

And she gave birth to a son. She saw that he was good and she hid him for three months. (2:2,3)

Rashi attributes Yocheved's ability to conceal Moshe *Rabbeinu* at home for three months to the fact that he was born prematurely - six months after conception. Hence, the Egyptians had no reason to search for a baby. When the nine-month period was up, she was forced to hide him in the water. Hashem could have saved Moshe *Rabbeinu* in any manner that He chose. He arranged for Moshe to be born prematurely, so that he would be home with his mother for three months. Then he was taken away from her, only to be returned to her later on in Pharaoh's palace.

Horav Zaidel Epstein, Shlita, infers from here a profound lesson in the *chinuch*, educational development, of a child. The formative years of a child's education have a profound effect upon his future. In order for Moshe *Rabbeinu* to emerge as the quintessential leader of the Jewish People, it was essential for him he be conceived in *kedushah*, sanctity. The well-known *Midrash* describes Amram's dialogue with his daughter, Miriam, after Pharaoh decreed that all male Jewish offspring were to be put to death. Amram felt that all marriages should be dissolved. As the leader of the Jews in Egypt, he divorced Yocheved, an action which everyone imitated. Miriam contended that her father's "decree" was worse than Pharaoh's, since Pharaoh's decree only affected the boys, while Amram's decree adversely affected all Jewish children! Indeed, Miriam *Ha'Neviah* prophesized that her mother would give birth to the savior of the Jewish People. How could Amram do this? Amram deferred to his daughter and remarried Yocheved, for the specific purpose of fathering the future leader of the Jewish People.

Moshe *Rabbeinu* was conceived and born in sanctity and purity with *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice. He needed exposure to the *kedushah* of Amram and Yocheved's home. Even that did not seem to be enough. Hashem created the situation whereby *Bisya bas* Pharaoh herself would bring Moshe *Rabbeinu*, the infant she had rescued, to Yocheved to raise him in Pharaoh's palace. The environment in which Moshe grew up infused in him the sanctity and purity essential for the one who was destined to be *Klal Yisrael's* leader.

Indeed, Moshe *Rabbeinu's* early environment played a pivotal role in his educational development. *Torah* education begins at home from birth. Children reflect the attitude, practice and commitment that their parents manifest. *Torah* is a spiritual entity. A *Torah* environment infuses a person with a sense of spirituality regardless of his intellectual appreciation of *Torah*. In the *Yerushalmi Yevamos 6*, *Chazal* relate that Rabbi Yehoshua *ben* Chananya's mother placed his crib in the *Bais HaMedrash* from the day that he was born, so that he would absorb the spiritual atmosphere. She kept him there so that the only sounds his ears would hear would be the sounds of *Torah*. Is it any wonder that he developed into the great *Tanna* that he was? Moreover, we see the dedication to *chinuch*, *Torah* education, that his mother exhibited. To place an infant in the *Bais Hamedrash* for the purpose of "listening" to *Torah* indicates a unique appreciation of the essence of *Torah*.

Rabbi Yehoshua *ben* Chananya proved his mother right.