

Irony abounds this coming week. We leave Egypt, and we also manage to defeat Sisera (with the help of a somewhat aggravated Yael). In both cases a song is sung, and women are rather important for the resolution of the incident.

Taking a look at the Torah reading first - after the Israelites knew they were safe, Miriam and the women took out the band instruments and had a jam session on the shore, riffing on the chorus "I sing to God who is really tops, horse and rider got upped into the sea."

Band instruments?

Really?

How many people include instruments in their evacuation bag?

Should we?

It doesn't feel that practical, except when it is. If you never feel the need to celebrate, then missing your instrument will never happen. If you anticipate celebrating, you know that somebody will complain if the instrument is missing.

In the prophetic section, we read the story of the battle of Barak against Sisera. Barak went to the Judge Deborah for her advice, and sought her presence in the army command post. She reminded him he would win either way, but Sisera would not be killed by him if she went with. He demanded she come, so Sisera wound up running away. He went to stay with some folks who were more neutral, and only Yael was there. She encouraged him to stay, and fed him things which would help him feel his exhaustion, at which point she killed him. When the Israelites came looking, she showed them their dead enemy, and the battle was over.

Then Deborah sang.

Among the things she mentions are the tribes which were too busy to show up. The closer ones kept sending the matter back to committee for further discussion, and there was reportedly great debate upon the matter.

Talking about something when action is necessary is not a new human failing, and it crosses political lines. All parties can think of something which "needs doing" that keeps being discussed. A fun project in preparation for Purim could be rewriting her song in an even-handed improv mode, skewering all and sundry.

Just think if there had been an "Exodus packing committee" back in Egypt.

In the end, I guess we can just be glad that 1) the women ignored the reasonable advice and packed their timbrels and 2) a guy named "thunder" did not feel the need to always be the center of attention. Perhaps we can try and be a bit more like them.