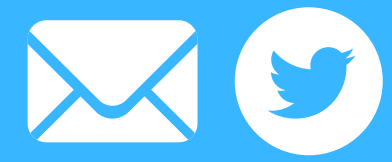




# PARSHA PAGES



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Created by Adele Nemirov

## • SHEMOS - שמות •

### WHAT HAPPENS IN THIS WEEK'S PARSHA?

This week, we start the second book of the Torah - **Shemos**! The Parsha begins by listing the names of **Yaakov's** children and telling us that **70 people** went down to Egypt. As the new generation begins, the Jewish people's population grows extremely quickly. This frightens the new **Pharaoh**, and he announces a decree: sly but total **enslavement** of the Jews. He also commands the **midwives** to kill the Jewish baby boys by throwing them into the **Nile River**. A baby boy is born into the tribe of **Levi**, and his mother saves him by putting him in a **basket** on the Nile. **Pharoah's Daughter** sees him, and, realizing that he must be a Jewish baby, pulls him from the water, adopting him and naming him **Moshe**. **Moshe** grows up, and, one day, sees an Egyptian beating a Jew. To protect the Jew, he kills the Egyptian. His secret is found out, and he runs away to **Midyan**, where he marries **Tzipora**, the daughter of the leader of Midyan, **Yisro**. Years pass, **Pharoah** dies and is replaced by a **new Pharoah**. The Jews cry out to Hashem from their suffering, and Hashem begins His plan to free them. While working as a shepherd in the desert, Moshe sees a **burning bush**. He goes to investigate, and Hashem speaks to him from within the bush, telling him that he has been chosen as the leader who will free the Jews from Egypt with the help of his brother, **Aharon**. Moshe returns to Egypt and he and Aharon speak to the **Elders** of the Jewish people and then ask **Pharoah** to let the Jews leave. Pharoah refuses, and instead, increases the workload of the Jews. The Jews become angry with Moshe, but Hashem again promises to Moshe that he will ultimately succeed.

**THINK ABOUT IT:** **Moshe** is one of only **two people** in the Torah to be saved by a תבה, a boat. The other person is **Noach**! How are **Moshe** and **Noach** similar? How are they different? The Ariza"l (1534-1572, Tzfat) explains that Moshe was a "correction" for Noach. What do you think this means?



### THE MYSTERIOUS MIDWIVES

In the beginning of **Sefer Shemos**, the book of names, there is one thing missing: **names**! Our Parsha has very few names, and two of the most mysterious are the **midwives** who worked for Pharoah: **Shifra** and **Puah**. So, **who were they? And why are they important?**

וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לְמִילֵדוֹת הָעִבְרִית אֲשֶׁר שֵׁם הָאֶחָת שִׁפְרָה וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִית פּוּעָה: (שמות א:טו)  
The king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named **Shifra** and the other **Puah**.

**Rashi** (1040-1105, France) quotes the **Gemara Sotah 11b** that these two women were **Yocheved** and **Miriam**, Moshe's mother and sister. The names "Shifra and Puah" came from their specific and unique roles in their jobs as midwives. **Rabbi Yehuda HaChasid** (1150-1217), along with the **Midrash** in **Yalkut Shemoni**, explains that Shifra and Puah were two **righteous converts**, as it wouldn't make sense for Pharoah to ask Jewish midwives to kill Jewish children. The Torah later tells us that these midwives did not listen to Pharoah's command because they **feared G-d**, showing their righteousness. **In case you were wondering**, **Ibn Ezra** (1089-1167, Spain) explains that these were not the only two midwives in Egypt! Instead, they were the head midwives, and lead at least **500** midwives throughout the country.

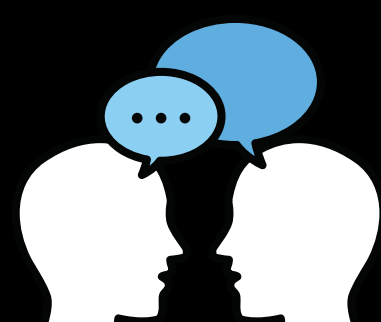
### MOSHE, I CHOOSE YOU!

Let's investigate the qualities that we learn about Moshe in the text of the **Torah**, with the aid of a few **Midrashim**:

Imagine being on the **hiring committee** for the next leader of the Jewish people in a crisis. What characteristics do you think are most important for that position? What stood out about Moshe that caused Hashem to choose him as the person who would free the Jews?



1. He was born to a prominent Jewish family in the tribe of **Levi**, the only tribe that didn't work as slaves
2. He was raised in **Pharoah's palace** but forced to run away
3. He killed an Egyptian man beating a Jew and **stood up** for Yisro's daughters when they were being harassed at the well
4. He worked as a **shepherd** for Yisro
5. He had some sort of **speech impediment** and was described as כבד פה, having a heavy mouth
6. He **argued with Hashem** about accepting leadership
7. He worked alongside his older brother, **Aharon**



**DISCUSS:**  
What are the **three most important qualities** in a leader?