



Mother of MOSES

A Play

By Sidney Goldberg

In Progress:
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Scene I

A long time ago:

**AMRAM and JOCHEBED who is
Pregnant are in their tent, drinking wine.
Both are a little tipsy and gloating about
Their two children, MIRIAM and
AARON.**

AMRAM

(Touches her Face and breasts, he's horny.)

My beautiful Jochebed, I've never seen you look more beautiful.

JOCHEBED

You're only saying that because it's true. And I know that look in your eyes; *oi* how I know. Forget it mister, I'm too fat and not in the mood.

AMRAM

Look how she thinks she knows what I'm thinking. What makes you think I'm in the mood?

JOCHEBED

Because you're always in the mood, so, what else is new?

AMRAM

Perhaps I'm saying that because we've been drinking in celebration and anticipation of our new son, who will one day lead our enslaved people, God's, *Hashem's* chosen people.

JOCHEBED

I think the wine is going to your head, Amram. How can you be so sure that we are going to have a son that will lead our people?

AMRAM

Are we not Levis, children of God? Did he not bless us with Aaron, who is as smart as any four year old boy that's ever lived, *Boruch Hashem*, thank you. Can he not recite the *Shma* and all the other prayers? Does he not follow me around and help tend the sheep? And *shhh*, I got a message from you know who: *Adonoi* told me that our son will become the leader of our people. One day a *tsadik*. A prophet who God will speak to like He spoke to Abraham, the father of our people, who He made a covenant with. I don't want to go around bragging, but one day, my son will be something, mark my words.

(THEY both drink more wine.)

JOCHEBED

Oh, so he'll be *your* son and are you also going to give birth to *your* son? And have you forgotten Miriam who is four years older? Isn't she also special? And did *you* give birth to Miriam also?

AMRAM

How can I forget my Miriam, who is as beautiful as her mother.

JOCHEBED

Why is it that girls, women are second rate citizens who can't study the Torah? And who gives birth, you or me? Not only am I not sure I love you anymore, and why, I still don't know. I love my children more than you or anything, more than life its self. And this one, because he hasn't even kicked me, I never got nauseous and I feel like I am blessed to have him. Yes I can feel it's a boy. I shall call him *Yelday Ha-Elohim*, a Godly child who I can't wait to love and nurse.

AMRAM

Jochebed, even though you are near delivery, and perhaps it's the wine I've been

(HE tries to kiss and fondle JOCHEBED.

drinking to excess, but looking at your beautiful face and *buhbies*, I'm in the mood for a little *hoochy koochy*. You know it's been two months and you know this man has needs...

(Pushes AMRAM away.)

JOCHEBED

...Get away from me you disgusting, needy animal! The children are outside. What happens if they come in? And leave me alone, I'm about to give birth any minute, and when he wants to, he wants to, whether I want to or not. He doesn't care about me, he never cared about me. He never cares about me. Sex, sex, sex! I'm not in the mood for sex, so leave me alone.

AMRAM

I sent them to visit my father. We have plenty of time for a little action.

JOCHEBED

You mean my brother? You got me drunk on wine and made to love me and like a dope I let you marry your father's sister, me. Not only am I your wife but I'm your aunt. Whoever heard of a nephew marrying an aunt?

AMRAM

So Aunt, take pity on your beloved nephew and give him a little action.

JOCHEBED

(Touches her swollen belly.)

Oi, I think I'm—better you should get Sophie, I think I'm about to have some action.

End of Scene I

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ACT I

Scene 2

A few hours later:

AMRAM, AARON, MIRIAM and SOPHIE are ALL beaming, looking at the new baby.

AMRAM

So how are you my beautiful, Jochebed? How do you like my new son? I turn them out, don't I? I turn them out.

JOCHEBED

(Weak.)

Maybe you all should go? I have to breast feed my *Yelday Ha-Elohim*, my Godly child. That's what I'm going to call him, *Yelday Ha-Elohim*, my Godly child.

MIRIAM

Oh Mama, your Godly child, my new baby brother is beautiful. I love him more than know-it-all smarty pants Aaron.

AARON,

You are such a dummy, Miriam! You may five years older than me, but Mama said his name is *Yelday Ha-Elohim—Shma yisroel Adonoi Elohaynu*... There, do you know that?

(Laughs.)

Do you most of the prayers like I do? Girls are not allowed to study the Torah, *heh, heh, heh*...

SOPHIE

„I think you should all leave. Your Mama has to breast feed your beautiful new brother and you can finish your *shma* and arguing elsewhere.

(ALL starting to leave.)

MIRIAM

I love you Mama and feed my baby brother. He looks so cute...

AARON

...Come on dummy, cute *Yelday's hungry*...

AMRAM

...And save some for me, your nephew is also hungry.

JOCHEBED

Miriam, my darling, let them all go I have to speak to you about something very important.

AARON

What do you want to speak to her Mama? Even though I'm younger, I'm smarter than her, speak to me.

JOCHEBED

Go my darling Aaron, go all of you. I have to speak to Miriam. You know, mama and daughter, we women have things to talk about.

AARON

But she's only a little older than me, she's still a little *pisher*, she's a little girl and what do girls know? nothing.

JOCHEBED

But soon your little *pisher*, Aaron will do something only a very brave woman can do. So, all of you please leave me alone with my Miriam.

AMRAM

Come on damn it! Can't you see we're not wanted? Miriam my little sweetheart, you know you look just my aunt?

AARON

Who's your aunt, Papa?

MIRIAM

Mama is his aunt, dummy! Papa married his father's sister, mister know-it-all.

AARON

Is that kosher, Papa?

AMRAM

Kosher, *smosher*, come on, let get the hell out here. Your mother wants to talk to Miriam and stops asking such stupid questions. Of course it's kosher. She's your mother, isn't she?

(THEY leave and MIRIAM stares as her mother breast feeds the baby and *cuchtys* him with love.)

JOCHEBED

Oh, how I love you my beautiful *Yelday Elohim*. Drink the milk my darling, it will make you strong and healthy. Drink.

MIRIAM

How does it feel, Mama? Does it hurt?

JOCHEBED

It doesn't hurt. It's the most wonderful feeling. I enjoyed it when I breast fed you and your brother and I love breast feeding your new brother.

MIRIAM

He looks beautiful and peaceful. What do you want to speak to me about Mama?

JOCHEBED

That rotten Pharaoh has ordered all new born Jewish sons must be put to death.

(Eight pass and the baby is about to be circumcised.)

JOCHEBED

Amram, children, a the covenant between Abraham and Jehovah, my goodly child, *Yelday Elohim* must be circumcised. You hole our son and I will perform the circumcision.

(Watch and, Amram and Aaron close their eyes.)

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to enter him into the Covenant of Abraham our father. You my son are now an Israelite, and one day with God's blessing you will lead our people from Pharaoh and slavery. Pharaoh has ordered all new born Israelite children to be put to death, which I cannot do

MIRIAM

(Starts to cry.)

Oh no! We can't kill my baby brother. What are we going to do, Mama? What are we going to do?

JOCHEBED

You my darling daughter are going to find some very large bulrush leaves, then you must daub it with slime and pitch and weave them together and make a small ark, a little boat, and then you are going to put your sweet little brother in it and then you will gently place the ark in the Nile river bank and push it. With God's help some kind Egyptian will find

him and love and raise him. Now go sweet heart, take your brother who I will wrap up, build an ark and pray.

MIRIAM

I'll do it Mama. With *HaShem's* help, I'll save my baby brother.

JOCHEBED

See if you can walk along the river and follow the little ark. Hopefully you will see who finds my goodly child.

MIRIAM

I'll do it, and I'll follow the ark and see who finds my baby brother. I love you Mama and

(Picks up baby and kisses him.)

I love you, I love you.

JOCHEBED

Go my darling daughter. Go before those Egyptians find and kill our *Yelday Ha-Elohim*.

End of Scene 2

Mother of **MOSES**

ACT I

Scene 3

The Nile River:

**The sun is shining, it is hot.
HATSHEPSUT and her maidens are
walking.**

Miriam watches Hatshepsat) daughter of Pharaoh Thothmes as she comes down to the river; and her maidens walk along the river's side and cavort. When HATSHEPSUT saw the ark floating among the leaves and flag she sent her maids to fetch it and Miriam sees her pick him up and shudders. HATSHEPSUT looks at the baby and smiles and kisses and hugs him. You have been sent by Min the God of fertility and I will secretly adopt you my beautiful gift. She carries her Moses and kneels on the river bank and slowly takes off his wraps as the baby cries.

HATSHEPSUT

Oh, I see you are circumcised my son: you are a Hebrew but I will protect you so that you will not be killed as my father the Pharaoh Ramses has decreed. I shall keep it secret. Magda, Beth, Miriam, all of you, you will tell never tell anyone that my adopted son is circumcised and is a Hebrew. If any of you ever mentions a word you will be tortured and put to death. I will love you and have you educated and you will be treated as a
(Kisses MOSES.)

Pharaoh, a king. I will call you Moses for you are drawn forth to me. I love you my little prince. I love you my little prince.

(Miriam steps forth.)

MIRIAM

Shall I go fetch a nurse of the Hebrew I heard thee call Moses, drawn forth, so she may nurse they Moses, HATSHEPSUT?

HATSHEPSUT

Do you know one, Miriam? And remember, you must never say a word about my adopted son being Jewish, or you will be put to death; for I know that you are Hebrew,

but you are a good maid and that's why you are allowed to serve me. Now be off be gone! And fetch the heathen that will nurse Moses.

MIRIAM

(Whispers.)

I believe her name is Jochebed and she is the baby's mother... and forgive me she is my mother too.

HATSHEPSUT

The milk of his mother: Nothing could be more wonderful. Please hurry and bring this Jochebed here immediately for Moses must be hungry. Miriam, are you saying that Moses is your brother?

(MIRIAM sobs and doesn't answer. In a short while JOCHEBED appears and bows.)

HATSHEPSUT (Cont'd)

Here, Jochebed, take this child whom I call Moses from me, nurse it and I will give thee wages more than you ever dreamed of.

(JOCHEBED takes her son and rushes off. Her heart is breaking for he is Jewish and will be raised by an Egyptian. After awhile, SHE breast feeds her son and speaks to him.)

JOCHEBED

My goodly son, born 1435 BC, who HATSHEPSUT calls Moses, I will always love you even though you will be with Pharaoh's daughter. Hopefully your sister Miriam will be with you. As far as I--I'm sure I'll be with you as long as I nurse you which I will do for as long as my milk holds out. Because HATSHEPSUT knows I am your mother, after I no longer nurse you, I will beg her to allow me to come and see you as you grow up. Now sleep my little Moses, sleep. *Shma Yisroel, Adonoi Elohanu, Adonoi Ehchud.*

End of Act 3

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ACT I

Scene 4

**Three years later:
A Bedouin tent:**

MOSES is dressed as a prince and is running around. HATSHEPSUT is grinning. MUHAMMAD ALIF his Teacher tries to coax little MOSES to stop.

MUHAMMAD

Please, Moses, you must stop running. How can I teach you if you do not stand still?

HATSHEPSUT

Moses, you must stop running and stop this instant or you will not have milk, honey and biscuits for desert. Now come here this instant!

(Shyly MOSES comes to his mother HATSHEPSUT.)

MOSES

Can I please have my milk and honey, Mama?

HATSHEPSUT

After Muhammad gives you your lesson. Muhammad, he's all yours.

MUHAMMAD

(Bows. - HATSHEPSUT exits.)

Thank you, HATSHEPSUT for this honor and privilege. Now little Moses, where were we?

MOSES

You were up to the God Ra, the sun.

MUHAMMAD

Excellent Moses, now the God of music is Hathor. Please say it.

MOSES

The God of music is Hathor.

MUHAMMAD

The God of destruction is Sekhmet. What is the God of destruction, Moses?

MOSES

The God of destruction is Sekhmet.

MUHAMMAD

Very good, very good. The God of the sky is Nut and the God of the Earth is Geb. Pleaser repeat.

MOSES

The God of the sky is Nut and the God of the Earth is Geb.

MUHAMMAD

Excellent! The God of the dead is Osiris, the god of the desert is Seth, and the God of wisdom is Thoth, son of our Pharaoh Tutmosis 111 . Please repeat.

MOSES

The God of the dead is Osiris, the god of the desert is Seth, and the God of wisdom is Thoth, son of our Pharaoh Tutmoses 111.

MUHAMMAD

You are doing wonderful, Moses. You are a genius, what a memory. The god of embalming is Aubis.

MOSES

What's embalming, Muhammad?

MUHAMMAD

When someone dies, they treat a corpse with preservatives in order to prevent decay. Do you understand?

MOSES

What happens if you don't want to die? I don't want both my Mommies to die. I love both my Mommies.

MUHAMMAD

Everyone must die. Now the God of justice is Ma'at, the God of creation is Amun and the God of cats is Bastet. Please repeat.

MOSES

The God of justice is Ma'at, the God of create is Amun and the God of cats is Bastet.

MUHAMMAD

I am very proud of you, Moses. You are my most gifted student. Would you please show your mother all you have learned little Moses?

MOSES

Okay, but you have to promise Mommy will give me milk, honey and biscuits after. Promise? That is for your mother to decide. Now wait here and do not run.

(MUHAMMAD runs off and immediately returns with HATSHEPSUT.)

HATSHEPSUT

Moses, my darling, do you want to show me what you've learned?

MOSES

I will if you give me my dessert.

HATSHEPSUT

First show me.

MOSES

The God of music is Hathor. The God of destruction is Sekhmet. The God of the sky is Nut and the God of the Earth is Geb.

HATSHEPSUT

Wonderful, just wonderful my, son.

MOSES

Wait, there's more. The God of the dead is Osiris, the god of the desert is Seth, and the God of wisdom is Throth. The god of embalming is Aubis. Now the God of justice is Ma'at, the God of creation is Amun and the God of cats is Bastet. Now Mommy, do I get dessert?

HATSHEPSUT

(Hugs and kisses MOSES.)

That was wonderful, wonderful and yes you will have all the milk and honey you want.

MOSES

Don't forget the biscuits, Mommy, I like biscuits.

(MIRIAM and JOCHEBED have been watching from afar. HATSHEPSUT notices THEM and gestures for them to come forward. MOSES sees THEM coming and rushes to Miriam and hugs and kisses her and hugs and kisses JOCHEBED. HATSHEPSUT is disheartened but knows that THEY are MOSES' true sister and Mother.)

MOSES

Oh Mommy, oh Miriam I'm so glad to see you. Muhammad has taught the names of more Gods. Not *Adonoi*, our God but Egyptian Gods. They have lots of Gods, we only have one. The God of music is Hathor. The God of destruction is Sekhmet. The God of the sky is Nut and the God of the Earth is Geb. The God of the dead is Osiris, the god of the desert is Seth, and the God of wisdom is Throth. The god of embalming is Aubis. Now the God of justice is Ma'at, the God of creation is Amun and the God of cats is Bastet. And because I know them, HATSHEPSUT my other Mommy is going to give me milk, honey and biscuits. Do you both want some?

HATSHEPSUT

Moses, I am afraid that your true mother, Jochebed and your sister Miriam are slaves and not entitled to have desert, the fine foods you enjoy or the freedom and education you have. Hebrews are not Allah, God's chosen.

MOSES

- *If their slaves how come I'm not a slave? And why do I enjoy the best of everything? What makes me so special, Mama HATSHEPSUT. I think you are beautiful and I love you, but I love my mother Jochebed and my sister Miriam. In fact I have this feeling that even though we have only one God, HaShem, I have this feeling that I'll always be a Hebrew.*

HATSHEPSUT

(Smacks MOSES.)

You are not a Hebrew, Moses, you are Egyptians and you must never tell anyone, especially my father Pharaoh Ramses that you are not an Arab. If he ever discovers how I found you, a Jewish boy that is circumcised, he will not only kill you, but your mother and sister as well, for he hates all Jews and I'm sure, because I deceived him, he might even kill me.

