

Yocheved, daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt. (26:59)

Yocheved was counted among the original seventy souls that accompanied Yaakov *Avinu* as he went down to Egypt. **Horav Eli Munk, zl**, in his commentary *Kol Ha'torah*, notes that Yocheved was placed at the core of this genealogy. He attributes this honor to her exceptional destiny. She married her nephew, Amram, a union that was legitimate only because the *Torah* had not yet been given. When Pharaoh decreed that all new-born Jewish boys be put to death, her husband divorced her. At the time, she was three months pregnant with Moshe. Her daughter Miriam, inspired by *Ruach Ha'kodesh*, convinced her father to remarry their mother. This guaranteed that Moshe would not be born into a broken home.

Yocheved died at the age of two hundred and fifty, shortly after she entered *Eretz Yisrael*. She had the *nachas* of watching her three children serve in leadership roles for *Klal Yisrael*. The dynasties of *Kehunah* and *Malchus* descended from her. Why? Why did she merit so much? We are taught that her merit was a result of her supreme devotion to her people when she and her daughter Miriam served as midwives for the early Jews in Egypt. They did not listen to Pharaoh's cruel decree to kill the baby boys. They risked their lives, courageously succeeding in foiling Pharaoh's decree.

If we just take a moment to think about this considerable reward, we will realize that this reward reflects the significance of the deed. The midwives risked their lives to bring Jewish children into a world that was cruel and dangerous, probably into a life of slavery, misery and persecution. Yet they received the greatest reward. We infer from this the enormous responsibility one has to bring Jewish children into the world--regardless of one's financial or social standing, whether one has a job or is still in school. Why is it that some of us place our trust in Hashem only when we think we have no alternative? What will wake people up to the realization that Hashem is there--always--for everything--regardless of the situation? Let us learn a lesson from this Jewish mother regarding a Jew's obligation to have a Jewish family and raise it according to *Torah* standards.