

## **A PASSOVER PLAY**

**STORYTELLER:** This play presents a few of the events leading up to Passover and reminds us of how important freedom is for all people. As a teaching play, it gives students and all of us a chance to deepen our knowledge of Torah. The answers to the apparent confusion or ignorance of some of the characters is included in parentheses, which the crowd can shout out if necessary during the performance.

### **STORYTELLER: SCENE ONE: THE MIDWIVES**

**CROWD:** Shiprah, Puah! Shiprah, Puah!

**STORYTELLER:** Shiprah? Puah? What kinds of names are those? Who are they?

**CROWD:** Good question!

**STORYTELLER:** No really, who are they? (Hebrew midwives). And why are you cheering for them?

**CROWD:** Who knows?

**STORYTELLER:** No really, doesn't anyone know? (Because they wouldn't kill the first-born male children of the Israelites)

### **STORYTELLER: SCENE TWO: MOSES IN THE BULRUSHES**

**MIRIAM:** Shh, Moses, don't cry. Here I am, taking my little baby brother and sailing him down the river. I hope I've got the right river. Now, what is the same of this river? (the Nile). Oh look! Somebody's coming! She looks awfully familiar, but I can't place her. It's, it's... (Pharaoh's daughter)

**PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER:** A Hebrew baby! I think I'll keep him. (To Miriam) Who are you, child?

**MIRIAM:** Oh no, I'm so nervous, I can't remember my own name. My name is... my name is... (Miriam)

**PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER:** Well, Miriam, I'll keep this little boy, and I'll name him Moses.

**MIRIAM:** What kind of a name is that?

**PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER:** Well now, for the life of me, I don't know. It must mean something, but I can't quite recall... (drawn out of the water)

### **STORYTELLER: SCENE THREE: MOSES IN MIDIAN**

**STORYTELLER:** Moses is drinking from a well. Jephro's daughters are there, getting water.

**MOSES:** This is a lovely land. What's it called?

**ZIPPORAH:** I, I can't tell you. I knew the name only a moment ago... (Midian)

**STORYTELLER:** Some men come up and push the girls aside.

**MOSES:** Hey, what are you guys doing?

**SHEPHEARD:** We need water. We can't do our job properly unless we get some water.

**MOSES:** Well, what line of work are you in anyway?

**SHEPHERD:** It's a little difficult to describe. We're... we're... (shepherds)

**MOSES:** Well, you're rude shepherds. Let these young women have a turn first. After all, they were here first.

**ZIPPORAH:** Moses, come home with us. I want you to meet our father. This is my father. His name is, uh, uh... his name is (Jethro [also Reuel])

**JETHRO:** Hello, Moses. I'm Jethro and this is my daughter, uh, uh... my daughter (Zipporah). We call her Zipper for short. It sounds like you did a good job down by the well, so you and Zipper can be married if you like.

#### **STORYTELLER: SCENE FOUR: MOSES AND THE BURNING BUSH**

**MOSES:** Here I am, taking care of the sheep, just like I've been doing for the past 40 years or so, near the mountain... what's its name? (Horeb). Wait! What's that? A campfire? Too early in the season for camping. A forest fire? It's something burning for sure. It's a burning... (bush). I'd better take a closer look. There's something stranger about this bush though I can't figure out exactly what (it isn't consumed by the flames)

**GOD:** Moses, Moses!

**MOSES:** Here I am.

**GOD:** Mumble, mumble.

**MOSES:** Say what?

**GOD:** Mumble, mumble.

**MOSES:** What was that? I can't understand? Does anyone know what God said to me? (Take off your shoes, because you're standing on holy ground)

**GOD:** Moses, I've seen the affliction of My people in Egypt and I've heard them crying out. I'm going to deliver them, and bring them to a land that is overflowing with... with... (milk and honey)

**MOSES:** That sounds really good, God, but who am I, that I should talk to the mighty Pharaoh?

**GOD:** Don't worry, Moses, I'll be with you the whole way.

**MOSES:** But when the children of Israel ask me about Your name, what shall I tell them?

**GOD:** Glad you asked, I've got a new one, one they've never heard before. I think they're really gonna go for it. Just a minute, it's slipped my mind, it's... (I am that I am). Well maybe if I could remember the Hebrew... nope, it's not coming to me (Ehyeh asher Ehyeh).

**MOSES:** I don't know about this, God. I still don't think they'll believe me.

**GOD:** What's in your hand?

**MOSES:** It looks familiar, but I couldn't say. It looks like a... like a... (rod)

**GOD:** Throw it on the ground.

**MOSES:** Oh goodness, it's not a rod any more, it's a... a... (snake).

**GOD:** If that doesn't do the trick, I'll give you a couple more signs and wonders, just in case.

**MOSES:** I still don't know, Lord. I'm not exactly what you call a clever speechmaker. In fact, everyone says I'm, I'm... (slow of speech and of tongue)

**GOD:** Moses, don't you think I know that? Remember, I'm God, I know everything. Look, don't worry about it, I'll be right there in your mouth, and teach you everything you need to say. You're still not convinced? Give me a break! Wait, look who's coming.

**MOSES:** I can't see. The light's in my eyes... (Aaron)

**GOD:** Right, Aaron. Let him do the talking.

#### **STORYTELLER: SCENE FIVE: MOSES AND PHARAOH**

**MOSES AND AARON:** Pharaoh, thus saith the Lord: Let my people go!

**PHARAOH:** let you go? You guys must be crazy. Who would build my cities for me? I've never heard of this god anyway. Back to work! Taskmasters! These Hebrews are bored

and lazy. Their life is too easy. I tell you what. Don't give them any more, any more... (straw) to make their... their (bricks). That should give them something to think about!

**CROWD:** This is terrible! We're even worse off than we were! Moses, do something!

**MOSES:** Lord, what's going on? You promised us a land of milk and honey. But you haven't delivered us at all.

**GOD:** Be patient. Wait and see.

#### **STORYTELLER: SCENE SIX: MOSES AND THE PLAGUES**

**Moses:** What's the good word, Pharaoh?

**PHARAOH:** It's no use, Moses, my heart is hardened. That trick with the rod was pathetic. My magicians matched it easily.

**MOSES:** True. But what happened to the serpents your magician made?

**PHARAOH:** I forget that part (Aaron's serpent swallowed the magician's serpents)

**MOSES:** I wish you'd change your mind, Pharaoh. It's gonna get pretty bad around here.

**PHARAOH:** Don't try to scare me, Moses. I'm a stubborn man. And now, it's time for my bath.

**STORYTELLER:** PHARAOH goes to the river. MOSES strikes the water with his rod.

**CROWD:** Oh no, the river is turning to... (blood)

**PHARAOH:** Oh boy. How long is this going to last? (7 days)

**MOSES:** Pharaoh, you've got to let the children of Israel go. All they want is not to be slaves, to be free. Otherwise God will send a plague of... of... (frogs)

**PHARAOH:** I hate these frogs, slimy little creates. Look, Moses, get your God to take them away and I'll let you all go.

**MOSES:** You double-crossed us, Pharaoh. The Lord killed all the frogs, yet we're still here as your slaves. The next plague will be a real doozy. It's gonna be... gonna be... (gnats).

**STORYTELLER:** Sure enough, the Pharaoh remained stubborn and the plague of gnats arrived.

**MOSES:** Still haven't changed your mind? I've come to warn you another plague is on its way, thin time a plague of... of... (flies)

**PHARAOH:** Alright already! Enough is enough. Sacrifice to your god, what's the big deal? But do it here, in Egypt. I don't want you wandering about in the wilderness; and I especially don't want you to be free.

**MOSES:** Sorry, Pharaoh, no can do. The Lord was pretty explicit. God told us to go into the wilderness for a journey of... now, how many days did he tell me? (3 days)

**PHARAOH:** Fine, fine. You can all go, just don't go too far. And make your god get rid of these darned flies.

**MOSES:** You lied to us, Pharaoh. I think the Lord is beginning to lose patience. Another plague has come. Look out the window and tell me what you see.

**PHARAOH:** Something's happening for sure. Oh no, my animals? What's happening? (Beasts, cows, camel, cattle are all sickening and dying)

**MOSES:** Still hard of heart, Pharaoh? Maybe this next plague will persuade you. It's... it's... (boils)

**PHARAOH:** (groaning) You can torment me all you want, you people aren't going anywhere. You're my slaves and that's that.

**MOSES:** I hope you don't mean that, because here comes another plague.

**PHARAOH:** What's that falling out of the sky? (hail) Very well, I think it's time for me to reconsider. Your god is righteous and I am a wicked man. Just tell your god to make it stop hailing, and I promise I will let you go. For real! (Under his breath) This Moses is pretty gullible and his god isn't much better. Y heart is just as hard as it ever was, and these Hebrews are going to stay right here in Egypt if I have anything to say about it!

**MOSES:** God, Pharaoh keeps lying to us. He says he'll let us go after each plague You send, but then he goes back on his word. What can we do?

**GOD:** This is so frustrating! Let me send a couple more plagues and see what happens. I think next I'll send a plague of... (locusts).

**PHARAOH:** Ugh, ugh, all these bugs! But I need the Israelites to be my slaves and build my... (pyramids). They can't leave.

**MOSES:** No deal, God. We're still stuck here. Try another one.

**GOD:** Okey-dokey. I have something that's pretty scary, it's... (3 days and nights of darkness)

**PHARAOH:** Wait, what's going on! I can't see anything. It's pitch black, even in the daytime. This is so annoying. But no deal, Moses, you Israelites are staying right where you are. No freedom for you!

**STORYTELLER:** But after a final plague, Pharaoh realizes he can't keep the Israelites as slaves any longer. So he lets them go.

**WOMAN 1:** Hurry, hurry! We don't have time to let the bread rise, just take it flat! We'll call it... (matzah). Pharaoh might change his mind and come after us at any minute!

**STORYTELLER: SCENE SEVEN: AT THE RED SEA**

**CROWD:** Oh no oh no!

**MOSES:** What's the problem?

**CROWD:** We're at some body of water, we don't know what it's called (the Red or Reed Sea). It's too deep to cross!

**MOSES:** God will help us! Let's go!

**STORYTELLER:** Moses led the Israelites into the water and, miracle of miracles, the seas parted!

**WOMAN 1:** It's a miracle!

**STORYTELLER:** But after a little while, the Israelites realized it was a long hike across the sea bed and they began to grumble.

**MAN 1:** It's hot!

**MAN 2:** It's muddy!

**CHILDREN (CROWD):** Are we there yet? Are we there yet?

**STORYTELLER:** But even after Pharaoh said he would let the Israelites go, he was still very tricky. As soon as they had departed he sent his soldiers after them to chase them down and bring them back.

**WOMAN 1:** Oh no oh no!

**MOSES:** What's the problem now?

**WOMAN 1:** Look behind you! Pharaoh's army is coming to capture us and take us back to slavery!

**MOSES:** Run, everybody, run as fast as you can!

**STORYTELLER:** The Israelites run as fast as they can, ignoring the mud and the heat, and Pharaoh's army is right behind them. But then the sea comes together again right behind the last Israelite and swallows up the soldiers. The Israelites are free, free at last.

**MOSES:** Hurry up, people. We still have a long trek through the desert... I'm not sure exactly how long it will take... (40 years in the wilderness) before we reach... hmmm, where are we going again?... (the Promised Land).

**MIRIAM:** Wait, Moses. Before we get going, let's take a pause. A great miracle has just happened. We were slaves and now we are free! Let's celebrate this great occasion. Let's all... (DANCE!) (The whole cast dances together)

**THE END**