

The name of one was Shifra and the name of the other was Puah. (1:15)

Rashi explains - Shifra, this is Yocheved, she was called so because she made the child beautiful. Puah, this is Miriam, who was called so because she called aloud and murmured to the child, in the manner of women who pacify an infant that cries.

Rabbi Shmuel Rozovsky Zt"l notes the *Torah's* description of the Jewish midwives, Yocheved and Miriam, had imbued them with exemplary character traits who had achieved a high level of spiritual insight and prophetic vision. Their fear of Hashem was the source of the moral courage necessary to save the Jewish babies. The *Torah* endows them with these very noble attributes, yet the *Torah* characterizes and acclaims them for their administering to the basic needs of the Jewish babies. It was their self-sacrifice in providing for the babies in a motherly fashion, for which they are praised.

A Jewish mother is the creator, guide and guardian of the Jewish home. To establish a Jewish home is to create and develop a new link in the chain of Jewish existence and tradition. The task of properly raising children, inculcating within them the correct *Torah* values so that they become responsible Jewish adults, is a formidable one. Hashem in His infinite wisdom has bestowed this task primarily upon women.

"Listen my son to the discipline of your father and do not forsake the Torah teachings of your mother." (Mishlei 1:8)

While a Jew ideally learns Torah discipline from his father, the fundamental concepts of Judaism he learns from his mother. A sensitivity to the basic aspects of Jewish belief and practice is imbued to him by his mother. As these concepts envelop a Jewish home it develops its unique power. The subsequent flourishing of a youngster's religious life is dependent largely upon this early maternal teaching. Yocheved and Miriam are praised for fulfilling their maternal role of raising Jewish children in the way of Hashem.