Class #13- Parshat Shemot- When Gentiles save Jews

Advanced Fellowship Parsha Class - Sponsored in memory of Alice Toby Barbanel Z”l

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<https://youtu.be/8RpsfRtWA6M> Schindler's List - Buying All the Jews

Businessman Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson) arrives in Krakow in 1939, ready to make his fortune from World War II, which has just started. After joining the Nazi party primarily for political expediency, he staffs his factory with Jewish workers for similarly pragmatic reasons. When the SS begins exterminating Jews in the Krakow ghetto, Schindler arranges to have his workers protected to keep his factory in operation, but soon realizes that in so doing, he is also saving innocent lives. Schindler ends up saving over 1200 Jews from Nazi extermination by employing them in his enamelware and munitions factories. He died on 9 October 1974 and is buried in Jerusalem on [Mount Zion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mount_Zion), the only member of the Nazi Party to be honored in this way.

1. Who was Oskar Schindler?
2. What did he do professionally?
3. Why did Schindler set up a factory in Poland after the Nazi occupation?
4. How is this business practice like what is done at a fire sale or foreclosure? Or by the importing of Mexican workers to do farm work or meatpackers?
5. How did this member of the Nazi party save 1200 Jews from certain death?
6. What realization and transformations, must of occurred within him, to do the dangerous things he did, to save so many Jews?

Shemot

1:15 The king of Egypt spoke to the [chief] midwives of the Hebrews, whose names were Shifra and Puah.

1:16 He said, 'When you deliver Hebrew women, you must look carefully at the birthstool. If [the infant] is a boy, kill it; but if it is a girl, let it live.'

1:17 The midwives feared God, and did not do as the Egyptian king had ordered them. They allowed the infant boys to live.

1:18 The king of Egypt summoned the midwives and demanded, 'Why did you do this? You let the infant boys live!'

1:19 'The Hebrew women are not like the Egyptians,' replied the midwives to Pharaoh. 'They know how to deliver. They can give birth before a midwife even gets to them.'

1:20 God was good to the midwives, and the people increased and became very numerous.

1:21 Because the midwives feared God, He gave them great families [of their own].

1:22 Pharaoh then gave orders to all his people: 'Every boy who is born must be cast into the Nile, but every girl shall be allowed to live.'

5) Were Shifra and Puah Midwives of the Jews or Jewish Midwives?

**Rashi -1:15**

**Shifra** – is Yocheved. [The name] comes from her taking care (meshaperet) of the infant.

**Puah** – is Miriam who coos (puah), speaks, and makes noises to the infant as women do to calm a crying baby.

**Don Isaac Abarbanel**

They were not Hebrews, since how could [Pharaoh’s] mind be confident that Hebrew women would murder their own [people’s] babies?! Rather, they are the “midwives of the Hebrews,” i.e., they assist the [Hebrew women] in the birthing process, just as [the next] verse says (v. 16), “when you deliver the Hebrew women.”

6) How is Shifra and Puah saving the babies from Pharoh comparable to Schindler saving the Jews from the Nazis?

7) What are the elements of their acts of heroism?

8) Is the act more heroic if Shifra and Puah are Jewish or non-Jewish?

8) Scenario # 1 – Debbie and Steve have a wonderful nanny, Claudia, for their son Jeffrey. She arrives promptly every morning at 7:30am so they can both get to work on time. Her weekly rate is very reasonable as her immigration situation is not settled. They do not think about the circumstances that causes this reasonable rate. When Covid hit in March 2020 they were confronted with a question. How long should they keep paying Claudia if she cannot come to work? What should they do?

9) Scenario # 2 – You are stuck in an important meeting on a Friday afternoon with your boss and the company’s largest client. The clock is ticking. You are feeling that you will not get home in time for Shabbos unless you excuse yourself right now. The deal is so important to the company. A bead of sweat goes down your back. You want to stand up and tell them you are a Shabbos observant Jew and leave. What should you do?

10) Scenario # 3 – You are a loyal employee of Mr. Jones. He has been there for you through thick and thin. The company has had rough year during Covid. He asks you to describe the expense as a legitimate business tax deduction. It is in fact does not qualify as a legitimate business tax deduction. You and Mr. Jones knows that. What do you do?