

Torah Portion: Chukat (Numbers 19:1-22:1)

[The focus of this Torah portion series is family structure and function as revealed in Scripture. I.e., headship, patriarchy, marriage, etc, graduating to understanding the community and Israel as a whole. If you have not read other portions up to this point, you may want to, as parts build on previous lessons in Torah, available at: <https://natsab.com/torah-portion-series/>]

Roughly 38 years have passed since the end of Numbers 18. The Red Heifer Ordinances were likely given at or before Mt. Sinai in preparation for the Tabernacle, but are interestingly placed in the latter parts of Numbers. Chapter 19 is an important chapter on the red heifer, however, we will not deal with it as it does not intersect our area of focus. But, be sure not to skip it altogether.

After the death of Miraim in chapter 20, the people again cry out for water. We, like them, are so fickle and stiff of neck. I'd like to think I'd act differently, but until the situation is presented, we cannot truly know how our hearts will respond. God, the Head, continually tests and trains the hearts of His people. His focus and desire is to remove the dross.

Numbers 20:² There was no water for the congregation, and they assembled themselves against Moses and Aaron. ³ The people thus contended with Moses and spoke, saying, "If only we had perished when our brothers perished before the Lord!" ⁴ Why then have you brought the Lord's assembly into this wilderness, for us and our beasts to die here? ⁵ Why have you made us come up from Egypt, to bring us into this wretched place? It is not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates, nor is there water to drink." ⁶ Then Moses and Aaron came in from the presence of the assembly to the doorway of the tent of meeting and fell on their faces. Then the glory of the Lord appeared to them;

What a hard hearted thing to say. “If only we had died when our brothers died before the Lord...”

Certainly, women tend to be much more emotive than men, but Israel seems crazy in their penchant for emotion v. logical response and careful thought. Men: We must be careful not to be led into rebellion by our fickle emotions or those people or conditions playing on them. A young friend of mine loves to say, ‘Facts don’t care about your feelings.’ Women: You are prone to short term thinking and emotion based decision making. *Both* will fail you if you cannot look beyond the immediacy to the Everlasting and trust that God knew exactly what He was doing when He placed you under the headship of man.

Men and women, recall, Elohim is from everlasting to everlasting and He is *still* seated on the throne, even when the world around us seems to be collapsing. Stand on the rock of facts and not on the immediate and wishy washy emotions that test us.

Moshe is understandably exasperated, but he lets the emotion of anger take charge for a split second and it cost him dearly!!

Numbers 20:⁷ and the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,

⁸ “Take the rod; and you and your brother Aaron assemble the congregation and speak to the rock before their eyes, that it may yield its water. You shall thus bring forth water for them out of the rock and let the congregation and their beasts drink.”

⁹ So Moses took the rod from before the Lord, just as He had commanded him; ¹⁰ and Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly before the rock. And he said to them, “Listen now, you rebels; shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock?” ¹¹ Then Moses lifted up his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation and their beasts drank. ¹² But the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because you have not believed Me, to treat Me as holy in the sight of the sons of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.” ¹³ Those *were* the waters of Meribah, because the sons of Israel contended with the Lord, and He proved Himself holy among them.

What a sad day for Moshe. Granted, he had walked in an amazing way before YHVH, and it was a good time for transition to Joshua, but for the transition to happen because he lost control of his temper and disobeyed his head is a tough pill to swallow.

Men, very one of us is prone to losing our temper at some point. Guard your lips. Remain loyal and connected with your Head, Yeshua!

Women, do not exasperate your husbands by grumbling and complaining and potentially giving occasion for them to sin. While they are responsible for their own sin, often the consequences roll down hill into the whole house... (Korach, Achan, Saul, etc) Instead, reverence the man under whose authority you are. Recall Ephesians 5 and the man-woman relationship as a model for Yeshua and the assembly.

Ephesians 5:²² Wives, *be subject* to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself *being* the Savior of the body. ²⁴ But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives *ought to be* to their husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. ²⁸ So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹ for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, ³⁰ because we are members of His body. ³¹ For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. ³² This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. ³³ Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects (*reverences*) her husband.

The final note I want to point out in this portion is the bittersweet moment of transfer of the High Priesthood from Aharon to Eleazar.

Numbers 20:²³ Then the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron at Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying, ²⁴ "Aaron will be gathered

to his people; for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the sons of Israel, because you rebelled against My command at the waters of Meribah. ²⁵ Take Aaron and his son Eleazar and bring them up to Mount Hor; ²⁶ and strip Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar. So Aaron will be gathered *to his people*, and will die there.” ²⁷ So Moses did just as the Lord had commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. ²⁸ After Moses had stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on his son Eleazar, Aaron died there on the mountain top. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. ²⁹ When all the congregation saw that Aaron had died, all the house of Israel wept for Aaron thirty days.

Men, how are we preparing the next generation? Are we intentional about passing the mantle? Are we careful to train them and prepare them for the day the *will* come? Or, do we float along and assume that leadership, manhood, and masculinity can be caught like some infectious virus?

At this point, Eleazar has been serving in the Tabernacle for about 38 or 39 years. He has seen his father weather so many storms. He has served *alongside his father* and grown in myriad ways by close association and interaction.

How are you preparing your sons? How are you intentional in doing so? Patriarchy is much more than just being the head, it is about preparing the next generation! How are you doing in this regard?

Selah!

Shabbat Shalom!