



Read the following verses and answer the questions:

טו ויאמר מלך מצרים למילדות העברית אשר שם האחת שפירה ושם השנית פועה. טז ויאמר בילדכן את-העבריות וראיתן על-האבנים אם-בן הוא והמתן אותו ואם-בת הוא וחיה. יז ותיראו-המילדות את-הא-להים ולא עשו כאשר דבר אליהן מלך מצרים ותחיינה את-הילדים. יח ויקרא מלך-מצרים למילדות ויאמר להן מדוע עשיתן הדבר הזה ותחיינה את-הילדים. יט ותאמרו-המילדות אל-פרעה כי לא כנשים המצרית העברית כי-חיות הנה בטחם תבוא אליהן המילדות וילדו. כ וייטב א-להים למילדות וירב העם ויעצמו מאד. כא ויהי כי-יִרְאוּ המילדות את-הא-להים ויעש להם בָּתִּים. כב ויצו פרעה לְכָל-עַמּוּ לֵאמֹר כָּל-הַבֶּן הַיְּלֻד הַיָּאֲרָה תְּשַׁלְּכֵהוּ וְכָל-הַבֵּת תַּחְיוּן. (שמות פרק א)

15 The king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiphrah and the other Puah, 16 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." 17 The midwives, fearing God, did not do as the king of Egypt had told them; they let the boys live. 18 So the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, letting the boys live?" 19 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." 20 And God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and increased greatly. 21 And [God] established households\* for the midwives, because they feared God. 22 Then Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, "Every boy that is born you shall throw into the Nile, but let every girl live."



### What challenges did the midwives face?

1. What different options did the midwives have?

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2. What choice did the midwives make?

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3. In your opinion, what character traits, strengths and values did the midwives demonstrate through their choices?

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4. Given an opportunity, what would you want to say or ask these characters?

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### Challenge Question

Quote the verse, or part of the verse, that most clearly displays the choice made by these characters.

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### ? Look at the picture and think about the following questions:

- Which characters appear in the painting? What is each character doing?
- What emotions does each character display? How is this reflected through the painting? (Focus on the facial expressions, body language, colors, position of the characters, etc.)
- The painting depicts Pharaoh's decree that was given to the midwives- "Every son that is born, throw him into the Nile"
- How does the painting contribute to our understanding of the actions of the midwives seen in verses 17-21?
- In your opinion, are the actions of the midwives described in these verses accurately reflected in the painting? Explain how.
- Why do you think this painting was included in a Passover Haggadah?



Painting from Barcelona Passover Haggadah (1320)

### Read the information below about the situation of the Jews in Spain in the 1400s.

In the 12th century, the Jewish people in Spain suffered under the rule of the Muslim Almohad Caliphate, which persecuted them, and from the process of reconquest (Reconquista) of Spain by the Christians. The Jews managed to live relatively peacefully under the Christians for a while, but in the 13th century, blood libels began against the Jews and decrees were passed against Jews and Judaism. With the end of the Reconquista in 1492, a royal decree was issued by Fernando II and Isabella, King and Queen of Spain, that every Jew in Spain must leave the kingdom or convert to Christianity. Jews who only pretended to convert (in order to avoid expulsion from the land) were tortured during the Spanish Inquisition (established in 1478). If they were found to have continued to practice Judaism they were put to death.

### ! Think

What message is passed down to later generations when they see this painting in the Haggadah?

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