

## Crimes of Faith

### Anah Jochebed

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*Near-ecstatic prose and a complicated subject matter make for challenging and timely reading.*

In *Crimes of Faith*, Anah Jochebed employs visionary prose that seems to have been crafted while in an ecstatic state to give voice to her fight for dignity and to leave a legacy for her daughter, to whom her book is dedicated.

“This book cannot be written with kind words. It will not be poetic,” Jochebed states as she reveals how the sexual harassment she endured while serving in the military led to physical, mental, professional, and spiritual harm, while its perpetrators went unpunished. Her recounting of the difficult events in her life sets the stage for a series of passionate visionary writings and interpretations of dreams, ancient teachings, and scriptures, including the Bible and less well-known texts such as *The Book of Mysteries* (also known as *The Book of Secrets*).

Jochebed gives graphic descriptions of continual sexual harassment by military men, and relates the failure of superiors to take action on her behalf. Her initial joy at, and commitment to, serving her country is extinguished as all attempts to report and seek redress for the abuse she suffers prove futile. As her abusers are promoted above her, her hurt and anger become unendurable.

When even psychologists are unable, or unwilling, to hear her pleas for help, Jochebed turns to narcotics to dull her pain, and soon finds herself in the grip of the justice system. After years spent in and out of jail, she begins to pursue “self-study” to turn her life around.

Topically, Jochebed's book is both timely and important, with its calling out of the “spiritless souls hiding behind the walls which they have built” and of the damage they do to sensitive spirits. Though filled with amazing imagery, the writing is also difficult to read and comprehend, and may not be accessible to the average reader due to serious and frequent errors in grammar, syntax, punctuation, and word usage. A plenitude of disclosed facts and statistics may also leave readers wanting for citations.

The volume is graced with beautiful black-and-white reproductions of artwork by artists including Rembrandt, Fra Angelico, and Gustave Doré. The layout, design, and cover art are attractive, and the use of different fonts adds a touch of artistic flair.

Despite the abuse and injustice she suffered, Jochebed's memoir-like *Crimes of Faith* stands as a much-needed example of strength and courage that brings home a message from Philippians: “What has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel.”

KRISTINE MORRIS (January 21, 2016)

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