֶׁבַת יוֹם טוֹב צָרִיךְ תּוֹסֶפֶת מִדְּאוּרֵיִתָּא אוֹ לֹא, וְנִמְצָא שֶׁהוֹאֵיל שֶׁהֵם שְׁנֵי לִימוּדִים אִם אֶנּוּ אוֹמְרִים לִימוּד אֶחָד אֵין לָנוּ פֶת לּוֹמַר הַשְּׁנִי.

**Further, in another way: behold, the commentators wrote that the reason for accepting converts is because Israel are holy, and every matter of holiness requires addition,<sup>10</sup> like Sabbath and Yom Kippur, for which we extend the time period. Therefore, Israel require an addition of converts.**

<sup>6</sup> Ruth 3:17.

<sup>7</sup> Moses Alshich, *Einei Moshe* (Venice 1601), 2:1:3.

<sup>8</sup> Ps. 89:21.

<sup>9</sup> Gen. 19:15.

<sup>10</sup> Eliyahu ben Avraham Shlomo haCohen (1659–1729), *Midrash Talpiot* (Izmir 1736).

We say in the *Mechilta* (parashat Yitro): “ ‘Remember [the Sabbath day, to keep it holy]’<sup>11</sup> and: “ ‘Observe [the Sabbath day, to keep it holy]’<sup>12</sup> were spoken in one utterance<sup>13</sup> — ‘Remember’ [the Sabbath] beforehand and ‘Observe’ it after. From here [we learn] that one adds from the mundane onto the holy [in order to extend a sacred time period].”<sup>14</sup> The *Zera Shimshon* uses *tosefet Shabbat* — the requirement to extend the Sabbath by adding from the mundane to the sacred — as the proof that holiness inherently demands augmentation. Just as Shabbat is made more complete by the addition of ordinary time, so Israel’s sanctity is made more complete by the addition of sincere converts like Ruth.

In the *Gemara* in *Berachot* (20b) there is another derivation on “Remember” and “Observe”: that women are obligated in the sanctification of the day by Torah law, for it is written, “Remember” — remember it over wine. These women, since they are included in “Observe,” they are also included in “Remember.” We already know that there is a dispute among the decisors whether Sabbath and festival require addition by Torah law or not.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, it follows that since they are two derivations, if we say one derivation we do not have the power to say the second. We can’t use both derivations simultaneously, as they interpret the same word-pair differently. The *Mechilta* derives the need to add time to the Sabbath, while the *Berachot* derives equal obligations for men and women as far as Kiddush. The two readings are mutually exclusive.

ועוד צריך להקדים מה שכתב הלקט יוסף שהתוספות הקשו למה לא מתה חנה מידי כדי שלא תתן לאדם לאכול, ותימצו שאדם הראשון חטא שסחט ענבים ושתה בלא קידוש ואם היה ממתיין עד הערב היה מקדש עליו. וגם חטא לוט היה ששתה בלא קידוש ונתעורר חטא אדם הראשון עכ"ל. ואם כן חנה לא חטאה שאינה מצווה על קידוש היום דנשים אינן מצוות על קידוש היום. ולכן גבי לוט אינם אסורים אלא הנזכרים ולא הנקבות, כי הנקבות אינן מצוות על קידוש היום עכ"ל, בערך אדם ועיי"ש.

Furthermore, it is necessary to preface the discussion with what the *Leket Yosef*<sup>16</sup> wrote, that:

**The Tosafot [on Sanhedrin 58b] asked: Why did Eve not die immediately [upon eating grapes from the Tree of Knowledge],<sup>17</sup> so that she would not [have come to] feed Adam [from that tree]?**

**They answered that the first Adam sinned in that he squeezed grapes [on Friday afternoon] and drank [immediately] without reciting Kiddush, and if he had waited until [Shabbat] evening, he would have recited Kiddush over it. Also, the sin of Lot was that he drank without Kiddush, and the sin of the first Adam was thereby reawakened.<sup>18</sup>**

<sup>11</sup> Ex. 20:8.

<sup>12</sup> Deut. 5:12.

<sup>13</sup> Rosh Hashanah 27a; Shevuot 20b.

<sup>14</sup> Mekhilta DeRabbi Yishmael, Tractate BaChodesh 7; Midrash Lekach Tov, Exodus 20:8.

<sup>15</sup> Beit Yosef, Orach Chayim 261:2.

<sup>16</sup> Yosef Ginsburg (d. 1715), *Leket Yosef* (Hamburg 1688).

<sup>17</sup> Sanhedrin 70a gives an opinion that the Tree of Knowledge was a grapevine.

<sup>18</sup> Id.

**If so, Eve did not sin, for she is not commanded regarding the sanctification of the day, as [some authorities hold that] women are not commanded regarding the sanctification of the day.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, regarding Lot, only the males are prohibited [from becoming Jewish] and not the females regarding Ammon and Moab, because the females are not commanded regarding sanctification of the day [whereas the men, who would be commanded, are connected to the sin of Adam and Lot].**

- *Leket Yosef*, Entry: “Adam”

ומעתה כְּשֶׁאָנוּ מְקַבְּלִים גְּרִים הוּא מְשׁוּם דִּישְׂרָאֵל קְדוּשִׁים הֵם וְכָל דְּבָר שֶׁבְּקִדּוּשָׁה צָרִיךְ תּוֹסֶפֶת כְּמוֹ הַשְּׁבֵת. וּמִנְּלוֹ שֶׁהַשְּׁבֵת צָרִיךְ תּוֹסֶפֶת, עַל כָּרְחֻךְ לֹדְמֵר שֶׁהַלִּימוּד שֶׁל "זְכוּר" וְ"שָׂמֹר" הוּא זְכוּר מִלְּפָנָיו וְשָׂמֹר מִלְּאַחֲרָיו, וְלִפִּי לִימוּד זֶה אֵין עוֹד רְאִיָּה שֶׁהַנְּשִׂיִם יִהְיוּ חַיִּיבוֹת בְּקִדּוּשׁ הַיּוֹם. וְאִם הַנְּשִׂיִם אֵינָם חַיִּיבוֹת בְּקִדּוּשׁ הַיּוֹם אִם כֵּן חֵנָּה לֹא חֲטָאָה, וּמְשׁוּם הִכִּי לֹא מִתָּה מִיָּד. וּמִטַּעַם זֶה הַנְּקֻבוֹת שֶׁל עֲמוּן וּמוֹאֵב מוֹתְרוֹת, דְּמוֹאֵבִי וְלֹא מוֹאֵבִית.

**From now, when we accept converts, it is because Israel are holy and every matter of holiness requires addition, like the Sabbath. From where do we know that the Sabbath requires addition? Perforce one must say that the derivation of “Remember” and “Observe” is “Remember” [the Sabbath] beforehand and “Observe” it after. According to this derivation from the Mechilta, there is no longer room for the proof available from tractate Berachot that women are obligated in sanctification of the day, that is, Kiddush.**

**If so, if women are not obligated in sanctification of the day, then Eve did not sin, and because of this she did not die immediately. For this reason, the females of Ammon and Moab are permitted to become Jewish, for “a Moabite male [is forbidden to become a Jewish convert], but not a Moabite female.”<sup>20</sup>**

וּמְשׁוּם הִכִּי אָמְרָה נְעֻמִי לְרוּת "וַיְהִי מִשְׁכַּרְתָּךְ שְׁלֵמָה", לְרִמּוֹז לָהּ שֶׁהַשְּׂכָר שֶׁל הַנְּקֻבוֹת הוּא יוֹתֵר שְׁלֵם מִשְׁלַל הַזְּכָרִים. שֶׁהָרִי חֵנָּה שֶׁהֵיטָה הַנְּקֻבָּה הִרְאִישׁוֹנָה לֹא פָגְמָה עֲצָמָה בְּעֵבוֹר הָאֲכִילָה, רַק שֶׁגָּרְמָה לְאָדָם לְאָכֹל. וְזֶה אֵינּוּ פָגַם כָּל כֹּף כְּמוֹ הָאֲכִילָה שֶׁהָאִסּוּר נִכְנָס בְּגוּפָה.

**Because of this, Naomi said to Ruth, “And may your reward be complete,” to hint to her that the reward of the females is more complete than that of the males. For behold, Eve, who was the first female, did not blemish herself because of the eating, as according to some views she was not obliged to make Kiddush, but she only caused Adam to eat, and this was especially bad for him because he should have waited and made Kiddush. This responsibility of hers of convincing Adam to eat, which led to his sin, is not such a blemish as the eating itself on his part, where the prohibition entered into his body.**

\* \* \*

<sup>19</sup> The *Leket Yosef* does note immediately after this section that according to the Gemara, women are commanded in Kiddush. It is unclear to the Translator why the *Leket Yosef* first says that they are not obligated. Perhaps he is making the same argument as Zera Shimshon, of the conflict between the Mechilta and Berachot.

<sup>20</sup> Yerushalmi Yevamot 8:3; Yevamot 69a; 76b, 77a; Ketubot 7b; Kiddushin 75a.