

Miriam

When we first meet Miriam she is involved in one of history's most unusual babysitting jobs.

Exodus 2:1-10 [New King James] *“And a man of the house of Levi went and took as wife a daughter of Levi. So the woman conceived and bore a son. And when she saw that he was a beautiful child, she hid him three months. But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of bulrushes for him, daubed it with asphalt and pitch, put the child in it, and laid it in the reeds by the river's bank. And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him. Then the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it. And when she opened it, she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, ‘This is one of the Hebrews’ children.’ Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, ‘Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?’ And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, ‘Go.’ So the maiden went and called the child's mother. Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, ‘Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages.’ So the woman took the child and nursed him. And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. So she called his name Moses, saying, ‘Because I drew him out of the water.’”*

Miriam's quick thinking allowed Moses to be raised by his own mother.

This protective superiority of her younger brother, reinforced by this event, must have been hard for Miriam to give up as she watched Moses' rise to greatness.

Eventually Moses' choice of wife gave Miriam an opportunity to criticise.

It was natural for Miriam's insecurity to be renewed as now she was not the most important woman in Moses' life.

The real issue was **not** the kind of woman Moses had married.

Numbers 12:1-2 [New King James] *“Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for he had married an Ethiopian woman. So they said, ‘Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?’ And the LORD heard it.”*

Moses was now the most important man in Israel.

“Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses?” This statement shows the real underlying reason for this stand against Moses.

“Has He not spoken through us also?”

Moses, the younger brother of Miriam, had become far more successful and this had put family loyalty strained to breaking point.

Simply put, Miriam was jealous of Moses' authority.

The lesson we can learn from this event is that our motive behind any criticism we make is more important for us to deal with than the criticism itself.

Ask the question, why am I criticising this person?

We need to pause long enough before we actually criticise a person to discover our personal motive for making this criticism, failing to do this can bring disastrous results.

Numbers 12:3-10 [New King James] *“(Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.) Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, ‘Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!’ So the three came out. Then the LORD came down in the pillar of cloud and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. Then He said, ‘Hear now My words: If there is a prophet among you, I, the LORD, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; He is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?’ So the anger of the LORD was aroused against them, and He departed. And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, suddenly Miriam became leprous, as white as snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper.”*

All too often what we may consider to be “constructive criticism” may actually be “disastrous jealousy,” for the easiest way to raise our own status is to bring someone else down.

Does the critical finger we point need to be pointed first towards ourselves?

Exodus 15:20-21 [New King James] *“Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them: ‘Sing to the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider he has thrown into the sea!’”*

Miriam is called a prophetess for the lead she gave to the women in music, dancing and singing a psalm of praise to the Creator God, to celebrate the crossing of the Red Sea.

Micah 6:4 [New King James] *“Testify against Me. For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, I redeemed you from the house of bondage; and I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.”*

Miriam is listed as part of the team that God used to bring the Israelites out of Egypt.

Numbers 20:1 [New King James] *“Then the children of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the Wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in Kadesh; and Miriam died there and was buried there.”*

Miriam died in the wilderness and was buried there near Kadesh-Barnea.

There is no record in scripture of Miriam being married but rabbinical tradition makes her the wife of Caleb and mother of Hur.