

Par'oh's daughter had just found baby Moshe floating in a basket on the Nile. Moshe's sister who had been observing the scene inquired of Par'oh's daughter, "Shall I call for you a wet nurse from among the Hebrew women?" [Shemot 2:7]. The Gemara Sotah [12b] states that Moshe refused to nurse from an Egyptian woman, because "Shall the mouth which is destined to speak with the Shechina [Divine Presence] digest something that is impure?"

The Rama [1520-1572] writes in Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De'ah [81:7] that one should not permit a Jewish child to nurse from a non-Jewish woman, when possible to obtain a Jewish woman, because such nursing can have an ill effect on the child later in life. The Vilna Gaon cites the Gemara in Sotah as a source for this halacha.*****

Rav Y Kaminetsky asks: How can this Gemara be the source of this halacha? The reason the Gemara gives is "Shall the mouth which is destined to speak with the Shechina digest something that is impure?" Which baby today [some 500 years ago since the time of Rama] is likely to talk to the Shechina at some time of his life? Moshe was a special case which should not be cited as a precedent for a practical halachic matter in our time!

Rav Yaakov himself answers that we see from here that we must look at every single Jewish child as a potential that perhaps he may one day speak with the Shechina. Perhaps the Beit HaMikdash will be speedily rebuilt, the Moshi'ach will come, prophesy will be restored, and this little child could be the one to speak with the Shechina.

R' Moshe Feinstein points out that when Moshe is born, the Torah does not make a big deal of his Yichus [genealogy]. It merely states, [Shemot 2:1] "A man from the house of Levy went forth and married the daughter of Levy...". Only later in Parashat Va'era, [6:16-26] when Moshe is about to appear before Par'oh at the beginning of his mission that the Torah reveals to us exactly who his father was and from whom he descended. So, Rav Moshe explains that when a child is born we do not know what will become of him. Every baby is unknown, but that unknown is potentially a "mouth that will speak with the Shechina.

A number of years ago there was a meeting of great Talmidei Chachamim in the house of Rav Kaminetsky. His daughter-in-law, who was pregnant at the time brought out cake and tea for the distinguished guests. They ate in the dining room and then arose to retire into another room for their meeting. A question of protocol came up as to which Talmid Chacham should leave the room first. The daughter-in-law remained seated because she assumed that she should let her distinguished guests leave the room first. Rav Ya'akov insisted that she be the one to lead the way. He said, perhaps she is carrying the future Melech HaMoshi'ach, who would trump all the Talmidei Chachamim in this room.

Because of that potential-we should give her that honor!

The next time you encounter a pregnant woman or hear about or read about a "Mazal Tov" regarding a birth, rejoice with all your heart, for who knows...?