

Moses name

And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water.
(Exodus 2:10)

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The child grew.

Jochebed had saved her son's life by transferring her rights as mother to Pharaoh's daughter. Now she received him back, on loan as it were, and merely as a nurse hired for his years of infancy. She gave him up that she might keep him, lost him that she might find him again, stooped that she might conquer. The time the child was with its mother, not stated in the Bible but given as 2 or 3 years by most commentators, was actually about 12 years (PP 244). During these years of childhood the foundations of character and later religious experience were laid. Instruction neglected now could not be made up later. Moses' afterlife shows clearly that his parents used well the years allotted them for bringing him up in the way in which he should go.

She brought him.

Many commentators have expressed the view that Moses' mother took her son to the palace of her own volition as soon as he was weaned, at the age of perhaps two or three years. As noted above, this actually occurred at about the age of 12. The idea that she surrendered him voluntarily is based on the absence of any indication that she was forced to give him up. Unless she took him to the palace at a time previously agreed upon, to do so on her own initiative would seem to show a strange lack of motherly affection. Would Jochebed have given up a son she loved so dearly without being required to do so? She must have kept him as long as she could. Her surrender of Moses at the age of 12 would imply that her term of service as "nurse" was to expire with the close of what was generally considered the period of childhood (see PP 244).

Moses.

The Hebrew, *Mosheh*, is comparable to the Egyptian mes or mesu, meaning "child," "son," "the one born of." During the Eighteenth Dynasty, under which Moses was born and brought up, it was customary to select for members of the royal family, names designating them as offspring of the gods. Names such as

- Ahmose, "The one born of [the moon-god] Ah";
- Kamose, "The one born of the [deified soul, the] Ka";
- Thutmose, "The one born of [the god] Thoth"; and
- Ramose (later Ramses), "The one born of [the sun-god] Ra";

were in everyday life often abbreviated to “Mose.” Students of Egyptology would say that Pharaoh’s daughter gave the child she adopted a name similar to Thutmose or Ahmose, of which that part referring to a heathen deity was dropped by Moses when he “refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter” (Heb. 11:24).

Again, she may have omitted the title of any god and instead given him only the abbreviated name “Mose,” since she neither knew his earthly parentage nor could claim that, as a Hebrew, he was the son of an Egyptian god. However, it is probable that the name she gave the child was Egyptian, though the form in which we know it today is Hebrew.

Drew him out.

The name *Mosheh* means, literally, “*one drawn out.*” It is the participial form of, and has the same consonants as, the verb *mashah*, “to draw out.” Since the Egyptian name Mose and the Hebrew verb *mashah* were similar in sound and related in meaning, the Hebrews may have transliterated Mose as *Mosheh*. Thus it would conform to the statement of the Egyptian princess, “Because I drew him out of the water.”

This statement implies that she accepted him as a gift to her from the river god, the Nile. In the Egyptian pantheon the Nile was deified as Hapi, though the stream itself was known as *’Itru*, later simply as *’Iru*. This the Hebrews transliterated as *Yeor*, and with one exception (Dan. 12:5-7)

Bible writers use it exclusively (49 times) in referring to the Nile and its tributaries (see Gen. 41:1; Isa. 7:18; Eze. 29:3; Nahum 3:8; etc.). **Originally, Moses’ name in Egyptian may thus have been Hapmose or ’Irumose, meaning,** “The one born of [Heb., “drawn out of”] the Nile.”

In refusing “to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter” (Heb. 11:24), he would naturally drop the reference to an Egyptian deity.

Translators of the LXX rendered his name Mouses.

In explanation of this name, Josephus (*Antiquities* ii. 9. 6) explains *Mo* as an Egyptian name for the Nile, and uses as Egyptian for anyone “drawn” or “saved” out of it. According to this explanation, then, *Moses* would mean, “The one saved out of the Nile,” a most appropriate name for one destined to save his people from the land of the Nile. It is not clear, however, whether Josephus’ explanation is based on fact or on wishful thinking.

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