

## And the midwives feared G-d; they did not do as the King of Egypt told them, and they kept the male offspring alive. (1:17)

To stand up to the most powerful ruler in the world was truly an act of great courage. Shifrah and Puah were two (physically) weak and defenseless women who were brave enough to defy a despotic, ruthless ruler who had enslaved hundreds of thousands of their co-religionists. Vast armies would tremble before Pharaoh. Yet, these two women were not afraid of Pharaoh, because they answered to a higher Authority; they feared Hashem. Their great *yiraas Shomayim engendered* within them a total abrogation of fear of men. Thus, they felt sufficiently confident and resolute in their *yiraas Shomayim* to defy Pharaoh. If he did not like what they were doing – too bad.

*Horav Yisrael Belsky, zl*, explains the concept of *yiraas Shomayim* as being so conscious of Hashem's greatness that nothing else and no one else matters. A person can only fear mortals if he has forgotten *Hashem Yisborach – chas v'sholom*. By extension, a person can only have the self-confidence and fortitude to stand flawlessly before any human being – regardless of his despotic power – if he possesses a strong sense of *yiraas Shomayim*. One who is replete with fear of Hashem – fears no one other than Hashem. One's fear is real when he is secure in his faith and trust in Hashem. A faith that is real becomes tangible, as does his fear.

Thus, the midwives from whom the Houses of *Kehunah*, *Leviyah* and *Malchus* descended imbued their future progeny with a powerful foundation of *yiraas Shomayim* – so powerful that it became their family legacy, leaving an indelible imprint on their future generations for all time.