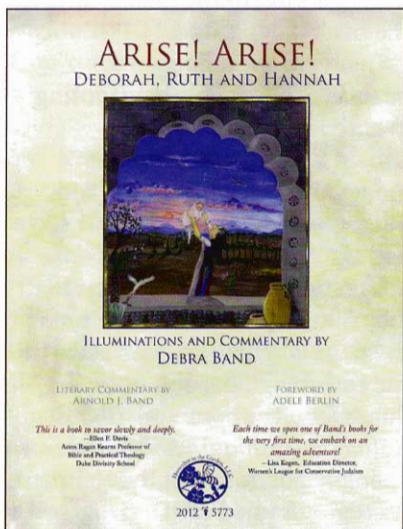


**Arise! Arise! Deborah, Ruth,  
and Hannah: Illuminations and  
Commentary**

**By Debra Band. Literary Commentary  
by Arnold J. Band**

Honeybee in the Garden LLC, 2012,  
\$39.95



**By Roselyn Bell**

**T**his luminously illustrated volume is both a literary and a visual commentary on the biblical passages dealing with Deborah, Ruth, and Hannah and also a deeply felt tribute to the memory of David Louis Band, the husband of Debra and the son of Arnold. It is clearly a labor of love on every level.

Band has selected three biblical heroines who are portrayed with extensive dramatic narratives, thus providing both continuous texts for illumination and rich material for *midrash*. Each text is presented with a literary commentary by Dr.

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Arnold J. Band, professor of Hebrew and comparative literature at UCLA, who draws on classical rabbinic sources as well as modern critical scholarship. Following the literary commentary come magnificently illuminated pages of the text itself, in Hebrew and in English, with illustrations that work on narrative, symbolic, and emotional planes.

These illuminations are the creative heart of this volume because they provide a highly original visual *midrash*. Debra Band's explanations of her artwork following each section spell out the symbols and draw attention to details. For example, at the beginning of the Deborah section, we see a harp leaning against a palm tree, foreshadowing the Song of Deborah, while also alluding to the sweet harpist of Israel, David—the namesake of the man to whom the book is dedicated.

The texts are scribed in a beautiful calligraphic handwriting in both Hebrew and English. Other traditional Jewish artistic modes, including papercuts and micrography, are employed. The use of micrography provides an interesting textual gloss upon the main illustration. For example, on the page where Ruth goes down to the threshing floor and uncovers Boaz's feet, the bordering text is from *Shir Hashirim* 1:9–13. The opening illustration of the Hannah section is framed with a calligraphic border based on the text of a nineteenth-century Moravian woman's *techina*, "For a Childless Wife." Band's use of art deepens the interpretation of a text, putting her in the elite company of Jewish midrashic artists such as David Moss and Archie Granot, who center their art on sacred texts.

Of course, as feminists we appreciate Band's choice of texts—three genuine biblical heroines about whom there is much to say. But most of all we appreciate the variety and originality of her artistic styles. This is a volume to put on your coffee table and to bring to *shul* on Shavuot.