

Rabbi David Wolpe's

Off The Pulpit

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Mothers

The word describing the basket in which Moses is placed as an infant is "tevah," the same word used to describe Noah's ark. Many commentators draw the parallel between the man who saved the world and the man who saved the Jewish people.



But who made the 'tevah'? In Noah's case, he made it at God's direction to save himself. But in Moses' case, it was made by his mother at her own initiative. She fashioned a sort of ark, not to save herself, but to save her child. Moses is then rescued by Pharaoh's daughter. Perhaps the story is less about Moses and more about mothers.

For many of us, our mother is the one who placed us in the vessel that enabled us to float out into the world. She gave the ark a gentle push, offering it direction. As Jocheved did with Moses, our mother is one who both anticipated the danger and prepared the container to shelter and bring her child to safe shores. Moses survived and grew up to instruct the world; but his accomplishment was only possible because before he was born, Jocheved sat in hiding, waiting for his birth and weaving a basket.