

ARISE! ARISE!

DEBORAH, RUTH AND HANNAH



ILLUMINATIONS AND COMMENTARY BY
DEBRA BAND

LITERARY COMMENTARY BY
ARNOLD J. BAND

FOREWORD BY
ADELE BERLIN

This is a book to savor slowly and deeply.

—Ellen F. Davis

Amos Ragan Kearns Professor of
Bible and Practical Theology
Duke Divinity School

*Each time we open one of Band's books for
the very first time, we embark on an
amazing adventure!*

—Lisa Kogen, Education Director,
Women's League for Conservative Judaism



2012 ♀ 5773

Shimmering with gold and rich color, Debra Band's illuminated paintings present three biblical stories of women who stood up at crucial moments to take actions that not only preserved the nascent nation of Israel but also shaped its character. Interpreting the tales in sixty-one illuminated paintings and papercuts replete with imagery drawn from Jewish lore, academic bible studies, archeology, and science, Band offers an aesthetically luscious and intellectually vibrant visual midrash of these three women's tales of the Hebrew Bible. Commentary offering compelling explanations of their symbolism and meaning accompany the paintings, along with concise essays introducing the reader to the tales and their interpretation. Literary commentary by renowned scholar of Hebrew literature, Arnold J. Band, helps readers fully enjoy the skill of the biblical authors.

This beautifully-bound book offers not only pure enjoyment, but also a superb source for biblical text study and chanting. *Arise! Arise! Deborah, Ruth and Hannah* makes an unforgettable gift for the bat mitzvah, weddings and countless celebrations...or just for one's own pleasure.



PRAISE FOR
THE SONG OF SONGS: THE HONEYBEE IN THE GARDEN
AND
I WILL WAKE THE DAWN: ILLUMINATED PSALMS

...a contemporary masterpiece, a visual feast for art and Judaica lovers."

—Jewish Women Magazine

*....Band's great accomplishment has been to create art—skilled, erudite, and sensual—
and commentary that gives us the bigger picture."*

—Hadassah Magazine

...AND ADVANCE PRAISE FOR
ARISE! ARISE! DEBORAH, RUTH AND HANNAH

Debra Band's images and her written commentary create an imaginative space that is informed equally by personal experience and vast knowledge of Jewish tradition, as well as by modern science and archaeology. The vibrant, detailed, and often surprising images constitute a kind of visual midrash, a genuinely new element in the ages-old tradition of Jewish biblical interpretation. Together with the written commentary, they invite us to engage the biblical texts afresh, through study, prayer, and exploration of stories both ancient and contemporary.

The persistence, love, and hard-won victories of a few biblical women offer models for all people of faith.

This is a book to savor slowly and deeply.

—Ellen F. Davis

Amos Ragan Kearns Professor of Bible and Practical Theology, Duke Divinity School

We are fortunate to live in a time when not just the words but also the artwork of Jewish women can add to our understanding of traditional Jewish texts. Arise! Arise!, a new work of commentary and original illuminated paintings by Debra Band, explores the personalities of Deborah, Hannah, and Ruth, combining serious scholarship with artistic talent to create visual midrash. The word midrash comes from the Hebrew root meaning to explore,

to question, to demand meaning from a text. Band's visual midrash seamlessly integrates fascinating elements as diverse as history, archaeology, the geography of the land of Israel, rabbinic commentaries, Shakespeare, psychology, and women's prayers, all of which she brings to illuminate the Biblical text. Learned analysis of the texts as literature, written by well known professor of modern Hebrew literature Arnold Band, the author's father-in-law, accompany her own commentary, which is refracted through the prism of her personal spiritual experiences as a Jewish woman.

A welcome addition to the Jewish bookshelf and syllabi for adult education (and not just for women!), this gorgeous volume is certain to delight the eyes, challenge the mind, and nourish the soul.

—Rabbi Avis Miller

8"10", 208 pp., cloth-bound with jacket, 61 full-page paintings, full color throughout.
Available from November 2012

Retail price \$39.95 ISBN 978-0-9857996-0-1

Discounted bulk purchases are available for organizations.

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for retail, wholesale and organizational purchasing, and additional information.

Author talks available; please contact dband@dbandart.com for information.



FROM THE INTRODUCTION

“Awake! Awake!” Deborah cries, recounting the Israelite route of Sisera's Canaanite army, “Strike up the chant!” In words and paint, this book presents three biblical stories of women who stood up at crucial moments to take actions that not only preserved the nascent nation of Israel but also shaped its character. The illuminations that I offer here attempt not only to shed light on these deeds of three millennia ago but also to convey these biblical women's very human dramas.

The illuminations of these stories afford an opportunity to expand our experience and understanding of the biblical textual tradition by using visual imagery to convey not just aesthetic pleasure or narrative illustration—as delightful and meaningful as they are—but also the many layers of meaning embedded in the traditional interpretations of these biblical stories. I lead you into this range of meanings along a path strewn with a wide visual symbolic vocabulary adapted not only from the stories at hand but from a virtual ocean of related Jewish text traditions and from archaeology, diverse elements of Western culture, modern science, and my own experience as a twenty-first-century Jewish woman. Let me introduce you now to the origins of this work, the essential themes flowing through it, and the means by which I create these visual interpretations of the biblical texts....

The events of the three stories occur in the same central region of the Land of Israel in the same period: the decades preceding the establishment of the Israelite monarchy. As distant as these inspirational women and men are from our own day, their brave and ultimately triumphant responses to their own trials offer us a window into the historical community of the people of Israel. I hope that the illuminations and commentaries will bring deep understanding and satisfaction to you who read the stories, gaze at the paintings, and imagine yourselves confronted by the challenges faced by these biblical women and men. Arise, then, and join me on this journey back into the early communities of Israel.

DEBORAH

ILLUMINATIONS

FIVE & SIX

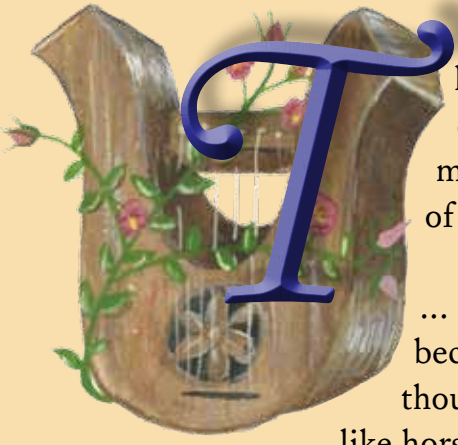
JUDGES 4:12-21



וַיִּגְדּוּ לְסִסְרָא כִּי עָלָה בָרַק בֶּן־אֲבִינָעַם הַר־תְּבוֹר:
 וַיִּזְעַק סִסְרָא אֶת־כָּל־רֶכֶבֹּ תְשֻׁעַ מְאוֹת רֶכֶב בְּרוֹק
 וְאֶת־כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ מִחֶרֶשֶׁת הַגּוֹזִים אֶל־נַחַל
 קִישׁוֹן: ¹² וַתֹּאמֶר דְּבֹרָה אֶל־בָּרַק קוּם כִּי זֶה הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר
 נָתַן יְהוָה אֶת־סִסְרָא בְיַדְּךָ הֲלֹא יְהוָה יֵצֵא לְפָנֶיךָ וַיִּרֶד
 בָּרַק מִהַר תְּבוֹר וַעֲשֶׂרֶת אֲלָפִים אִישׁ אַחֲרָיו: ¹³ וַיְהִים
 יְהוָה אֶת־סִסְרָא וְאֶת־כָּל־הַרֶכֶב וְאֶת־כָּל־הַמַּחֲנֶה
 לְפִי־חֶרֶב לְפָנֵי בָרַק וַיִּרֶד סִסְרָא מֵעַל הַמְּרֻכָבָה וַיִּנְס
 בְּרַגְלָיו: ¹⁴ וּבָרַק רָדַף אַחֲרָיִם הַרֶכֶב וְאַחֲרֵי הַמַּחֲנֶה עַד
 חֶרֶשֶׁת הַגּוֹזִים וַיַּפֵּל כָּל־מַחֲנֶה סִסְרָא לְפִי־חֶרֶב לֹא
 נִשְׁאַר עַד־אַחֵר: ¹⁵ וְסִסְרָא נָס בְּרַגְלָיו אֶל־אֹהֶל יַעֲל
 אִשֶׁת חֶבֶר הַקֵּינִי כִּי שָׁלוֹם בֵּין יָבִין מֶלֶךְ־חֶצְרוֹן וּבֵין
 בֵּית חֶבֶר הַקֵּינִי: ¹⁶ וַתֵּצֵא יַעֲל לְקִרְאֵת סִסְרָא וַתֹּאמֶר
 אֵלָיו סוּרָה אֲדֹנָי סוּרָה אֵלַי אֶל־תִּירָא וַיִּסֵּר אֵלֶיהָ
 הָאֹהֶל וַתִּכְסְהוּ בְשִׁמְכָהּ: ¹⁷ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ הַשְׁקִינִי־נָא
 מִצֶּט־מַיִם כִּי צָמְאֵתִי וַתִּפְתַּח אֶת־נְאוֹד הַחֶלֶב וַתִּשְׁקֶהוּ
 וַתִּכְסְהוּ: ¹⁸ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ עֲמֹד פְּתַח הָאֹהֶל וְהָיָה אִם־אִישׁ
 יָבוֹא וּשְׂאֵלְךָ וְאָמַר הִישָׁפָה אִישׁ וְאָמַרְתְּ אֵין: ¹⁹ וַתִּקַּח
 יַעֲל אִשֶׁת־חֶבֶר אֶת־יָתֵד הָאֹהֶל וַתִּשֶׂם אֶת־הַמַּקְבֵּת
 בְּיָדָהּ וַתְּבוֹא אֵלָיו בְּלֹאט וַתִּתְקַע אֶת־הַיָּתֵד בְּרִקְתּוֹ
 וַתִּצְנַח בְּאָרֶץ וְהוּא־נֹרֵדִים וַיִּזְעַף וַיָּמָת:

¹²Sisera was informed that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. ¹³So Sisera ordered all his chariots—nine hundred iron chariots—and all the troops he had to move from Harosheth-goiim to the Wadi Kishon. ¹⁴Then Deborah said to Barak, “Up! This is the day on which the Lord will deliver Sisera into your hands: the Lord is marching before you.” Barak charged down Mount Tabor, followed by the ten thousand men, ¹⁵and the Lord threw Sisera and all his chariots and army into a panic before the onslaught of Barak. Sisera leaped from his chariot and fled on foot ¹⁶as Barak pursued the chariots and the soldiers as far as Harosheth-goiim. All of Sisera’s soldiers fell by the sword; not a man was left. ¹⁷Sisera, meanwhile, had fled on foot to the tent of Jael, wife of Heber the Kenite, for there was friendship between King Jabin of Hazor and the family of Heber the Kenite. ¹⁸Jael came out to greet Sisera and said to him, “Come in, my lord, come in here, do not be afraid.” So he entered her tent, and she covered him with a blanket. ¹⁹He said to her, “Please let me have some water; I am thirsty.” She opened a skin of milk and gave him some to drink; and she covered him again. ²⁰He said to her, “Stand at the entrance of the tent. If anybody comes and asks you if there is anybody here, say no.” ²¹Then Jael wife of Heber took a tent pin and grasped the mallet. When he was fast asleep from exhaustion, she approached him stealthily and drove the pin through his temple till it went down to the ground. Thus he died.

COMMENTARY



he battle! “The weariless roaring of horses, chariots and spearmen ... ever upon them,” Homer wrote of a moment in the Trojan War.¹ Much more recently, the soldier-poet, Brian Turner, described the experience of an improvised explosive device (IED) in the Iraq War:

... it’s just as well his eardrums ruptured because it lends the world a certain calm though the traffic circle is filled with people like horses in a carousel, turning

and turning the way tires spin on the Humvee flipped to its side, the gunner’s hatch he was thrown from a mystery to him now, a dark hole...²

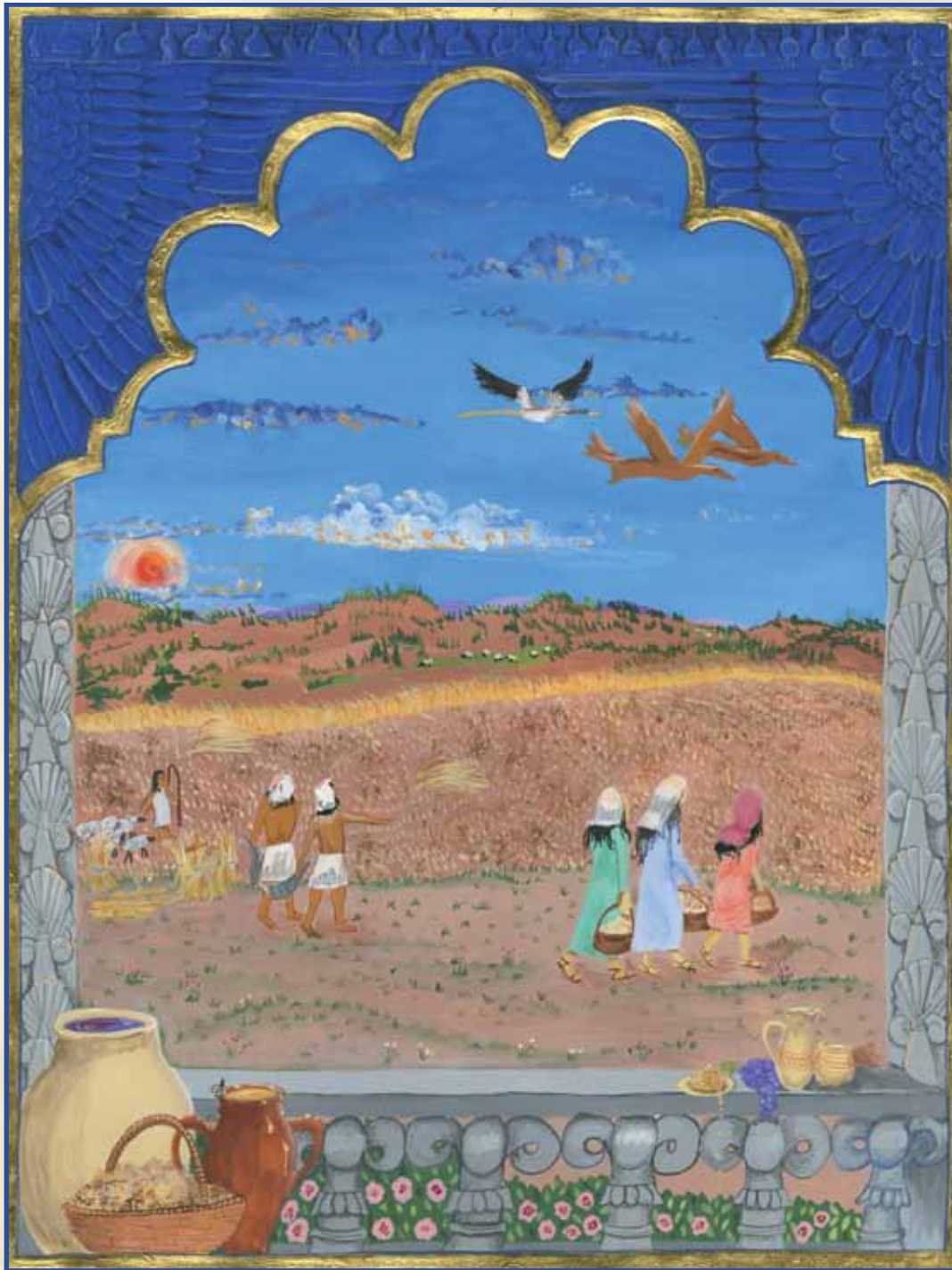
Soldiers across all time and all cultures have described the compulsive blood-soaked confusion of battle. These paintings attempt to capture the chaotic turbulence into which the Israelite soldiers plunged as they fought Sisera’s fearsome army.

The English illumination at right presents the battle that ensued as Barak led his tribal army into Sisera’s forces at the bank of Wadi³ Kishon, as it flooded with winter rains (and became *nahal*, or “stream,” Kishon, as in the Hebrew). Wildly flashing arrows, spears, and sickle axes, ramming shields, slippery, spurting blood and rearing battle-horses crowd the soldiers’ perceptions. The epic poem that constitutes chapter 5 (see Illuminations 9 through 11) describes the ferocious battle, the prophet-poet exhorting herself to “march on, my soul, with courage,” in the face of flailing hooves and charging warriors.

The Hebrew illumination at left presents an image of Jael, wife of a Kenite farmer allied with the Israelite tribes. She looms out of the blood-redness, as she steels herself to smash the tent pin into the skull of the slumbering Sisera. Midrash embellishes the attentions that the woman used to disarm the exhausted and thirsty general:

When Jael saw him approach, she went to meet him arrayed in rich garments and jewels. She was unusually beautiful, and her voice was the most seductive ever a woman possessed. These are the words she addressed to him: “Enter and refresh thyself with food, and sleep until evening, and then I will send my attendants with thee to accompany thee, for I know thou wilt not forget me, and thy recompense will not fail.” When Sisera, on stepping into her tent, saw the bed strewn with roses that Jael had prepared for him, he resolved to take her home to his mother as his wife, as soon as his safety should be assured.⁴

COMMENTARY CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE OF BOOK.



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