

Conflict Resolution



Miriam and Aaron

Not only do conflict arise from without, but also from within: whether they are internal, i.e., conflicts between the flesh and spirit, or conflicts within families. The present Conflict looks into the hearts of siblings, namely, Miriam, Aaron and Moses.

The first Biblical introduction to these siblings dates back over eight decades, prior to Israel's deliverance from Egypt: the children of Israel are in the depth of oppression, in Egypt, and Pharaoh had issued an edict, and "charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive" (Exodus 1:22).

Among these sons of Israel, upon whom death was declared was Moses. Having hid Moses for three months, "And when she (his mother) could no longer hide him" (Exodus 2:3), she put Moses in an ark of bulrushes, "and laid it in the flags by the river's brink." It is at this time Miriam is introduced to the reader, i.e., "And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him" (Exodus 2:4): a sister's care and concern for her infant brother, and as a result of her watchful eyes, and quick response, Moses will be save from an inevitable demise, and will be reared in the house of Pharaoh for forty years.

After Moses had fled Egypt, and spent another forty years in the land of Midian, the time came for Israel to be victoriously led out of Egypt, by the power of God, and the leadership of Moses. However, concerning Jehovah's charge to Moses, saying, "Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt" (Exodus 4:10), Moses said, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Exodus 3:11). After further remonstrance, Jehovah said unto Moses, "Is there not Aaron thy brother the Levite? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. And thou shalt speak unto him, and put the words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and it shall come to pass, that he shall be to thee a mouth, and thou shalt be to him as God" (Exodus 4:14–16). Therefore, "Jehovah said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses" (Exodus 4:27).

These three individuals: Miriam, Aaron, and Moses, for eighty years, shared in birth, life, and faith, but as time progressed a seed of Conflict grew until it became full.

"And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married; for he had married a Cushite woman."

Although the initial charge against Moses was related to the Cushite woman he had taken to wife. However, as the event continues to unfold it is evident that the real reason Miriam, who was chief in this transgression, charged Moses with error was a challenge to the authority of Moses, saying, "Hath Jehovah indeed spoken only with Moses? hath he not spoken also with us?"

Jehovah's Resolution: "And Jehovah heard it. Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth. And Jehovah spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tent of meeting. And they three came out. And Jehovah came down in a pillar

of cloud, and stood at the door of the Tent, and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words: if there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known unto him in a vision, I will speak with him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so; he is faithful in all my house: with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches; and the form of Jehovah shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant, against Moses?"

The Conflict: "And the anger of Jehovah was kindled against them; and he departed. And the cloud removed from over the Tent; and, behold, Miriam was leprous, as white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous."

The Resolution: "And Aaron said unto Moses, Oh, my lord, lay not, I pray thee, sin upon us, for that we have done foolishly, and for that we have sinned. Let her not, I pray, be as one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he cometh out of his mother's womb. And Moses cried unto Jehovah, saying, Heal her, O God, I beseech thee. And Jehovah said unto Moses, If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days? let her be shut up without the camp seven days, and after that she shall be brought in again. And Miriam was shut up without the camp seven days: and the people journeyed not till Miriam was brought in again" (Numbers 12:1-15).

It is evident among men, and women, that the pride of life is a divisive characteristic that can be, and will be found where ever mankind is brought under the authority of others.

Within our text there is a phrase of important note, i.e., "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth." Many perceive meekness as weakness. However, when the Lord said, "blessed are the meek" (Matthew 5:5), Vine's describes meekness, saying, "In its use in Scripture, in which it has a fuller, deeper significance than in nonscriptural Greek writings, it consists not in a person's "outward behaviour only; nor yet in his relations to

his fellow-men; as little in his mere natural disposition. Rather it is an inwrought grace of the soul; and the exercises of it are first and chiefly towards God. It is that temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting." Or as Gill comments, "he (Jehovah), knew he was so exceeding meek, that he himself would pass it by without taking notice of it, though he might hear it: hence the Targum of Jonathan "and he cared not for their words; "they gave him no concern or uneasiness, so meek, mild, and gentle was he: and this is to be considered; not as a self-commendation of Moses, but as a testimony of his character by God himself." The actions of Moses, regarding the wellbeing of Miriam, even after her charges against him, speaks volumes to the nature of Moses.

Lesson learned? A man may want to be careful when challenging authority, as Gamaliel said, concerning the apostles of Jesus, "lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God" (Acts 5:39).