

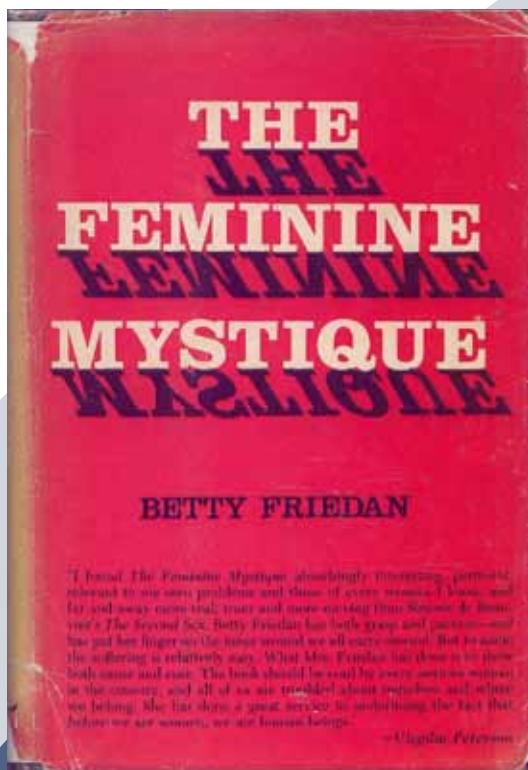
Sacred Stories

A Living Commentary on American Jewish History and the Hebrew Bible

PINCHAS JUNE 29, 2013

Be Inspired

By Rabbi Brad Hirschfield



Artifact:

The Feminine Mystique

Betty Friedan, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1963

National Museum of American Jewish History

Gift of Arlyn Hochberg Miller

Located in the Women's Rights case, behind the large film screens, on the second floor

Be Inspired

Sacred Stories **PINCHAS**

Do you have a big question about how the world works, or a sense that somehow your life could be different and better than it already is? Do you feel that you have more to offer, or deserve better than you seem to be getting? You are not alone. This week is your opportunity to be inspired by some very special women who have not only felt those feelings, but have done something about them.

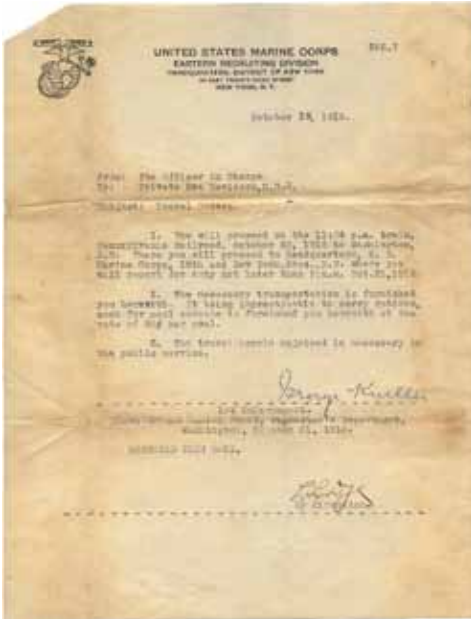
Who are these great women? Their names are Betty Friedan, Corporal Eva Davidson and Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirza – the daughters of Zelophehad, mentioned in Numbers 27:1. Each of these heroic women dared to think about their lives in unprecedented ways, ways that created opportunities for generations to follow, both women and men.

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Betty Friedan writes in *The Feminine Mystique*, “We can no longer ignore that voice within women that says ‘I want something more than my husband and my children and my home.’” Whether one agrees with her about that desire or not, Friedan’s insistence that we pay attention to voices and aspirations within ourselves, and within others, is both profound and beautiful. It is nothing less than a call for greater awareness of each person’s fundamental dignity and the sacredness of the freedom to pursue its realization.

The same can be said for Eva Davidson and the 299 other young women who made the revolutionary decision to volunteer for the Marine Corps in 1918. How can we not feel inspired by these women who imagined that there was a place for them even though nobody had told them so and dared to go where no women had gone before in order to claim that place and status?

Just as Friedan stood on the shoulders of Davidson, they both stood on the shoulders of Zelophehad's five daughters who, according to the story, approached Moses with the unprecedented request that they inherit their father's possessions "even though" they were "only" daughters and not sons. Moses turned to God for guidance and God said yes, these women should inherit.



I don't know what those five daughters looked like, but we can imagine them with faces like Corporal Davidson and Betty Friedan's, the faces of strong women courageous enough to challenge preexisting limitations on the female gender. They remind us all that we must listen to the voices within and dare to ask bold questions, for ourselves and for others.

Rabbi Brad Hirschfeld, President of CLAL, has been ranked several years in a row in *Newsweek* as one of America's "50 Most Influential Rabbis," and recognized as one of our nation's top "Preachers & Teachers," by *Beliefnet.com*.

ARTIFACTS:

The Feminine Mystique (Cover)
 Betty Friedan, New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1963
 National Museum of American Jewish History
 Gift of Arlyn Hochberg Miller

Orders of Eva Davidson, New York, 1918 (Interior)
 National Museum of American Jewish History
 Gift of Judge Murray C. Goldman in memory of his cousin Eva Davidson Radbill
 Located in the World War I gallery on the third floor



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About this partnership:

Both the Jewish People and the United States of America are rooted in a quest for greater freedom and human dignity. Inspired by this parallelism, the National Museum of American Jewish History is collaborating with Clal—The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership and its Rabbis Without Borders program to launch a new initiative, **Sacred Stories: A Living Commentary on the Hebrew Bible and American Jewish History**.

Sacred Stories weaves together Judaism's foundational sacred text, the Torah, with one of the most successful expressions of freedom in human history, the story of Jewish life in America. **Sacred Stories** explores our shared values by linking these two vital and compelling stories through contemporary commentary and 21st century media.

The **Torah** is a central feature of Jewish tradition. Used to refer generally to Jewish wisdom, it also refers specifically to the 5 Books of Moses which makes up the Hebrew Bible. A portion of the Torah text, a **Parsha**, is read on **Shabbat** (Sabbath). The whole Torah is read sequentially over the course of the year. Shabbat is the Jewish day of rest and begins on Friday evenings and ends Saturday night. Many Jews observe Shabbat to emulate God's resting on the seventh day of Creation. The fourth commandment is to keep Shabbat holy which Jews do with festive meals, resting, and learning.



The National Museum of American Jewish History, on Independence Mall in Philadelphia, presents educational programs and experiences that preserve, explore and celebrate the history of Jews in America. Its purpose is to connect Jews more closely to their heritage and to inspire in people of all backgrounds a greater appreciation for the diversity of the American Jewish experience and the freedoms to which Americans aspire.



Clal—The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership is a think tank, leadership training institute, and resource center. Bringing Jewish insights to a wide American audience, Clal makes Jewish wisdom an accessible public resource. A leader in religious pluralism, Clal builds bridges across communities to encourage diversity and openness. Linking Jewish texts and tradition with innovative scholarship, Clal promotes Jewish participation in American civic and spiritual life, reinvigorating communities and enhancing leadership development.