

## Before the midwife comes to them, they have given birth. (1:19)

The midwives explained to Pharaoh that the Jewish women were unique in that they gave birth even prior to the arrival of the midwife. Thus, the midwives were powerless to prevent the male infants from entering the world. Certainly, Pharaoh did not want them to commit a wanton act of murder. *Horav Ovadia Yosef, zl*, related the following incredible incident. One *Erev Pesach*, a young father who lived on a *Moshav* south of Yerushalayim came to him with a six-year old boy.

“*Kavod Horav*, will the *Chacham* bless my son? After all, he was born because of ‘you,’” the young father explained. (There are quotes on “you” for a reason, to be explained in the course of the story.)

“In 1998 (four years after *Rabbanit* Margalit Yosef had returned her soul to its holy source), I was asked to conduct the *Pesach Seder* at an absorption center. Many of the new *olim*, emigres, were experiencing Judaism for the first time. The *Seder* would be, for many of them, their segue into traditional Judaism. I agreed to lead the *Seder* and make use of this opportunity to reach out to the attendees to bring them closer to the religion of their forebears. Shortly before the *chag*, festival, was to begin, my wife felt that her pregnancy was coming to its conclusion and she must go to the hospital. Imagine, arriving at the hospital to be informed that due to the upcoming festival, all the midwives had left for *chofesh*, vacation, to spend time with their respective families. There was, however, one midwife on staff who was present to cover any emergencies. If my wife could ‘wait’ a little, while the midwife attended to another patient, she would soon be in to help her.

“When my wife saw that it would be some time before she would be attended to, she asked me to leave and attend the *Seder* for the *olim*: ‘*B’ezras Hashem*, with the help of the Almighty, in the merit of the *mitzvah* that you will perform, I will get through this without mishap, and it will be a *mazel tov* for us.’ With tears in my eyes, I left my wife to lead the *Seder*. It pained me greatly to leave her alone in the hospital, but how could I ignore the three hundred *olim* who were waiting to hear the *d’var Hashem*?

“Understandably, following the *Seder*, I returned to my wife to learn of the *mazel tov*, birth of our son, who stands with me here today. My wife told me that she had an intriguing experience while I was gone. She lay there alone in the room, happy that I was performing a *mitzvah*, but nervous and afraid, when suddenly a woman stood before her, dressed all in white, similar to that worn by the nurses. She said to her, ‘Listen to me. My name is Margalit. I am the wife of *Horav Ovadia Yosef*. I come to you from Heaven to assist and be with you. Do not be afraid; do not worry. I will be with you the entire time.’ Within a few moments, my wife gave birth and the (*neshamah* of) *Rabbanit* disappeared.” (The reader now knows why there were quotes on “you.”) When the story was related to *Horav Chaim Kanievesky, Shlita*, he said that he believed the story. In the merit of the *mitzvah* and in the merit of the woman’s *mesiras nefesh*, dedication to the point of self-sacrifice,

Hashem did something *l'maaleh min ha'teva*, supernaturally, to help the woman. She deserved it.