



Text Study Shifra and Pua

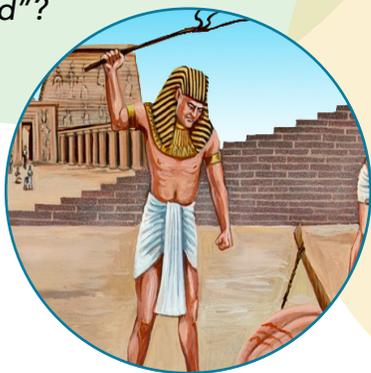
What motivates the courageous midwives Shifra and Pua to save the Jewish boys?

Exodus 1:15-21 (translation NJPS)

I. The king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shifra and the other Pua, saying, "When you deliver the Hebrew women, look at the birthstool: if it is a boy, kill him; if it is a girl, let her live." The midwives, fearing G-d, did not do as the king of Egypt had told them; they let the boys live.

>> Why did Pharaoh seek to kill only the boys?

>> What do you think it means that they "feared G-d"?



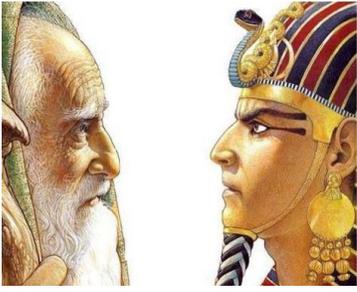
II. So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, letting the boys live?" The midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women: they are vigorous. Before the midwife can come to them, they have given birth."

>> Do you think Shifra and Pua are Jewish? Why? Does that matter?

>> This is the first recorded act of civil disobedience (in the Torah). Can you think of others in history?

III. G-d dealt well with the midwives; and the [Israelite] people multiplied and increased greatly. And because the midwives feared G-d, He established households for them.

>> Why is this a particularly fitting reward for the midwives?



"Be strong and courageous": a diverse collection of thoughts on courage

1. "In a place where nobody is acting like a mensch, be the mensch."
- Hillel in Pirkei Avot (Talmud)



2. "Courage is the price that life exacts for granting peace."
- Amelia Earhart



3. "The most courageous act is still to think for yourself. Aloud."
- Coco Chanel



4. "You cannot swim for new horizons until you have courage to lose sight of the shore."
- William Faulkner



5. "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."
- Nelson Mandela

6. "Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."
- Winston Churchill



7. "Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says I'll try again tomorrow."
- Mary Anne Radmacher



8. "The secret to happiness is freedom... And the secret to freedom is courage."
- Thucydides

9. "Courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage, you can't practice any other virtue consistently."
- Maya Angelou



10. "People with courage and character always seem sinister to the rest."
- Hermann Hesse



1. Which three quotes do you most agree with? Why?
2. Do you disagree with any of these? Which?
3. What does courage look like in 2021?
4. When did you see courage up close?