

Numbers 12:1-16 Know Your Place

It is not uncommon for a person who believes they hear from YeHoVaH to rise up against and or challenge the chosen leader YeHoVaH has called to lead.

Moses was challenged by the Children of Israel on several occasions throughout Torah. In the previous Chapter, Moses was challenged by the people of the community. In Numbers 16, Moses was challenged by some Levites and famous men in the congregation.

In this Chapter, Moses is challenged by his own family members, Miriam, his sister who is a Prophetess, and his brother Aaron, the High Priest chosen by God. In this case, a Prophetess and the High Priest, YeHoVaH had ordained, spoke against the leader that YeHoVaH had called.

Aaron was ordained by Moses as per YeHoVaH's Instructions. Moses was not ordained by anyone, but simply chosen by YeHoVaH.

Nu 12:1 And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

Ethiopian – **03571** קִשְׁיִית Kuwshiyth {koo-sheeth'}

Meaning: 1) a Cushite woman, Moses' wife so-called by Miriam and Aaron

Usage: AV - Ethiopian 2; 2

Notes: ¹ Ethiopian: or, Cushite

Some Bible versions have Cushite

Cush – **03568** כּוּשׁ Kuwsh {koosh}

Meaning: Cush = "black" n pr m 1) a Benjamite mentioned only in the title of Ps 7 2) the son of Ham and grandson of Noah and the progenitor of the southernmost peoples located in Africa 3) the peoples descended from Cush n pr loc 4) the land occupied by the descendants of Cush located around the southern parts of the Nile (Ethiopia)

Usage: AV - Ethiopia 19, Cush 8, Ethiopians 3; 30

Miriam was a Prophet. Aaron was High Priest. Miriam was mentioned first which suggests she may have been the one instigating the conversation. Furthermore, she was the only one left with leprosy.

The opening verse to this Chapter indicates that Miriam and Aaron had a problem. Their conversation and problem seemed to be about Moses' Ethiopian wife, but based on what YeHoVaH said, the real issue was something else.

Moses had been away from Egypt for forty years. In that time, Moses had gotten married and had two sons. The verse introduces Moses' wife as an Ethiopian/Cushite wife.

Miriam and Aaron met Moses' wife for the first time in Exodus Chapter 18 when Jethro brought her to Moses after the Exodus from Egypt.

Ex 18:2 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back,

Ex 18:3 And her two sons; of which the name of the one was Gershom; for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land:

Ex 18:4 And the name of the other was Eliezer; for the God of my father, *said he*, was mine help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh:

Ex 18:5 And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife unto Moses into the wilderness, where he encamped at the mount of God:

Ex 18:6 And he said unto Moses, I thy father-in-law Jethro am come unto thee, and thy wife, and her two sons with her.

At that time, Moses had been married around forty years.

In Numbers 10, Moses asked Zipporah's brother to join them.

Nu 10:29 And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which YeHoVaH said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for YeHoVaH hath spoken good concerning Israel.

Nu 10:30 And he said unto him, I will not go; but I will depart to mine own land, and to my kindred.

Nu 10:31 And he said, Leave us not, I pray thee; forasmuch as thou knowest how we are to encamp in the wilderness, and thou mayest be to us instead of eyes.

Nu 10:32 And it shall be, if thou go with us, yea, it shall be, that what goodness YeHoVaH shall do unto us, the same will we do unto thee.

Nu 10:33 And they departed from the mount of YeHoVaH three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of YeHoVaH went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them.

Midianites were descendants of Abraham and Keturah.

Ge 25:1 Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah.

Ge 25:2 And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and **Midian**, and Ishbak, and Shuah.

Moses' wife was of Hebrew decent, being a descendant of Abraham, but she was not an Israelite. Miriam and Aaron associated Moses' wife to Cush. Maybe they did not know the history.

Moses wrote Genesis, and the history of Abraham's marriage to Keturah and the children they bore, as it was given to him by YeHoVaH.

Miriam and Aaron seemed to have made the conversation about who Moses married, but the real issue was something else.

Sometimes people come against you with one thing, but the real issue comes out later.

Verse 1 and Verse 2 seem disconnected.

Nu 12:2 And they said, Hath YeHoVaH indeed spoken only by Moses? **hath he not spoken also by us**? And YeHoVaH heard *it*.

According to Micah, Aaron and Miriam were leaders.

Mic 6:4 For I brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

Miriam led the women in song and dance.

Ex 15:20 And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.

Ex 15:21 And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to YeHoVaH, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

Why Miriam and Aaron had an issue with who Moses married is not mentioned. They involved YeHoVaH in their murmuring when they said:

Nu 12:2 And they said, Hath YeHoVaH indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And YeHoVaH heard *it*.

YeHoVaH heard their conversation.

The text suggest that they were speaking privately amongst themselves, and Moses was not part of the conversation. This indicated that they were speaking behind Moses' back.

Nu 12:3 (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)

Meek – **06035** עָנָו `anav {aw-nawv'} or [by intermixture with 6041] עָנָיַן `anayn {aw-nawv'}

Meaning: 1) poor, humble, afflicted, meek 1a) poor, needy 1b) poor and weak 1c) poor, weak and afflicted 1d) humble, lowly, meek

Origin: from 06031; TWOT - 1652a; n m

Usage: AV - meek 13, humble 5, poor 5, lowly 2, vr meek 1; 26

The only time this Hebrew word is used in the Torah is in reference to Moses.

The Psalmist wrote:

Ps 25:9 The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.

Ps 37:11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Yeshua was quoting a portion of Psalm 37:11 when He said:

Mt 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

YeHoVaH had an issue with Miriam and Aaron speaking against Moses.

Moses, Aaron, and Miriam all heard the voice of YeHoVaH summon them.

Nu 12:4 And YeHoVaH spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out.

Nu 12:5 And YeHoVaH came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth.

YeHoVaH spoke directly to all of them. YeHoVaH addressed the real issue in their hearts.

YeHoVaH does not address their conversation about Moses' wife. He addressed the issue about who He speaks to, or spoke to, which seems to be the heart of the matter of their discussion.

Nu 12:6 And he said, Hear now my words: If there be a prophet among you, / YeHoVaH will make myself known unto him in a vision, *and* will speak unto him in a dream.

Vision – **04759** מַרְאֵה mar'ah {mar-aw'}

Meaning: 1) vision 1a) mode of revelation 2) mirror

Usage: AV - vision 11, lookingglasses 1; 12

Dream – **02472** חֲלוֹם chalowm {khal-ome'} or (shortened) חֶלֶם chalom {khal-ome'}

Meaning: 1) dream 1a) dream (ordinary) 1b) dream (with prophetic meaning)
1; 65

Nu 12:7 My servant Moses *is* not so, who *is* faithful in all mine house.

YeHoVaH made a clear distinction between them and Moses.

Nu 12:8 With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and **not** in dark speeches; and the similitude of YeHoVaH shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

How YeHoVaH spoke to Moses:

- Mouth to mouth
- Apparently
- Not in dark speeches
- Similitude

Apparently – **04758** מַרְאֵה mar'eh {mar-eh'}

Meaning: 1) sight, appearance, vision 1a) sight, phenomenon, spectacle, appearance, vision 1b) what is seen 1c) a vision (supernatural) 1d) sight, vision (power of seeing)

Usage: AV - appearance 35, sight 18, countenance 11, vision 11, favoured 7, look upon 4, fair + 02896 2, misc 15; 103

Dark speeches – **02420** חֵידָה chiydah {khee-daw'}

Meaning: 1) riddle, difficult question, parable, enigmatic saying or question, perplexing saying or question 1a) riddle (dark obscure utterance) 1b) riddle, enigma (to be guessed) 1c) perplexing questions (difficult) 1d) double dealing (with 'havin')

Usage: AV - riddle 9, dark sayings 3, hard question 2, dark sentence 1, proverb 1, dark speech 1; 17

Similitude – **08544** תְּמוּנָה temuwnah {tem-oo-naw'} or תְּמוּנָה temunah {tem-oo-naw'}

Meaning: 1) form, image, likeness, representation, semblance

Usage: AV - likeness 5, similitude 4, image 1; 10

In Deuteronomy 34, it is recorded:

Dt 34:10 And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom YeHoVaH knew face to face,

YeHoVaH asked them why they were not afraid to speak against Moses in such a way.

Nu 12:8 ... wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?

The Hebrew writer wrote:

Heb 13:17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.

Nu 12:9 And the anger of YeHoVaH was kindled against them; and he departed.

Kindled **02734** כָּחַרַח {khaw-raw'}

Meaning: 1) to be hot, furious, burn, become angry, be kindled 1a) (Qal) to burn, kindle (anger) 1b) (Niphal) to be angry with, be incensed 1c) (Hiphil) to burn, kindle 1d) (Hithpael) to heat oneself in vexation

Usage: AV - kindled 44, wroth 13, hot 10, angry 9, displease 4, fret 4, incensed 2, burn 1, earnestly 1, grieved 1, very 1; 90

YeHoVaH was angry with Aaron and Miriam, but only made Miriam leprous.

Nu 12:10 And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam *became* leprous, *white* as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, *she was* leprous.

- What was Aaron's punishment?
- Miriam's leprosy caused great concern to Aaron who feared for her life. He immediately recognized their sin and its effect, and then pleaded with Moses on Miriam's behalf.
- Aaron's response was that he recognized and confessed their sin; he appeared to be repentant.

Nu 12:11 And Aaron said unto Moses, Alas, my lord, I beseech thee, lay not the sin upon us, wherein we have done foolishly, and wherein we have sinned.

Nu 12:12 Let her not be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb.

Aaron's response caused Moses to cry out to YeHoVaH on her behalf to heal her now.

Nu 12:13 And Moses cried unto YeHoVaH, saying, Heal her now, O God, I beseech thee.

YeHoVaH responded to Moses with a question and a time period.

Nu 12:14 And YeHoVaH said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut out from the camp seven days, and after that let her be received in *again*.

Nu 12:15 And Miriam was shut out from the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again.

Nu 12:16 And afterward the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the wilderness of Paran.

You would think that with all the death, plagues, rebukes, corrections, and warnings, that the people would see that **YeHoVaH is serious about His WORD!**