

Books: Mothers and Wives - Hadassah Magazine | HadassahMagazine.org 4/17/13 11:57 AM

With *Arise! Arise!*, her third visual and literary commentary on the Bible, Debra Band is firmly established as a scholar and artist who can enlighten and delight. In *Arise! Arise!* she looks at five strong women—all of whom lived in the 12th-to-11th-centuries B.C.E. Three texts are printed twice—in Hebrew and English calligraphy complementing colorful illuminations, and in Hebrew together with the 1985 Jewish Publication Society translation. Band's commentary is an appreciation of the art as midrash; Arnold J. Band, her father-in-law and a professor of Hebrew and comparative literature, adds a literary commentary.

The first woman is Deborah (Book of Judges 4-5)—prophet, judge and leader—whose military acumen brought 40 years of peace to the Israelite tribes. Yael, a non-Jew, fulfilled Deborah's prophecy that a woman would kill the enemy general Sisera (she drove a tent pin through his temple).

Naomi and Ruth's courage is a different sort. Once rich, Naomi returns to Israel bereft of husband and sons; they died in a foreign land. Only daughter-in-law Ruth remains. Grief turns to joy when Ruth marries and becomes the progenitor of King David. Ruth's adherence to Judaism is paralleled with the Jewish commitment to God at Sinai, celebrated on Shavuot, which is when the Book of Ruth is read.

Finally, there is barren Hannah (1 Samuel 1:1-2:10), who prays for a child. When God answers her prayers she dedicates Samuel—her son and future prophet—to God. Hannah's is the first example of silent prayer and, Band says, shows that God hears our innermost thoughts. Her story is read on Rosh Hashana.

Band's images are both realistic and kabbalistic: Broken vessels are symbol of grief and loss.

The book is dedicated to the memory of Band's husband, David Louis Band, who inspired her to create this work. One illustration shows a sky with the constellations that were visible over Washington, D.C., at the moment he died. —*Zelda Shluker*