# Three Women, Two Homes: Devorah's War

Rachel Sharansky Danziger \* January 16th 2023 \* Houses, Divided: Families in Judges #2

#### 1: Unexpected means

# Judges 4:4-11

שופטים ד':ד'-י"א

(4) Deborah, wife of Lappidoth, was a prophetess; she led Israel at that time. (5) She used to sit under the Palm of Deborah, between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites would come to her for decisions. (6) She summoned Barak son of Abinoam, of Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, has commanded: Go, march up to Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun. (7) And I will draw Sisera, Jabin's army commander, with his chariots and his troops, toward you up to the Wadi Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hands." (8) But Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, I will go; if not, I will not go." (9) "Very well, I will go with you," she answered. "However, there will be no glory for you in the course you are taking, for then the LORD will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman." So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh. (10) Barak then mustered Zebulun and Naphtali at Kedesh; ten thousand men marched up after him; and Deborah also went up with him. (11) Now Heber the Kenite had separated from the other Kenites, b descendants of Hobab, father-in-law of Moses, and had pitched his tent at Elon-bezaanannim, which is near Kedesh.

(ד) וּדְבוֹרָה אָשָׁה נָבִיאֹה אָשֶׁת לפִּידוֹת הַיָּא שֹפִּטָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵלְ בַּעֵת הָהִיא: (ה) וְהִיא יוֹשֶׂבֶת תַּחַת־תֹּמֶר דְּבוֹרָה בֵּין הַרַמֵה וּבֵין בֵּית־אֵל בָּהַר אֵפָרָיֶם וַיַּעַלוּ אֵלֵיהַ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לַמִשְׁפַּטּ (ו) וַתִּשְׁלָּח וַתִּקְרַא לְבַרָק בָּוְ־ אַבִינֿעַם מִקֶּדָשׁ נַפְתַּלִי וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלֵיו הַלֹּא צְנָהו ה' אֱלֹהֵי־יִשֹּׁרָאֵל לֵךְ וּמַשַּׁכְתַּ'בָּהַר תַבוֹר וִלַקַחָתַּ עִמָּךָ עֲשֶׁרָת אֱלַפִּים אָישׁ מִבְּנֵי נָפְתַּלִי וּמִבְּנֵי זְבַלְוּן: (ז) וּמַשַׁבְתַּי אֶלֵיךְ אֵל־ נַחַל קִישׁוֹן אֶת־סִיסְרַא שַּׁר־צָבָא יַבִּין וְאֵת־ ַרְכָבוֹ וָאֵת־הֲמוֹנוֹ וּנְתַתִּיהוּ בִּיַבֵּךְ: (ח) וַיֹּאמֵר אֶלֶיהַ בַּרַק אָם־תַּלְכֵי עָמָי וְהַלַּכָתִי וְאָם־לֹא תַלְכֵי עָמַי לֹא אֱלֶךְ: (ט) וַתֹּאמֵר הַלֹּךְ אֱלֶךְ ֹעְמַּרְ אֵפֶס כִּי לֹא תִהִיֵה תִּפְאַרְתִּךְּ עַל־הַדֵּרֵר אַשֶׁר אַתָּה הוֹלֶךְ כִּי בַיַד־אִשַּׂה יִמְכָּר ה' אֵת־ ּסֵיסָרָא וַתָּקָם דִּבוֹרָה וַתֵּלֵךְ עִם־בַּרָק קֵדְשַׁהּ (י) וַיַּזְעֵלְק בַּרַ׳ק אֵת־זִבוּלְן וְאֵת־נַפְתַּלְי ֹקֵּדְשָׁה וַיַּעַל בְּרַגִּלַיו עַשֵּׂרָת אַלְפֵּי אָישׁ וַתַּעַל עִמֹן דָבוֹרָה: (יא) וְחֶבֶר הַקֵּינִי נְפָרָד מְקּיֹיָן מְבָּנֵי חֹבַב חֹתֵן משֶׁה וַיֵּט אֲהַלוֹ עַד־אֵילוֹן (בצענים) [בְּצַעַנַנִּים] אֲשֵׁר אֵת־קֵדשׁ:

### Judges 4:14-16

שופטים ד':י"ד-ט"ז

(14) Then 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, (15) and 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 (16) as Barak pursued the chariots and the soldiers as far as Harosheth-goilm. All of Sisera's soldiers fell by the sword; not a man was left.

(יד) וַתּאמֶר ְּדְבֹּרָה אֶל־בָּרָק קֹּוּם כִּי זֶה הַיּוּם אֲשֶׁר נְתַּוֹ ה' אֶת־סִיסְרָא ֹבְּיָדֶׁךְ הֲלֹא ה' יָצָא לְפָנֶיךְ וַיֻּרֶד בָּרָק מֵהַר תְּבוֹר וַצְשֶׁרָת אֲלָפִים כָּל־הָרֶכֶב וְאֶת־כָּל־הַמַּחֲנֶה לְפִי־חֶרֶב לִפְנֵי (טז) וּבָרָק רָדֵף אַחֲבִי הָרֶכֶב וְאַחֲבִי הַפְּנְי חַרְשֶׁת הַגּוֹיָם וַיִּפֵּל כָּל־מַחֲנֶה סִיסְרָא לְפִי־חֶלֶר לֹא נִשְׁאַך עַד־אֶחָד:

#### 2. An Unexpected arena

## Judges 4:17-22

שופטים ד':י"ז-כ"ב

(17) Sisera, 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. (18) Jael 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. (19) He 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. (20) He said to her, "Stand at the entrance of the tent. If anybody comes and asks you if there is anybody here, say 'No.'" (21) Then 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. (22) Now Barak appeared in pursuit of Sisera. Jael went out to greet him and said, "Come, I will show you the man you are looking for." He went inside with her, and there Sisera was lying dead, with the pin in his temple.

(יז) וְסִיסְרַא ׁנַס בַּרַגִּלַיו אֱל־אְהֵל יַעֵּל אָשֶׁת חֶבֶר הַקּינֵי כִּי שַׁלוֹם בֵּין יַבִין מֶלֶךְ־חַצוֹר וּבֶּין בֵּיִת חֵבֶר הַקֵּינִי (יח) וַתָּצֵא יַעֵל ֹלְקָרָאת סִיסְרָא וַתּאמֶר אֶלַיו סוֹרָה אֵדֹנָי סוֹרָה אֵלַי אַל־תִּירָא וַיַּסֶר אֶלֵיּהַ הַאֹהֶלָה וַתִּכְּפָּהוּ בַּשִּׂמִיכַה: (יט) ַוּיָּאמֵר אֵלֶיָהַ הַשָּׁקִינִי־נַא מִעַט־מַיֵם כִּי צמאתי ותפתח את־נאוד החלב וַתִּשְׁקָהוּ וַתִּכַפֶּהוּ (כ) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֵיהַ עַמֹּד פַתַח הַאָהֶל וִהַיָה אָם־אִישׁ יַבֹּא וּשְׁאֵלֶךְ וָאַמֶר הַיָשׁ־פָּה אִישׁ וָאַמַרתּ אַיִן. (כא) ַוֹתִּקַח יַעֵל אֱשֶׁת־חֵבֶּר אֱת־יִתַּד הַאֹּהֵל ַוֹתָשֵׂם אֵת־הַמַּקֵבֶת בִּיָדָה וַתַּבוֹא אֵלָיו` בַּלָּאט וַתִּתָקָע אֵת־הַיָּתֶד בּרַקַּתוֹ וַתִּצְנַח בָּאָרֶץ וְהְוּא־נְרְדָּם וַיָּעַף וַיָּמִתּ (כב) ְוְהִנָּה בָרָק רֹדֵף אֶת־סִיסְרָאֹ וַתַּצֵא יָעֵל` לָקָרָאתוֹ וַתִּאמֶר לוֹ לֵךְ וְאַרְאֵׂךְ אֵת־ האַישׁ אשר־אתה מבקשׁ ויבא אַלִּיה וָהְנָה סִיסְרָא נֹפֵל מֶת וְהַיַּתֶד בְּרַקּתְוֹּי

#### Judges 5:24-27

שופטים ה':כ"ד-כ"ז

(24) Most blessed of women be Jael,
Wife of Heber the Kenite,
Most blessed of women in tents. (25) He asked for
water, she offered milk;
In a princely bowl she brought him curds. (26) Her [left]
hand reached for the tent pin,
Her right for the workmen's hammer.
She struck Sisera, crushed his head,
Smashed and pierced his temple. (27) At her feet he
sank, lay outstretched,

(כד) תִּבֹרֶךְ מִנַּשִּׁים יַעֵּל אֲשֵׁת חֲבֵר מְנַשִׁים בַּאֹהֵל הַקֵּינֵיֶ (כה) מַיָם שַׁאַל חַלַב תברה: בַּסַפַל אַדִּירִים הָקָרִיבה נַתַנָה (כו) יַדַה ֹלַיַּתֶד חַמְאַה: וִימִינַהָּ לְהַלְמִוּת תִּשָׁלַחִנַה וָהָלְמָה סֵיסָרָא מָחֲקָה עַמֵלְיִם וּמָחַצָה וְחַלְפַה ראשו (כז) בֵּין רַגְלֵיהַ כָּרַע נָפַּל ַרַקָּתְוֹי בֵין רַגְלֵיּהָ ׁכָּרַע שָׁכֶב בַּאַשֵּׁר כַּרַע שַׁם נַפַּל נַפַל ּשַׁדְוּד:

At her feet he sank, lay still; Where he sank, there he lay—destroyed.

#### 3: Yael's dark mirror

#### Judges 5:28-30

שופטים ה':כ"ח-ל'

(28) Through the window peered Sisera's mother, Behind the lattice she whined:

"Why is his chariot so long in coming?

Why so late the clatter of his wheels?" (29) The wisest of her ladies give answer;

She, too, replies to herself: (30) "They must be dividing the spoil they have found:

A damsel or two for each man, Spoil of dyed cloths for Sisera,

Spoil of embroidered cloths,

A couple of embroidered cloths Round every neck as spoil."

(כח) בִּעַד הַחַלוֹן נִשְׁקְפַה וַתִּיבֵּב אָם סִיסְרָא בְּעַד מַדּוֹּעַ בּשָשׁ רָכִבּוֹ הָאֶשְׁנָב מַדוּעַ אָחֶרוּ פַּעַמֵי לבוא מַרכִּבוֹתַיו: (כט) חַכִמוֹת אף־היא שָׂרוֹתֵיָהַ תַּעֵנֵינָה (ל) הַלאֿ תַּשִׁיב אַמַרִיהַ לַהּיּ רַחָם יִמְצָאוֹ יִחַלְּקוּ שַׁלֵּל רַחֲמַתַיִּם לְרִאשׁ גָּבֶר צְבָעִים ׁלְסִיסְרַא צֶבַע רָקְמַתְיֵם צבעים רקמה

### 4: A new era's song

#### **Judges 5:1-5**

שופטים ה':א'-ה'

לְצַוָּארֵי שַׁלֵלּי

(1) On that day Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang:

(2) When locks go untrimmed-b in Israel,

When people dedicate themselves—

Bless the LORD!

(3) Hear, O kings! Give ear, O potentates!

I will sing, will sing to the LORD,

Will hymn the LORD, the God of Israel.

(4) O LORD, when You came forth from Seir,

Advanced from the country of Edom,

The earth trembled;

The heavens dripped,

Yea, the clouds dripped water, (5) The mountains

quaked—

Before the LORD, Him of Sinai,

Before the LORD, God of Israel.

(א) וַתַּשָׁר דִּבוֹרָה וּבַרַק בֵּן־ בַּיּוֹם הַהוָּא אַבִינֹעָם לאמר: ֹב) בִּפָּרֹעַ פִּרַעוֹת (ב) בִּהִתְנַדֵּכֻ עֲם בִּישָׂרַאֶל (ג) שָׁמִעוּ מִלַּכִים בַרכוּ ה'. 'אנכ*י* לה הַאַזִינוּ רוֹנְיֶם 'אַזַּמֵּלר לַה אַנֹכִי אַשִּׂירָה אַלקי ישראַל. (ד) ה' בַּצֵאתָךָ מִשֵּׂעִיר בצעַדָּרָ מִשַּׂדָה אֱדוֹם אָרֵץ רַעַשָּׁה גַם־עַבִים גַם־שָׁמַיֵם נָטָפוּ נָטְפוּ מַיִם: (ה) הַרִים נַזְלוּ 'מִפְּנֵי ה' זָה סִינֵי מִפְּנֵי ה' אַלקי ישראַל.

# Judges 4:23-24

שופטים ד':כ"ג-כ"ד

(23) On that day God subdued King Jabin of Canaan before the Israelites. (24) The hand of the Israelites bore harder and harder on King Jabin of Canaan, until they destroyed King Jabin of Canaan.

(כג) וַיַּכְנַע אֱלֹקִים בַּיּוֹם הַהוֹּא אֵת יָבִין מֶלֶהְ־ כְּנָעַן לִפְנֵי בְּנִי יִשְּׂרָאֵלּי (כד) וַתֵּלֶּהְ יֻד בְּנִי־ יִשְׂרָאֵל הָלִוֹךְ וְלֶשָׁה עַל יָבִין מֶלֶּה־כְּנָעַן עַד אֲשֶׁר הִכְרִיתוּ אֵת יָבִין מֶלֶּךְ־כְּנָעַן. {פּ}

## 5: Closing a chapter

#### Exodus 15:14-17

(14) The peoples hear, they tremble; Agony grips the dwellers in Philistia.

(15) Now are the clans of Edom dismayed;

The tribes of Moab—trembling grips them;

All the dwellers in Canaan are aghast.

(16) Terror and dread descend upon them;

Through the might of Your arm they are still as stone—

Till Your people cross over, ה',

Till Your people cross whom You have ransomed.

(17) You will bring them and plant them in Your own mountain,

The place You made to dwell in, ה',

The sanctuary, O my lord, which Your hands established.

שמות ט"ו:י"ד-י"ז

(יד) שָׁמִעוּ עַמִּיִם

יִרנָּזוּן חִיל אָחַז ישִׁבֵי

(טו) אָז נִבְהֲלוּ פּֿלֵשֶׁתּי (טו) אַלּוּפֵי אֱדוֹם אֵילֵי מוֹאָב

יְאחֲזֻבּׁוֹ רָעַד נְּמֹגוֹּ כֹּלְ יִשְׁבֵי

כָנֶעָן: (טוֹ) תִּפֹּל עֲלֵיהֵם

אֵימָתָה (וָפַּחַד בִּגִדֹל וְרוֹעֵךָ,

ֿיִדְמוּ כָּאָבֶן עַד־יַעֲבֹר עַמְּדְ

עַד־יַעַבֹרָ עַם־זְוּ

ֹקנֵיתַ: (יז) תִּבְאֵמוֹ וִתְטַּעֲמוֹ

בְּהַר נַחֲלֶתְה מָכוֹן לְשִׁבִּתִּהְ

מִקְדַשׁ אדושם 'פַּעַלָתַ ה

כוֹנְנְוֹ יַדֵיהָ.

#### 5. Motherhood

# **Judges 5:6-8**

(6) In the days of Shamgar son of Anath,-d In the days of Jael, caravans ceased, And wayfarers went

By roundabout paths. (7) Deliverance ceased,

Ceased in Israel,

Till you arose, O Deborah,

Arose, O mother, in Israel! (8) When they chose new gods,

Was there a fighter then in the gates?<sup>-g</sup>

No shield or spear was seen

Among forty thousand in Israel!

שופטים ה':ו'-ח'

(ו) בִּימֵ׳ שַׁמְגַּר בֶּן־עֲנָת בִּימֵ׳ יַעֵל חַדָלןּ אַרַחוָת וְהֹלְכֵי

נָתִיבוֹת יֵלְכוֹּ אֲרַחוְת

עֲקַלְקַלְוֹת: (ז) חָדְלוּ פְּרָזוֶון בִּישְׂרָאֵל חָדֵלִוּ עַד שַׁקַּמְתִּי

דְבוֹרָה שַׁקַּמְתִּי אֵם

בִּישָׂרָאֵלּ (ח) יִבְחַר אֱלֹקִים בִּישֹׂרָאֵל

חַדָשִׂים אָז לָחֶם שְׁעָרִים מָגֵן אָם־יֵרָאֵה (וַרֹמַח בָּאַרְבַּעִים

ָאֶלֶף בְּיִשְׂרָאֵלּי

מלבי"ם על שופטים ה':ז':ג'

שקמתי אם בישראל: ימליץ כאילו כבר נשבת ישראל מהיות עם ועתה נולדו מחדש והיא האם היולדת את הגוי כולו.

#### 6: A mother's wisdom

### Judges 5:9-18

(9) My heart is with Israel's leaders, With the dedicated of the people—

Bless the LORD! (10) You riders on tawny she-asses,

You who sit on saddle rugs,

And you wayfarers, declare it! (11) Louder than the sound of archers,-h

There among the watering places

Let them chant the gracious acts of the LORD,

His gracious deliverance of Israel.

Then did the people of the LORD

March down to the gates! (12) Awake, awake, O Deborah!

Awake, awake, strike up the chant!

Arise, O Barak;

Take your captives, O son of Abinoam!

(13) Then was the remnant made victor over the mighty,

The LORD's people won my victory over the warriors.

(14) From Ephraim came they whose roots are in Amalek;

After you, your kin Benjamin;

From Machir came down leaders,

From Zebulun such as hold the marshal's staff. (15) And

Issachar's chiefs were with Deborah;

As Barak, so was Issachar—Rushing after him into the valley. Among the clans of Reuben Were great decisions of heart.

(16) Why then did you stay among the sheepfolds And listen as they pipe for the flocks? Among the clans of Reuben Were

great searchings of heart! (17) Gilead tarried beyond the

Jordan; And Dan—why did he linger by the ships?-j

#### Asher remained at the seacoast

And tarried at his landings. (18) Zebulun is a people that mocked at death, Naphtali—on the open heights.

Genesis 49:13-15

(13) Zebulun shall dwell by the seashore; He shall be a haven for ships, And his flank shall rest on Sidon. (14) Issachar is a strong-boned ass, Crouching among the **sheepfolds**. (15) When he saw how good was security, And how pleasant was the country, He bent his shoulder to the burden, And became a toiling serf.

שופטים ה':ט'-י"ח

(ט) לְבִּי ֹלְחוֹקְקֵי

ישראל הַמְּתִנַּדְּבִיִם בָּעָם בָּרְכוּ

(י) רֹכָבֵי אַתֹנוֹת

.'⊓

ישָׁבֵי עַל־מַדְיֵן וְהֹלְכֵי צחרות

עַל־דֶּרֶךְ שִׂיחוּ. (יא) מָקוֹל

מְחָצִצִים בֵּין מַשְׁאַבִּים

ֹיְתַנּוּ ׁצִדְקוֹת ה' צָדָקֹת פַּרָזוֹנוֹ

בִּישִׂרִים אָז יַרְדוּ לַשְּׁעַרִים

(יב) עוּרָי עוּרִי (יב) עם־ה':

עוּרי עוּרי דּבַּרי־ דבורה

קום בַּרָק וִשְׁבֶה שֶׁבִיךָ לַעֻיר

בֶּן־אֲבִינְעַם: (יג) אָז יִרַד שָּׂרִיׁד

לְאַדִּירָיִם עָם ה' יִרַד־לָי

(יד) מַנֵּי אֶפַרִיִם בַּגִּבּוֹרִים:

שַׁרִשָּׁם בּעֵמָלֶק אַחַבִיךּ בִנִיָמִיֶן

> ַמְגָי מַכִיר יַרדוּ בַעַמָמֵיך

מחקקקים ומובולן משכים בשבט

ספר: (טו) וְשַׂרָי בִּיִשַּׁשׁכַר'עִם־

וִישַּׁשׁכַר ֹכֵּן בַּרַק בַּעָמֵק דברה

שָׁלָח בָּרָגִלַיִוֹ בִּפְלַגִּוֹת רְאוּבֵן

(טז) לַמה גִּדֹלָיִם חָקָקֵי־לֶבּיּ

יַשַׂבָתַ בֵּין הַמִּשִׁפִּתַיִם לשמע

שָׁרְקוֹת עַדָרְיִם לְפְּלַגְּוֹת רְאוּבֵּן

גָּדוֹלְיִם חָקָרֵי־לֶב: (יז) גִּלְעֵׂד

בִּעָבֵר הַיַּרִדּן שָׁכֵּן וְדָּן לָמַה יָגוּר

אָנִיוֹת אָשֵׂריָשַבֹּלְחְוֹף

יַמִּים וְעַל מִפְרַצַיִו יִשְׁכַוֹן: (יח)

זָבָלוון עַם חֶרֶף נַפָּשׁוֹ לַמוּת

וְנַפְתַּלְיִ עַלְ מִרוֹמֵי שַׂדֵה.

בראשית מ"ט:י"ג-ט"ו

(יג) זְבוּלָן לְחָוֹף יַמָּיִם יִשָּׁכֹּן וְהוּא ֹלְחְוֹף אַנִיֹּת וְיַרְכַתוֹ עַל־צִידֹן: {פּ} (יד) יִשַּׂשׁכַר חַמֹר גַרם רבֶץ בֵּין הַמִּשְׁפַּתַיִם: (טו) וַיַּרָא מְנָחַה ֹכֵּי טוֹב וְאֵת־הַאַרֵץ כִּי נַעֲמַה וַיֵּט שָׁכְמוֹ לְסָבֹּל וַיָהָיִ לְמַס־עֹבֵד: {ס}