

Akdamut

Recited on the first day of Shavuot, immediately after the introductory blessing over the first aliyah, before the first aliyah's Torah reading is read:

א

Allow me to begin saying some words;
I ask permission to speak and be heard.

Apprehensive and in awe I'll take note of two or three
of the creator's designs, who is with us at all times,
whose might is everlasting and cannot be described—
even were the heavens parchment and all the plants pens,
the ocean's waters gathered up as ink,
and everyone on earth authors and scribes.

Glorious is the master of heaven and the sovereign of the earth
who rules it alone, having created this world,

without effort, never tiring,
with only the whoosh of a breath-like *hei*,

accomplishing it all in six days,
and in glory ascending the fiery throne.

אקדמות

Recited only on the first day of Shavuot, immediately after the introductory blessing over the first aliyah, before the first aliyah's Torah reading is read:

א

אֶקְדָּמוֹת מְלִין וְשָׁרְיוֹת שׁוֹתָא,
אִוְלָא שְׁקִילְנָא הַרְמֵן וְרִשׁוֹתָא.

בְּבָבִי תֵרִי וּתְלַת דְּאִפְתַּח בְּנִקְשׁוֹתָא,
בְּבָרִי דְּבָרִי וְטָרִי עָדִי לְקִשְׁיִשׁוֹתָא.

גְּבוּרָן עֲלָמִין לִיה וְלֹא סַפֵּק פְּרִישׁוֹתָא,
גְּוִיל אֵלוֹ רְקִיעֵי, קְנִי פְּלִחְרִשְׁתָּא.

דִּין אֵלוֹ יְמֵי וְכָל־מִי כְּנִישׁוֹתָא,
דִּירִי אֲרַעָא סְפָרִי וְרִשְׁמֵי רִשׁוֹתָא.

הַדָּר מְרִי שְׁמִיָּא וְשִׁלִּיט בִּיבְשׁוֹתָא,
הַקִּים עֲלָמָא יְחִידָאֵי וְכַבְּשִׁיה בְּכַבְּשׁוֹתָא.

וּבָלָא לָאוּ שְׁכַלְלִיה, וּבָלָא תִשְׁשׁוֹתָא,
וּבְאַתָּא קְלִילָא, דְּלִית בֵּיה מְשִׁשׁוֹתָא.

זְמִין פְּל־עִיבִידְתִּיה בְּהַן יוֹמֵי שְׁתָּא,
זְהוֹר יְקָרִיהָ עָלֵי, עָלֵי כְּרִסְיָה דְּאִשְׁתָּא.

blessing of the author: *Meir bar rabbi yitzhak, yigdal ba-torah u-v'ma-asim tovim, amen v'hazak ve-ematz*, "Meir bar Rabbi Isaac, may he grow in Torah and good deeds, amen, may he be strengthened." There is a consistent rhyme throughout: each line concludes with a word ending in *tav-alef* (the first and final letters of the alphabet), pronounced as *ta*. There is also a consistent meter. Akdamut is sung to a melody that is thought to be at least a thousand years old. The explanatory comments that follow are primarily based on the scholarly work of Jonah Frankel in *Mahzor Shavuot*. We have divided the poem into sections so that congregations can choose to recite only some parts of the *piyyut*.

AT ALL TIMES אֶקְדָּמוֹת. Literally, "to old age."

WITH A BREATH-LIKE "HEI" וּבְאַתָּא קְלִילָא, דְּלִית בֵּיה מְשִׁשׁוֹתָא. Literally, "with the sound of a letter that has no substance." The midrash (Genesis Rabbah 12:10) understands the word *b'hibaram* ("when they were created," Genesis 2:4) to be parsed as *b'hei b'ra-am*, "God created them [heaven and earth] by using the letter *hei*." The midrash reads: "*B'hibaram*: Rabbi Abbahu said in the name of Rabbi Yohanan: With a *hei* [God] created them. Just as all the letters (of the alphabet) make a sound and the *hei* does not, so too did the blessed Holy One create the world without labor and effort." (Jeffrey Hoffman)

ב

An army of tens of thousands who serve the Divine are newly born each and every day—so great are God’s ways.

While hordes of fiery seraphs adorned with six wings wait silently for the signal to sing—

which with no hesitation they grant each other—and then fill the world with the threefold holy verse.

And as if the sound came from God or the roar of the sea, opposite the cherubim, *ofanim* loudly rise in a wave

to see with their own eyes the Face, a bow in the sky—before rushing to go on their way.

In that place where God resides, never to be found, they bless God’s glory in every language spoken.

Then, all the heavenly army, in awe, shouts praise, acknowledging the one who rules, in each generation, always.

ב

חַיֵּל אֶלֶף אֶלֶף וְרִבּוּא לְשִׁמְשׁוֹתָא,
חַדְתִּין נְבוֹט לְצַפְרִין, סְגִיָּא טְרָשׁוֹתָא.

טְפֵי יְקִידִין שְׂרָפִין, כָּלוּל גַּפֵּי שְׁתָּא,
טַעֲמָא עַד יִתְיַהֵב לְהוֹן שְׁתִּיקִין בְּאֲדָשְׁתָּא.

יְקַבְּלוֹן דִּין מִן דִּין שְׁוֵי דְלָא בְּשִׁשְׁתָּא,
יְקַר מְלֵי כָּל־אַרְעָא, לְתַלְוֹתֵי קְדָשְׁתָּא.

כָּקַל מִן קָדָם שְׂדֵי כָּקַל מִי נְפִישׁוֹתָא,
כְּרוּבִין קָבַל גְּלָגְלִין מְרוּמָמִין בְּאֲוִשְׁתָּא.

לְמַחֲזֵי בְּאַנְפָּא עֵין פְּנוֹת גִּירֵי קְשָׁתָא,
לְכָל־אַתְר דְּמִשְׁתַּלְּחִין, זְרִיזִין בְּאֲשׁוֹתָא.

מְבַרְכִין בְּרִיף יְקַרְיָהּ בְּכָל־לֶשֶׁן לְחִישׁוֹתָא,
מְאַתְר בֵּית שְׂכִינְתָּהּ, דְּלָא צְרִיף בְּחִישׁוֹתָא.

נְהִים כָּל־חֵיל מְרוּמָא, מְקַלְסִין בְּחִישׁוֹתָא,
נְהִירָא מְלַכּוֹתֵיהּ, לְדָר וְדָר לְאַפְרָשְׁתָּא.

NEWLY BORN נְבוֹט. According to an opinion in the Babylonian Talmud, angels are created anew each day, recite their praise of God, and then disappear (Hagigah 14a).

THREEFOLD HOLY SONG לְתַלְוֵי קְדָשְׁתָּא. The words of the Kedushah—“Holy, holy, holy is *Adonai Tz’va-ot*, the whole world is filled with God’s glory”—is recited by the angels closest to the divine throne each morning.

THE CHERUBIM כְּרוּבִין. This stanza is based on Ezekiel’s vision of the heavens: “When they moved, I could hear the sound of their wings like the sound of mighty waters, or the sound of the Almighty, a tumult like the din of an army” (1:24). After the description of the angelic beings, Ezekiel sees God enthroned: “like the appearance of the bow that

shines in the clouds on a day of rain, such was the appearance of the surrounding radiance” (1:28). This first chapter of the Book of Ezekiel is read as the *haftarah* on the first day of Shavuot.

THE HEAVENLY ARMY חֵיל מְרוּמָא. The poet now returns to the army of angels mentioned at the beginning of this section. They are the lowest level of angels and offer their praise last.

ג

The sanctification is so ordered, that should an angel miss its singular time, it ceases to exist, never completing the task assigned.

But God's congregation is held dear, for twice each day they offer praise when light dawns and when the sun goes away.

They are distinguished as God's portion, to do God's will, and describe God's wonders with words they pray.

God wants and desires the effort expended; their prayers are accepted, their petition effected,

forming a crown, as promised, for the giver of life to the world, near the precious *tefillin*, worn by their creator,

and which—with true judgment and wisdom—is inscribed with the greatness of Israel who affirm God as one.

ד

The praise of the world's master, just expressed, I would address to the kingdoms who rule on earth,

who shall come and assemble like ocean's waves—disconcerted by the wonders and signs—they ask:

“Who is your lover, beautiful to behold, for whose sake you die in the lion's den?”

continued

ג

סְדִירָא בְהוֹן קְדוּשָׁתֵיהּ, וְכַד הִלְפָא שְׁעָתָא, סְיוּמָא דְלַעֲלָם, וְאוּף לָא לְשַׁבוּעָתָא.

עֲדָב יְקָר אַחְסַנְתֵיהּ חֲבִיבִין דְּבִקְבַעְתָּא, עֲבִידָא לֵיהּ חֲטִיבָא בְּדַנְחָ וּשְׁקַעְתָּא.

פְּרִישָׁן לְמִנְתֵיהּ, לְמַעַבְד לֵיהּ רְעוּתָא, פְּרִישְׁתִי שְׁבַחֵיהּ יְחוּוֹן בְּשַׁעוּתָא.

צָבִי וְחֲמִד וְרַגְג דְּלֵאוֹן בְּלַעוּתָא, צְלוּתְהוֹן בְּכֹן מְקַבֵּל וְהִנְיָא בְּעוּתָא.

קְטִירָא לְחֵי עֲלָמָא בְּתַגָּא בְּשַׁבוּעָתָא, קָבֵל יְקָר טוּטְפָתָא יְתִיבָא בְּקַבֵּיעָתָא.

רְשִׁימָא הִיא גּוּפָא בְּחַכְמָתָא וּבְדַעְתָּא, רְבוּתָא דִּישְׂרָאֵל, קְרָאִי בְּשַׁמְעָתָא.

ד

שְׁבַח רְבוֹן עֲלָמָא, אַמִּירָא דִּכְוֹתָא, שְׁפָר עָלֵי לְחוּוִיָּהּ, בְּאַפִּי מְלַכּוּתָא.

תַּאֲיִן וּמִתְבַּנְּשִׁין בְּחֻזּוֹ אֲדוּתָא, תַּמְהִין וְשִׁלִּין לֵיהּ בְּעַסְק אֲתוּתָא.

מִנְן וּמָאן הוּא רְחִימָהּ, שְׁפָרָא בְּרִיּוּתָא, אַרוֹם בְּגִינֵיהּ סְפִית מְדוֹר אַרְיּוּתָא.

continued

IT CEASES TO EXIST סְיוּמָא דְלַעֲלָם. The Babylonian Talmud talks of angels having different times to say the Kedushah—some say it once a week, some once in seven years—but if they miss their appointed time, their purpose is ended. Thus, the angel wrestling with Jacob insisted that he be let go, for his time to praise God had arrived. While some angels may recite the Kedushah only once in their lifetime, Israel is distinguished in that it praises God twice each day, reciting the Sh'ma morning and evening. (Hullin 91b; Jeffrey Hoffman)

A CROWN, AS PROMISED קְטִירָא According to a midrash in the Babylonian Talmud, an angel takes the prayers of the people Israel and tie them together as a crown on God's head (Hagigah 13b).

NEAR THE PRECIOUS TEFILIN קָבֵל יְקָר טוּטְפָתָא. In the Babylonian Talmud (Berakhot 6a), Rabbi Hiyya bar Abin describes the *tefillin* worn by God as containing the verse, “Who is like you among the nations, O Israel!” (1 Chronicles 17:21).

TO THE KINGDOMS WHO RULE ON EARTH בְּאַפִּי מְלַכּוּתָא

This entire section is a poetic rendition of the description by Rabbi Akiva of the nations of the world coming to Israel and asking how they might be rewarded like Israel (Mekhilta Shirata 3).

YOU DIE IN THE LION'S DEN אַרְיּוּתָא. Daniel was thrown into the lion's den but was saved. Subsequent Jewish generations suffered actual martyrdom, but Daniel—living in exile and persecuted as a Jew, and willing to suffer the consequences—was a model for those who came after.

We would be honored and rewarded if you would join with us;
we will fulfill your desires wherever you dwell.”

Her wise response describes the end of days:
“Would that you knew God in a genuine way!

What is the worth of your greatness today,
compared to what awaits me when God’s deliverance comes?

On me and mine God’s light will shine, but you shall be
covered with shame,
as God’s glory is revealed in all its power and pride,

for then God will repay haters and foes
and vindicate this nation beloved as a bride.”

These pure vessels shall celebrate with joy,
when ingathered exiles enter Jerusalem’s gates,

where glory shall cover them day and night,
a canopy for a wedding where blessings are sung.

Radiant clouds of glory shall shine on each one
according to the deeds that they have done.

ה

On couches of pure gold, in seven rows,
the righteous, seated, face the Master of deeds.

Their appearance is that of satisfied delight,
shining like the splendrous heaven and stars burning bright,

reflecting a beauty that lips can’t express,
nor was ever heard or seen in a prophet’s dream.

continued

יְקַרְא וַיֵּאָה אֶת, אֵין תַּעֲרְבִי לְמַרוֹתָא,
רַעוּתֵיהּ נַעֲבֵד לֵיהּ, בְּכָל־אֲתָרוֹתָא.

בְּחֻכְמָתָא מְתִיבָא לְהוֹן קָצַת לְהוֹדְעוֹתָא,
יְדַעְתוֹן חֻכְמִין לֵיהּ בְּאֲשַׁתְּמוּדְעוֹתָא.

רְבוּתְכוֹן מָה חֲשִׁיבָא קָבַל הֵיא שְׂבַחָתָא,
רְבוּתָא דִּיעֲבַד לִי, פִּי מְטִיא יְשׁוּעָתָא.

בְּמִיתִי לִי נְהוּרָא, וְתַחֲפִי לְכוֹן בְּהָתָא,
יְקַרְיָה בְּד יִתְגַּלִּי בְּתַקְפָּא וּבְגִיּוֹתָא.

יְשַׁלֵּם גְּמֻלָּיָא לְשֹׂנְאֵי וְנִגְוֹתָא,
צְדֻקָתָא לְעַם חַבִּיב וְסִגֵּי זְכוּתָא.

חֲדוּ שְׁלָמָא בְּמִיתִי וּמִנָּא דְכוּתָא,
קַרְיָתָא דִּירוּשָׁלַם בְּד יִכְנַשׁ גְּלוּתָא.

יְקַרְיָה מְטִיל עֲלֵיהּ בְּיוֹמֵי וְלִילוֹתָא,
גְּנוּבֵיהּ לְמַעֲבַד בְּה בְּתַשְׁבְּחוֹן כְּלִילָתָא.

דִּזְהוּר עֲנַנְיָא לְמַשְׁפַּר כִּילָתָא,
לְפוּמָא דִּיעֲבִידָתָא עֲבִידוֹן מְטִלָתָא.

ה

בְּתַחֲתִיקֵי דְהַב פְּזָא וְשִׁבַע מַעֲלָתָא,
תַּחֲזִימִין צְדִיקֵי קָדָם רַב פְּעֻלָתָא.

וְרִיזִיהוֹן דְּמִי לְשִׁבְעָא חֲדוּתָא,
רְקִיעָא בְּזַהוּרִיָּה וְכוּכְבֵּי זִיוָתָא.

הֲדָרָא דְלָא אֶפְשָׁר לְמַפְרֵט סְפוּתָא,
וְלָא אֲשַׁתְּמַע וְחַמֵּי נְבִיאָן חֲזוּתָא.

continued

תַּעֲרְבִי לְמַרוֹתָא. The nations ask
the Jewish people to leave
their Judaism behind.

HER WISE RESPONSE
בְּחֻכְמָתָא מְתִיבָא. That is:
Israel’s.

ACCORDING TO THE DEEDS
לְפוּמָא דִּיעֲבִידָתָא. The
Babylonian Talmud asserts
that the glory which each
person will experience in
the world that is coming
will be in accordance with
the deeds the person has
performed in this world
(Bava Batra 75a).

In the Garden of Eden, which no eye has yet seen,
they circle in dance with the Shekhinah herself.

Filled with awe, they point to the Divine,
“In captivity, we lived with hope and great faith

in the one who forever leads us as youths in our prime
to the portion prepared for us from the beginning of time.”

Leviathan and the bull on the mountain on high
wrestle one another, in battle and war:

Behemoth, the bull goring deeply with great horns,
Leviathan with mighty fins slicing the beast.

Their creator approaches them with sword unsheathed,
serving them up to the righteous as a delicious feast.

The virtuous are seated at tables made of rubies and jewels,
with floats of fragrant flowers flowing between them,

and from cups overflowing they drink with satisfaction and elation
the juice of the vines preserved since the time of creation.

ו

O you upright, as the praise in this song has just expressed,
your place is assured in this great congregation.

To be seated in these rows on high, you shall be found worthy,
for you obeyed the divine words uttered in glory.

Exalted is our God from first to last,
who desired us, and gave us the Torah to hold fast.

בְּלֵא שְׁלֵטָא בִּיהַ עֵינָן, בְּגוּ עֵדוֹן גְּנָתָא,
מְטִילֵי בֵי חֲנֻנָא לְבַהֲדֵי דְשִׁכְנֵינָתָא.

עֲלִיהַ רְמִזֵי דִין הוּא, בְּרַם בְּאֲמַתְנוּתָא,
שְׁבַרְנָא לִיהַ בְּשִׁבְיוֹן, תְּקוּף הַמְנוּתָא.

יְדַבֵּר לָן עֲלָמִין עֲלָמִין מְדַמוּתָא,
מְנַת דְּלָן דְּמַלְקָדְמִין פְּרַשׁ בְּאֲרַמוּתָא.

טְלוּלָא דְלוּיָתָן וְתוֹר טוֹר רְמוּתָא,
וְחַד בְּחַד פִּי סְבִיף וְעֵבֵד קְרַבוּתָא.

בְּקַרְנוּהֵי מְנַגַח בְּהֵמוֹת בְּרַבוּתָא,
יְקַרְטַע נוֹן לְקַבְלִיהַ בְּצִיצוּי בְּגַבוּרְתָא.

מְקַרַב לִיהַ בְּרִיָה בְּחַרְבִּיהַ רְבַרְבוּתָא,
אֲרַסְטוֹן לְצַדִּיקֵי יִתְקַן וְשְׂרוּתָא.

מְסַחְרִין עֲלֵי תַפִּי דְכַדְבוּד וְגוּמְרְתָא,
נְגִידִין קְמִיהוֹן אֲפְרָסְמוֹן נְהַרְתָּא.

וּמְתַפְנְקֵי וְרוּוּ בְכַסֵּי רוּיָתָא,
חֲמַר מְרַת דְּמַבְרָא שִׁית נְטִיר בֵּי נַעוּתָא.

ו

זְבָאִין, בֵּי שְׁמַעְתוֹן שְׁבַח דָּא שִׁירְתָּא,
קְבִיעִין בְּן תְּהוּוֹן בְּהַנְהוּ חַבּוּרְתָּא.

וְתַזְבּוֹן דֵּי תִיתְבוּן בְּעֵלָא דְרְתָא,
אֲרִי תִצִּיתוֹן לְמַלוּי, דִּנְפְקִין בְּהַדְרְתָּא.

מְרוּמָם הוּא אֱלֹהִין בְּקַדְמֵתָא וּבַתְרֵיָתָא,
צְבִי וְאַתְרַעִי בָן וּמְסַר לָן אֲוִרְתָּא.

LEVIATHAN AND THE BULL
דְלוּיָתָן וְתוֹר Leviathan is mentioned in various places in the Bible, including the conclusion of the Book of Job (40:19, 25), as a sea monster. The Book of Job also describes Behemoth, assumed to be a bull, who is “the first in creation,” and who is so strong that “only his Maker can draw the sword against him.” Jewish legend envisioned both creatures being slaughtered at the end of days, becoming the fish and meat delicacies to be consumed by the righteous.

TO THE UPRIGHT AS A DELICIOUS FEAST
אֲרַסְטוֹן לְצַדִּיקֵי Earlier, the poet had described an otherworldly realm populated by angels; here, the promised reward in the world that is coming is populated by the righteous. There, the poem describes the angels serving God; here, the faithful are served a meal by God. Having confronted the challenge of the other nations and prevailed, the faithful now rise higher and closer to God than even the angels.

O YOU UPRIGHT
זְבָאִין This section of the poem spirals back to its beginning. The poet opened with an address to the congregation and now concludes addressing them with words of comfort. The last line speaks of Torah, since the poem serves as an introduction to the reading of the Torah.

The Scroll of Ruth

CHAPTER I

In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land; and a man of Bethlehem in Judah, with his wife and two sons, went to reside in the country of Moab. The man's name was Elimelech, his wife's name was Naomi, and his two sons were named Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah. They came to the country of Moab and remained there.

Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left with her two sons. They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth, and they lived there about ten years. Then those two—Mahlon and Chilion—also died; so the woman was left without her two sons and without her husband.

She started out with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab; for in the country of Moab she had heard that ADONAI had taken note of the people and given them food. Accompanied by her two daughters-in-law, she left the place where she had been living; and they set out on the road back to the land of Judah.

But Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, "Turn back, each of you to her mother's house. May ADONAI grant that each of you find security in the house of a husband!" And she kissed them farewell. They broke into weeping and said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." But Naomi replied, "Turn back, my daughters! Why should you go with me? Have I any more sons in my body who might be husbands for you?"

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? Oh no, my daughters! My lot is far more bitter than yours, for the hand of ADONAI has struck out against me."

They broke into weeping again, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law farewell. But Ruth clung to her. So she said, "See, your sister-in-law has returned to her people and her gods. Go follow your sister-in-law."

But Ruth replied, "Do not urge me to leave you, to turn back and not follow you. For wherever you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus and more may ADONAI do to me if anything but death parts me from you." When [Naomi] saw how determined she was to go with her, she ceased to argue with her; and the two went on until they reached Bethlehem.

מגילת רות

פרק א

וַיְהִי בַיָּמֵי שְׁפֹט הַשְּׁפֹטִים וַיְהִי רָעַב בְּאֶרֶץ וְיִלְךָ אִישׁ מִבֵּית לָחֶם יְהוּדָה לְגוֹר בְּשָׂדֵי מוֹאָב הוּא וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּשְׁנֵי בָנָיו: וְשֵׁם הָאִישׁ אֱלִימֶלֶךְ וְשֵׁם אִשְׁתּוֹ נְעֹמִי וְשֵׁם שְׁנֵי־בָנָיו | מַחְלֹן וְכִלְיוֹן אֶפְרַתִּים מִבֵּית לָחֶם יְהוּדָה וַיָּבֹאוּ שְׂדֵי־מוֹאָב וַיְהִי־שָׁם: וַיָּמָת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ אִישׁ נְעֹמִי וַתִּשְׂאָר הִיא וּשְׁנֵי בָנֶיהָ: וַיִּשְׂאוּ לָהֶם נָשִׁים מֵאֲבוֹת שֵׁם הָאֶחָת עֹרְפָּה וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית רֹוּת וַיָּשָׁבוּ שָׁם בְּעֶשֶׂר שָׁנִים: וַיָּמוּתוּ גַם־שְׁנֵיהֶם מַחְלֹן וְכִלְיוֹן וַתִּשְׂאָר הָאִשָּׁה מִשְׁנֵי יְלָדֶיהָ וּמֵאִשָּׁה:

וַתָּקָם הִיא וְכַלְתֶּיהָ וַתָּשָׁב מִשְׂדֵי מוֹאָב כִּי שָׁמְעָה בַשָּׂדֶה מוֹאָב כִּי־פָקַד יְהוָה אֶת־עַמּוֹ לָתֵת לָהֶם לֶחֶם: וַתֵּצֵא מִן־הַמְּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר הָיְתָה־שָׁמָּה וּשְׁתֵּי כַלְתֶּיהָ עִמָּהּ וַתֵּלַכְנָה בְּדֶרֶךְ לָשׁוּב אֶל־אֶרֶץ יְהוּדָה:

וַתֹּאמֶר נְעֹמִי לְשְׁתֵּי כַלְתֶּיהָ לִכְנֹה שְׁכֵנָה אֲשֶׁה לְבֵית אִמִּיהָ יַעַשׂ יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם חֶסֶד כַּאֲשֶׁר עֲשִׂיתֶם עִם־הַמֵּתִים וְעִמָּדִי: יִתֵּן יְהוָה לָכֶם וּמִצָּאֵן מְנוּחָה אֲשֶׁה בֵּית אִישָׁה וַתִּשָּׂק לָהֶן וַתִּשָּׂאנָה קוֹלָן וַתִּבְכְּינָה: וַתֹּאמְרֵנָה לָּהּ כִּי־אֲתָרְךָ נָשׁוּב לְעִמָּךְ: וַתֹּאמֶר נְעֹמִי שְׁכֵנָה בְּנָתִי לָמָּה תֵּלַכְנָה עִמִּי הַעוֹד־לִי בָנִים בְּמַעֲלִי וְהָיוּ לָכֶם לְאֻנָּשִׁים:

שְׁכֵנָה בְּנָתִי לָכֵן כִּי זָקַנְתִּי מֵהַיּוֹת לְאִישׁ כִּי אֲמַרְתִּי יִשְׁלִי תִקְוָה גַם הָיִיתִי הַלְּיָלָה לְאִישׁ וְגַם יְלָדְתִי בָנִים: הֲלֹהֵן | תִּשְׁבְּרֵנָה עַד אֲשֶׁר יִגְדְּלוּ הֲלֹהֵן תַּעֲגֹנָה לְבַלְתִּי הַיּוֹת לְאִישׁ אֶל בְּנָתִי כִּי־מַרְלִי מֵאֵד מִכֶּם כִּי־יִצְאָה בִּי יְדִי־הוּהָ:

וַתִּשָּׁנֶה קוֹלָן וַתִּבְכְּינָה עוֹד וַתִּשָּׂק עֹרְפָּה לַחֲמוּתָהּ וְרוּת דָּבְקָה בָּהּ: וַתֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה שָׁבָה יְבַמְתָּךְ אֶל־עַמָּהּ וְאֶל־אֱלֹהֶיהָ שׁוּבִי אַחֲרַי יְבַמְתָּךְ:

וַתֹּאמֶר רֹוּת אֶל־תַּפְּעֻעִי־כִּי לְעִזְבֹּךְ לָשׁוּב מֵאַחֲרַיךְ כִּי אֶל־אֲשֶׁר תֵּלְכִי אֵלַיךְ וּבְאֲשֶׁר תֵּלִינִי אֵלָיִן עִמָּךְ עִמִּי וְאֶל־הַיָּד אֱלֹהֵי: בְּאֲשֶׁר תָּמוּתִי אָמוּת וְשֵׁם אֶקְבֹּר בָּהּ יַעֲשֶׂה יְהוָה לִי וְכֹה יִסְיֵף כִּי הַמּוֹת יִפְרִיד בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ: וַתֵּרָא כִּי־מִתְאַמְצָת הִיא לְלַכֵּת אִתָּהּ וַתַּחֲדֵל לְדַבֵּר אֵלֶיהָ: וַתֵּלַכְנָה שְׁתֵּיהֶם עַד־בָּאֲנָה בֵּית לָחֶם

THE SCROLL OF RUTH. Each of the festivals is distinguished by the reading of one of the *megillot*, one of the five scrolls. There are many reasons for the association of the Scroll of Ruth with the Festival of Shavuot. Shavuot celebrates the receiving of the Torah at Sinai, and in Jewish tradition Ruth is considered to be the first convert. We, in celebrating the Torah, place ourselves in Ruth's shoes: on this day of Shavuot, it is as if we receive the Torah anew. The book is permeated with acts of kindness and love, beginning with Ruth's relationship with her mother-in-law and continuing with Boaz and Ruth and the kindness they show each other and the love they consummate. In this understanding, the Torah is ultimately about teaching us how to love both God and our fellow human beings. Further, the return to the Land of Israel takes place at the time of the harvest—and Shavuot is a harvest festival.

The translation is taken from the Jewish Publication Society's *Tanakh*, as are the notes marked "JPS" (with slight adaptations to match the style of this volume).

When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole city buzzed with excitement over them. The women said, “Can this be Naomi?” Do not call me Naomi,” she replied. “Call me Mara, for Shaddai has made my lot very bitter. I went away full, and ADONAI has brought me back empty. How can you call me Naomi, when ADONAI has dealt harshly with me, when Shaddai has brought misfortune upon me!”

Thus Naomi returned from the country of Moab; she returned with her daughter-in-law Ruth the Moabite. They arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

CHAPTER 2

Now Naomi had a kinsman on her husband’s side, a man of substance, of the family of Elimelekh, whose name was Boaz. 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; 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 Elimelekh’s family.

Presently Boaz arrived from Bethlehem. He greeted the reapers, “May ADONAI be with you!” And they responded, “May ADONAI bless you!” Boaz said to the servant who was in charge of the reapers, “Whose girl is that?” The servant in charge of the reapers replied, “She is a Moabite girl who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. She said, ‘Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the reapers.’ She has been on her feet ever since she came this morning. She has rested but little in the hut.” Boaz said to Ruth, “Listen to me, daughter. Don’t go to glean in another field. Don’t go elsewhere, but stay here close to my girls. Keep your eyes on the field they are reaping, and follow them. I have ordered the men not to molest you. And when you are thirsty, go to the jars and drink some of [the water] that the men have drawn.”

She prostrated herself with her face to the ground, and said to him, “Why are you so kind as to single me out, when I am a foreigner?”

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. May ADONAI reward your deeds. May you have a full recompense from ADONAI, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have sought refuge!”

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.”

וַיְהִי כִּבְאֻנָּה בֵּית לֶחֶם וַתִּהְיֶה כָּל־הָעִיר עֲלִיָּהוֹן וַתֹּאמְרֵנָּה הַנְּזֹאת נְעָמִי: וַתֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶן אֶל־תִּקְרְאוּנָה לִי נְעָמִי קְרָאן לִי מָרָא בִּי־הֵמָּר שְׂדֵי לִי מְאֹד: אֲנִי מְלֵאָה הַלֶּכֶתִּי וְרִיקָם הֵשִׁיבֵנִי יְהוָה לָמָּה תִקְרְאוּנָה לִי נְעָמִי וַיְהוּה עֲנָה בִּי וְשְׂדֵי הָרַע לִי:

NAOMI נְעָמִי. The name means “pleasantness.”

MARA מְרָא. The name means “bitterness.”

וַתָּשָׁב נְעָמִי וְרוּת הַמוֹאבִיָּה כְּלֹתָהּ עִמָּה הַשָּׂבָה מִשְׂדֵי מוֹאָב וְהָמָּה בָּאוּ בֵּית לֶחֶם בְּתַחֲלַת קַצִּיר שְׁעָרִים:

פֶּרֶק ב

וּלְנְעָמִי מוֹדֵעַ לְאִשָּׁה אִישׁ גְּבוּר חָיִל מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ וּשְׁמוֹ בְּעֻז: וַתֹּאמֶר לְרוּת הַמוֹאבִיָּה אֶל־נְעָמִי אֲלֹכֵה־נָא הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֶלְקַטְטָה בַּשָּׂפְלִים אַחַר אֲשֶׁר אֲמַצְאֲחֶן בְּעֵינָיו וַתֹּאמֶר לָהּ לְכִי בָתִּי: וַתֵּלֶךְ וַתִּבּוֹא וַתִּלְקַט בַּשָּׂדֶה אַחֲרֵי הַקְּצָרִים וַיִּקַּר מִקִּוְיָהּ חֲלֹקֶת הַשָּׂדֶה לְבְּעֻז אֲשֶׁר מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת אֱלִימֶלֶךְ:

וְהִנֵּה־בְּעֻז בָּא מִבֵּית לֶחֶם וַיֹּאמֶר לְקוֹצְרִים יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה: וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעֻז לְנַעֲרוֹ הַנֹּצֵב עַל־הַקְּוֹצְרִים לְמִי הַנִּעְרָה הַזֹּאת: וַיַּעַן הַנַּעַר הַנֹּצֵב עַל־הַקְּוֹצְרִים וַיֹּאמֶר נַעֲרָה מוֹאבִיָּה הִיא הַשָּׂבָה עִם־נְעָמִי מִשְׂדֶּה מוֹאָב: וַתֹּאמֶר אֶלְקַטְטָה־נָּא וְאִסְפַּתִּי בְּעֵמְרִים אַחֲרֵי הַקְּוֹצְרִים וַתִּבּוֹא וַתַּעֲמוּד מֵאֹז הַבְּקָר וְעַד־עֹתָהּ זֶה שְׂבִתָּהּ הַבַּיִת מְעֻט: וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעֻז אֶל־רוּת הַלֹּא שְׂמַעְתְּ בָתִּי אֶל־תִּלְכִּי לְלַקֵּט בַּשָּׂדֶה אַחַר וְגַם לֹא תַעֲבֹרִי מִזֶּה וְכֹה תִדְבָּקִין עִם־נַעֲרָתִי: עֵינַיִךְ בַּשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר־יִקְצְרוּן וְהִלַּכְתְּ אַחֲרֵיהֶן הַלֹּא צְרִיתִי אֶת־הַנַּעֲרִים לְבִלְתִּי נִגְעֶנָּךְ וְצָמְתִּי וְהִלַּכְתְּ אֶל־הַפְּלִים וְשִׁתִּית מֵאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁאֲבוּן הַנַּעֲרִים:

וַתִּפֹּל עַל־פְּנֵיהָ וַתִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶרְצָה וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מִדּוּעַ מִצְאָתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְהַפְּרִינִי וְאֲנֹכִי נִכְרִיָּה:

וַיַּעַן בְּעֻז וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ הֲגַד הַגָּד לִי כֹל אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂיתְּ אֶת־חַמּוֹתֶיךָ אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אִישֶׁךָ וַתַּעֲזֹבִי אֲבִיךָ וְאֶמְךָ וְאֶרְצְךָ מוֹלְדֹתֶיךָ וַתִּלְכִּי אֶל־עַמִּים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדַעְתְּ תַּמּוּל שְׁלוֹם: יִשְׁלַם יְהוָה פְּעֻלָּתְךָ וַתִּהְיֶה מִשְׁפָּרְתְּךָ שְׁלָמָה מֵעַם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר־בָּאת לְחַסּוֹת תַּחַת־כַּנְּפָיו:

וַתֹּאמֶר אֲמַצְאֲחֶן בְּעֵינַיִךְ אֲדַנִּי כִּי נַחֲמָתֵנִי וְכִי דַבַּרְתְּ עַל־לֵב שְׂפָתְךָ וְאֲנֹכִי לֹא אֶהְיֶה כְּאֲחַת שְׂפֹחֲתֶיךָ:

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. 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, but you must also pull some stalks out of the heaps and leave them for her to glean, and not scold her.”

She gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned—it was about an *ephah* of barley—and carried it back with her to the town. When her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned, and when she also took out and gave her what she had left over after eating her fill, 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.” Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “Blessed be he of ADONAI, who has not failed in 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.” Ruth the Moabite said, “He even told me, ‘Stay close by my workers until all my harvest is finished.’” And Naomi answered her daughter-in-law Ruth, “It is best, daughter, that you go out with his girls, and not be annoyed in some other field.” So she stayed close to the maidservants of Boaz, and gleaned until the barley harvest and the wheat harvest were finished. Then she stayed at home with her mother-in-law.

CHAPTER 3

Naomi, her mother-in-law, said to her, “Daughter, I must seek a home for you, where you may be happy. Now there is our kinsman Boaz, whose girls you were close to. He will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor tonight. So bathe, anoint yourself, dress up, and go down to the threshing floor. But do not disclose yourself to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down, note the place where he lies down, and go over and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what you are to do.” She replied, “I will do everything you tell me.” She went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had instructed her. Boaz ate and drank, in a cheerful mood went to lie down beside the grainpile. Then she went over stealthily and uncovered his feet and lay down. In the middle of the night, the man gave a start and pulled back—there was a woman lying at his feet!

“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.”

וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ בַעַז לֵעֵת הָאֲכֹל גְּשִׁי הַלֶּם וְאָכַלְתָּ מִן־הַלֶּחֶם
וְטִבַּלְתָּ פִתְּךָ בַחֲמִץ וְתִשָּׁב מִצַּד הַקּוֹצִים וַיִּצְבֹּט־לָהּ קָלִי
וְתֹאכַל וְתִשָּׁבַע וְתוֹתֵר: וְתִקֶּם לְלֶקֶט וַיֵּצֵר בַּעַז אֶת־נִעְרֵיו
לֵאמֹר גַּם בֵּין הָעֹמְרִים תִּלְקֹט וְלֹא תְכַלְמֶנָּה: וְגַם שַׁלְתָּשְׁלוֹ
לָהּ מִן־הַצְּבֹתִים וְעֹזְבֹתֶם וְלֶקְטָהּ וְלֹא תִגְעֲרוּ־בָהּ:

וְתִלְקֹט בַשָּׂדֶה עַד־הָעֶרֶב וְתַחבֹּט אֶת אֲשֶׁר־לֶקְטָהּ וַיְהִי
כַּאֲיִפָּה שְׁעָרִים: וְתִשָּׂא וְתִבּוֹא הָעִיר וְתִרְא חֲמוּתָהּ אֶת
אֲשֶׁר־לֶקְטָהּ וְתוֹצֵא וְתִתֵּן־לָהּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר־הוֹתֵרָה מִשְּׂבָעָהּ:
וְתֹאמֶר לָהּ חֲמוּתָהּ אֵיפָה לֶקְטַת הַיּוֹם וְאַנְה עֲשִׂית יְהִי
מִפִּירְךָ בְרוּךְ וְתִגַּד לְחֲמוּתָהּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר־עָשִׂתָה עִמּוֹ וְתֹאמֶר
שֵׁם הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי עִמּוֹ הַיּוֹם בַּעַז: וְתֹאמֶר נְעָמִי
לְכַלְתָּה בְרוּךְ הוּא לִיהוּה אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עֹזֵב חֲסִדּוֹ אֶת־הַחַיִּים
וְאֶת־הַמֵּתִים וְתֹאמֶר לָהּ נְעָמִי קְרוּב לָנוּ הָאִישׁ מִגְּאֻלָּנוּ הוּא:
וְתֹאמֶר רוּת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה גַם | כִּי־אָמַר אֵלַי עַם־הַנְּעָרִים אֲשֶׁר־
לִי תִדְבָּקִין עַד אִם־כָּלוּ אֶת כָּל־הַקְּצִיר אֲשֶׁר־לִי: וְתֹאמֶר
נְעָמִי אֲלֵרֹת כָּלְתָה טוֹב בְּתִי כִי תִצְאִי עִם־נְעֻרוֹתָיו וְלֹא
יִפְגְּעוּ־בְךָ בַשָּׂדֶה אַחֵר: וְתִדְבַּק בְּנִעְרוֹת בַּעַז לְלֶקֶט עַד־
כָּלוֹת קְצִיר־הַשְּׁעָרִים וְקִצִּיר הַחֲטִים וְתִשָּׁב אֶת־חֲמוּתָהּ:

פרק ג

וְתֹאמֶר לָהּ נְעָמִי חֲמוּתָהּ בְּתִי הֲלֹא אֲבַקֶּשְׁלָךְ מִנוּחַ
אֲשֶׁר יִיטַב־לָךְ: וְעַתָּה הֲלֹא בַעַז מִדְּעַתָּנוּ אֲשֶׁר הֵיית
אֶת־נְעֻרוֹתָיו הִנֵּה־הוּא זָרָה אֶת־גֵּרְךָ הַשְּׁעָרִים הַלְּיָלָה:
וְרַחֲצִת | וְסָכַת וְשָׁמַת שְׁמֹלְתֶיךָ עָלֶיךָ וַיִּרְדַּת הַגֵּרְךָ אֶל־
תַּוְדְעִי לְאִישׁ עַד כָּלְתוּ לְאָכַל וְלִשְׁתּוֹת: וַיְהִי בְשֹׁכְבוֹ וַיִּדְעַת
אֶת־הַמְּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב־שָׁם וּבָאת וּגְלִית מִרְגְּלֹתָיו וְשָׁכַבְתָּ
וְהוּא יִגִּיד לָךְ אֶת אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשִׂין: וְתֹאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ כָּל אֲשֶׁר־
תֹּאמְרִי אֵלַי אַעֲשֶׂה: וְתִרְדַּד הַגֵּרְךָ וְתַעַשׂ כְּכָל אֲשֶׁר־צִוִּיתָהּ
חֲמוּתָהּ: וַיֹּאכַל בַּעַז וַיִּשָּׁת וַיִּיטַב לָבוֹ וַיָּבֵא לְשֹׁכַב בְּקֶצֶה
הָעֵרְמָה וְתָבֵא בָלֹט וְתִגַּל מִרְגְּלֹתָיו וְתִשָּׁכַב: וַיְהִי בַחֲצִי
הַלְּיָלָה וַיִּחְרַד הָאִישׁ וַיִּלְפַּת וַהֲנִה אִשָּׁה שְׁכַבְתָּ מִרְגְּלֹתָיו:
וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אַתָּה וְתֹאמֶר אֲנֹכִי רוּת אִמְתְּךָ וּפְרַשְׁתָּ כְּנָפֶךָ עָלַי־
אֲמַתְךָ כִּי גֹאֵל אַתָּה:

EPHAH. An ephah is about two-thirds of a bushel.

ONE OF OUR REDEEMING KINSMEN. מִגְּאֻלָּנוּ הוּא. The fact that Boaz was a kinsman of Ruth's dead husband opened up the possibility of providing an heir for the latter, in accord with Leviticus 25:25 and Deuteronomy 25:5–6. (JPS)

A HOME מִנוּחַ. Literally, “a place to rest.”

UNCOVER HIS FEET וגְלִית מִרְגְּלֹתָיו. Perhaps a euphemism for sexual organs.

SPREAD YOUR ROBE OVER YOUR HANDMAID וּפְרַשְׁתָּ עַל־אֲמַתְךָ. A formal act of espousal; cf. Ezekiel 16:8. (JPS)

He exclaimed, “Be blessed of ADONAI, daughter! Your latest deed of loyalty is greater than the first, in that you have not turned to younger men, whether poor or rich. And now, daughter, have no fear. I will do on your behalf whatever you ask, for all the elders of my town know what a fine woman you are. But while it is true that I am a redeeming kinsman, there is another redeemer closer than I. Stay for the night. Then in the morning, if he will act as a redeemer, good! let him redeem. But if he does not want to act as redeemer for you, I will do so myself, as ADONAI lives! Lie down until morning.” So she lay down at his feet until dawn. She rose before one person could distinguish another, for he thought, “Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.” And he said, “Hold out the shawl you are wearing.” She held it while he measured out six measures of barley, and he put it on her back.

When she got back to the town, 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; 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.’” And Naomi said, “Stay here, daughter, till you learn how the matter turns out. For the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today.”

CHAPTER 4

Meanwhile, Boaz had gone to the gate and sat down there. And now the redeemer whom Boaz had mentioned passed by. He called, “Come over and sit down here, So-and-so!” And he came over and sat down.

Then [Boaz] took ten elders of the town and said, “Be seated here”; and they sat down. He said to the redeemer, “Naomi, now returned from the country of Moab, must sell the pieces of land which belonged to our kinsman Elimelekh. I thought I should disclose the matter to you and say: Acquire it in the presence of those seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you are willing to redeem it, redeem! But if you will not redeem, tell me, that I may know. For there is no one to redeem but you, and I come after you.” “I am willing to redeem it,” he replied. Boaz continued, “When you acquire the property from Naomi and from Ruth the Moabite, you must also acquire the wife of the deceased, so as to perpetuate the name of the deceased upon his estate.” The redeemer replied, “Then I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own estate. You take over my right of redemption, for I am unable to exercise it.”

Now this was formerly done in Israel in cases of redemption or exchange: to validate any transaction, one man would take off his sandal and hand it to the other. Such was the practice in Israel. So when the redeemer said to Boaz, “Acquire for yourself,” he drew off his sandal.

וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּכָה אַתְּ לַיהוָה בְּתוּלַי הַיְטַבְתְּ חֲסִדְךָ הָאֲחֵרוֹן מִן־
הָרֵאשׁוֹן לְבִלְתִּי־לָכֶת אַחֲרֵי הַבְּחוּרִים אִם־דָּל וְאִם־עָשִׁיר׃
וַעֲתָה בְתוּלַי אֶל־תִּירָאֵי כָּל אֲשֶׁר־תֹּאמְרֵי אֶעֱשֶׂה־לְךָ כִּי יוֹדֵעַ
כָּל־שְׂעֵר עִמִּי כִּי אִשְׁתְּ חֵיל אֶתְּ׃ וַעֲתָה כִּי אִמְנֹם כִּי גֹאֵל
אֲנֹכִי וְגַם יֵשׁ גֹּאֵל קָרוֹב מִמֶּנִּי׃ לִינִי | הַלֵּילָה וְהַיָּה בַּבֶּקֶר אִם־
יִגְאָלְךָ טוֹב יִגְאָל וְאִם־לֹא יִחַפֵּץ לְגֹאֲלְךָ וְגֹאֲלְתִּיךָ אֲנֹכִי חֵי
יְהוָה שְׂכָבִי עַד־הַבֶּקֶר׃ וְתִשָּׁפֵב מִרְגְּלוֹתַי עַד־הַבֶּקֶר וְתִקֶּם
בְּטָרִם יִפִּיר אִישׁ אֶת־רַעְיוֹנוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־יְוֹדֵעַ כִּי־בָאָה הָאִשָּׁה
הַגֵּרָוּ׃ וַיֹּאמֶר הָבִי הַמִּטְפַּחַת אֲשֶׁר־עָלַיךָ וְאֶחֱזִי־בָהּ וְתֹאחֲזוּ
בָּהּ וַיִּמַּד שֵׁשׁ־שְׁעָרִים וַיִּשֶׁת עָלֶיהָ

וַיָּבֵא הָעֵיר׃ וַתְּבוֹא אֶל־חַמּוּתָהּ וְתֹאמֶר מִי־אַתְּ בְּתוּלַי וְתִגַּד־
לָּהּ אֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂה־לָּהּ הָאִישׁ׃ וְתֹאמֶר שֵׁשׁ־הַשְּׁעָרִים
הָאֵלֶּה נָתַן לִי כִּי אָמַר אֵלַי אֶל־תְּבוֹאֵי רִיקֶם אֶל־חַמּוּתְךָ׃
וְתֹאמֶר שְׂבִי בְתוּלַי עַד אֲשֶׁר תִּדְעִין אֵיךְ יִפֹּל דְבַר כִּי לֹא
יִשְׁקֹט הָאִישׁ כִּי־אִם־כֹּלֵה הַדְּבַר הַיּוֹם׃

פרק ד

וּבָעֵז עָלָה הַשְּׂעֵר וַיִּשָּׁב שָׁם וְהָיָה הַגֹּאֵל עִבֵּר אֲשֶׁר דְּבַר־בְּעֵז
וַיֹּאמֶר סוּרָה שְׂבִי־פָּה פְּלִנִי אֶלְמַנִּי וַיְסַר וַיִּשָּׁב׃ וַיִּקַּח עֶשְׂרֵה
אֲנָשִׁים מִזְקֵנֵי הָעֵיר וַיֹּאמֶר שְׂבוּ־פָּה וַיִּשְׁבוּ׃

וַיֹּאמֶר לְגֹאֵל חֲלַקְתָּ הַשְּׂדֵה אֲשֶׁר לְאַחֵינוּ לְאֵלֵימְלֶךְ מִכְּרָה
נָעַמִי הַשְּׂבִיחָה מִשְׂדֵּה מוֹאֵב׃ וְאֲנִי אֲמַרְתִּי אֲגַלָּה אֲזַנְךָ לְאֹמֶר
קָנָה נֶגֶד הַיֹּשְׁבִים וְנֶגֶד זְקֵנֵי עַמִּי אִם־תִּגְאָל גֹּאֵל וְאִם־לֹא
יִגְאָל הַגֵּיזָה לִי וְאִדְעָה כִּי אֵין זוּלְתְךָ לְגֹאֵל וְאֲנֹכִי אַחֲרָיךָ
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי אֲגֹאֵל׃ וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעֵז בְּיוֹם קְנוֹתְךָ הַשְּׂדֵה מִיַּד
נָעַמִי וּמֵאֵת רוּת הַמוֹאֲבִיָּה אִשְׁת־הַמֵּת קְנִיתָהּ לְהַקִּים
שְׁם־הַמֵּת עַל־נַחְלָתוֹ׃ וַיֹּאמֶר הַגֹּאֵל לֹא אוּכַל לְגֹאֵל־לִי
פֶן־אֲשַׁחִית אֶת־נַחְלָתִי גֹאֵל לְךָ אֶתְּהָ אֶת־נְאֻלָּתִי כִּי
לֹא־אוּכַל לְגֹאֵל׃

וְזֹאת לְפָנַי בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־הַגֹּאֲלָה וְעַל־הַתְּמוּרָה לְקַיֵּם כָּל־
דְּבַר שְׁלֹף אִישׁ נִעְלוֹ וְנָתַן לְרַעְיוֹנוֹ וְזֹאת הַתְּעוּדָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל׃
וַיֹּאמֶר הַגֹּאֵל לְבָעֵז קָנָה־לְךָ וַיִּשְׁלַף נִעְלוֹ׃

כִּי אָמַר אֵלַי ("to me")
The word *elai* ("to me")
does not appear in the
written text but is added
when read aloud, making
the reference clear.

LEST I IMPAIR MY OWN
ESTATE פֶּן־אֲשַׁחִית אֶת־
נַחְלָתִי. That is, by expend-
ing capital for property
that would go to the
son legally regarded as
Maḥlon's; see Deuter-
onomy 25:5-6. (JPS)

And Boaz said to the elders and to the rest of the people, “You are witnesses today that I am acquiring from Naomi all that belonged to Elimelekh and all that belonged to Chilion and Maḥlon. I am also acquiring Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Maḥlon, as my wife, so as to perpetuate the name of the deceased upon his estate, that the name of the deceased may not disappear from among his kinsmen and from the gate of his home town. You are witnesses today.”

All the people at the gate and the elders answered, “We are. May ADONAI make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built up the house of Israel! Prosper in Ephrathah and perpetuate your name in Bethlehem! And may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah—through the offspring that ADONAI will give you by this young woman.” So Boaz married Ruth; she became his wife, and he cohabited with her. ADONAI let her conceive, and she bore a son. And the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be ADONAI, who has not withheld a redeemer from you today! May his name be perpetuated in Israel! He will renew your life and sustain your old age; for he is born of your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons.”

Naomi took the child and held it to her bosom. She became its foster mother, and the women neighbors gave him a name, saying “A son is born to Naomi!” They named him Obed; he was the father of Jesse, father of David.

This is the line of Perez: Perez begot Hezron, Hezron begot Ram, Ram begot Amminadav, Amminadav begot Naḥshon, Naḥshon begot Salmon, Salmon begot Boaz, Boaz begot Oved, Oved begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.

וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעֵז לְזִקְנִים וְכָל־הָעָם עֵדִים אַתֶּם הַיּוֹם כִּי קָנִיתִי
אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לְאֵלִימֶלֶךְ וְאֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לְכִלְיוֹן וּמַחְלוֹן מִיַּד
נָעֻמִי: וְגַם אֶת־רוּת הַמֹּאבִיָּה אִשְׁתׁ מַחְלוֹן קָנִיתִי לִי לְאִשָּׁה
לְהַקִּים שֵׁם־הַמֵּת עַל־נַחְלָתוֹ וְלֹא־יִכָּרֵת שֵׁם־הַמֵּת מֵעַם
אֲחִיו וּמִשָּׁעַר מְקוֹמוֹ עֵדִים אַתֶּם הַיּוֹם:

וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־בְּשָׁעַר וְהַזִּקְנִים עֵדִים יִתֵּן יְהוָה אֶת־
הָאִשָּׁה הַבָּאָה אֶל־בֵּיתְךָ כְּרַחֵל | וּכְלֵאָה אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ שְׂתִיָּהֶם
אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעִשְׂהָ־חֵיל בְּאִפְרָתָה וּקְרָא־שֵׁם בְּבֵית
לְחָם: וַיְהִי בֵיתָךְ כְּבֵית פְּרִיץ אֲשֶׁר־יִלְדָה תָמָר לַיהוּדָה
מִן־הַזָּרַע אֲשֶׁר יִתֵּן יְהוָה לָךְ מִן־הַנְּעֻרָה הַזֹּאת: וַיִּקַּח בְּעֵז
אֶת־רוּת וַתְּהִי־לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וַיֵּבֵא אֵלֶיהָ וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה לָהּ הָרִיוּן
וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן:

וַתֹּאמְרָנָה הַנָּשִׁים אֶל־נְעֻמִי כְרוּךְ יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא הִשְׁבִּית
לָךְ גֹּאֵל הַיּוֹם וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: וְהָיָה לָךְ לְמַשִּׁיב נָפֶשׁ
וּלְכַלְכֵּל אֶת־שִׁיבְתְּךָ כִּי כָל־תֵּךְ אֲשֶׁר־אַהַבְתְּךָ יִלְדֶתוּ אֲשֶׁר־
הִיא טוֹבָה לָךְ מִשִּׁבְעָה בָּנִים:

וַתִּקַּח נְעֻמִי אֶת־הַיֶּלֶד וַתִּשְׁתָּהוּ בְחִיקָה וַתְּהִי־לוֹ לְאִמָּנָת:
וַתִּקְרָאנָהּ לוֹ הַשְּׂכֵנֹת שֵׁם לְאִמֹר יֶלֶד־בֶּן לְנְעֻמִי וַתִּקְרָאנָה
שְׁמוֹ עוֹבֵד הוּא אֲבִי־יֵשׁוּ אֲבִי דָוִד:

וְאֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת פְּרִיץ פְּרִיץ הוֹלִיד אֶת־חֲצֹרֹן: וְחֲצֹרֹן הוֹלִיד
אֶת־רֵם וְרֵם הוֹלִיד אֶת־עַמִּינָדָב: וְעַמִּינָדָב הוֹלִיד אֶת־נַחֲשׁוֹן
וְנַחֲשׁוֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת־שַׁלְמָה: וְשַׁלְמֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת־בְּעֵז וּבְעֵז
הוֹלִיד אֶת־עוֹבֵד: וְעוֹבֵד הוֹלִיד אֶת־יֵשׁוּ וַיֵּשִׁי הוֹלִיד אֶת־דָּוִד:

בְּאִפְרָתָה IN EPHRATHAH.
Ephrathah is another name
applied to Bethlehem. (JPS)

הוֹלִיד אֶת־ BEGOT SALMON
שַׁלְמָה. The Hebrew here
is in fact “Salmah,” not
“Salmon”—though Salmon
is the name at the begin-
ning of the following verse.
Perhaps “Salmah” is a short-
ened form of the name.