



Is Moses a Jewish or Egyptian Name?



Watercolor-style illustration of Jochebed, accompanied by young Miriam watching closely, holding baby Moses by the Nile River as she prepares to place him in a woven basket. - Art by Yitzchok Schmukler

The Torah recounts how, three months after Moses was born, his mother tucked him into a basket, which she placed in the marsh at the river's edge. Later, Pharaoh's daughter went down to bathe and saw a basket among the reeds. She saved Moses and, in a fascinating turn of events, gave him to the child's own mother to nurse him. The verse then states: "The child grew up, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became like her son. She named him Moses (Moshe), and she said, 'For I drew him (mishitihu) from the water.' "

The obvious question is, is the name "Moses" Hebrew or Egyptian? At first glance, the verse seems to be using a Hebrew etymology, implying that it is a Hebrew name. But how would Pharaoh's daughter Bithiah even know Hebrew, let alone give the child a distinctly Hebrew name?

The Name Is Hebrew

One opinion is that it was indeed a Hebrew name. Bithiah had learned the Hebrew language from the Israelites who had settled in Egypt.

In a similar vein, the Talmud explains that Bithiah was going down to the river in order to immerse, cleanse herself of the idolatry in her father's house, and adopt the Jewish faith. The commentaries explain that Bithiah indeed learned Hebrew, and when the time came, she named her adopted son the Hebrew name "Moses."

Others maintain that it was actually Yocheved, Moses' mother, who called him that when she returned him to Bithiah, and Bithiah was agreeable to that name. Thus, the verse would read: "The child grew up, and she [Yocheved] brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became like her son. She [Yocheved] named him Moses, and she said, 'For I drew him from the water.' "

Additional Egyptian Meaning

The name "Moshe" is a conjunction of two Egyptian words: mo, which means "water," and uses (or sha), which means "saved" or "drawn" from. Thus, Rabbi Meir Leibush Wisser, the Malbim, explains that the name "Moshe" actually has a similar connotation in both Egyptian and Hebrew.

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Hebrew Translation of Egyptian Name

Some suggest that Bithiah named Moses with an Egyptian name that has been lost to us. The name "Moses" is actually Scripture's Hebrew translation of the original Egyptian name.

Saving a Life

The Midrash relates that Moses actually had ten different names given variously by his parents, his tribe and the Jewish people (see What Was Moses' Name?). Nevertheless, it is very telling that the name he is known by is Moses, harking back to the heroic act of Bithiah, who put herself at risk to save a helpless child of a foreign nation. It was ultimately this selfless act that eventually brought about the salvation of the entire Jewish nation.

(by Yehuda Shurpin from www.chabad.org)

This day in Jewish History

The founder of Chabad Chassidism, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812), passed away on the eve of the 24th of Tevet, 5573, at approximately 10:30 p.m., shortly after reciting the Havdalah prayer marking the end of the Shabbat. The Rebbe was in the village of Peyena, fleeing Napoleon's armies, which had swept through the Rebbe's hometown of Liadi three months earlier in their advance towards Moscow. He was in his 68th year at the time of his passing, and was succeeded by his son, Rabbi DovBer of Lubavitch.

(from www.chabad.org)



'The Rav's Friday Night Hashkafa Q&A Shiur for Men'

will take place **next Friday night – January 16th**
at 8:00 p.m. and will be held at
the home of **Mr. Josh and Mrs. Yedida Orlofsky**,
at 2323 Farringdon Road (corner of Amleigh & Farringdon).
Questions can be submitted in advance to rabbikaplan@chabadmd.com.

Kol Hanaarim – every Friday evening during the winter at **7:30 p.m. in The Shul**. Cholent and pastries are served. Each session is 'topped off' at the end with a fascinating story by Rabbi Eli Itzkowitz. For any questions, please see Rabbi Itzkowitz.

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DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday, 1/9 – 20 Tevet

Shacharit – 7:00 a.m.
Shabbat Candles – 4:43 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv – 4:45 p.m.

Shabbat, 1/10 – 21 Tevet

Shacharit 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema – 9:48 a.m.
Minchah – 4:30 p.m.
Shiur – after Minchah
Shkiah – 5:02 p.m.
Ma'ariv – 5:46 p.m.

Sunday, 1/11 – 22 Tevet

Shacharit – 8:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv – 4:50 p.m.

Monday, 1/12 – 23 Tevet

Shacharit – 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv – 4:50 p.m.

Tuesday, 1/13 – 24 Tevet

Shacharit – 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv – 4:50 p.m.

Wednesday, 1/14 – 25 Tevet

Shacharit – 7:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv – 4:50 p.m.
Tanya Shiur: 2nd part of Tanya Shaar HaYichud
V'Emunah which deals w/the nature of creation
and the unity of Hashem – cancelled this week

Thursday, 1/15 – 26 Tevet

Shacharit – 6:50 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv – 4:50 p.m.

Friday, 1/16 – 27 Tevet

Shacharit – 7:00 a.m.
Shabbat Candles – 4:50 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv – 4:50 p.m.