

## Parsha Q's- B'haalot'kha

Chapter 12 of Bamidbar opens by reporting that Aharon and Miriam spoke (do far as we know only with one another) unfavorably about Mosheh regarding his wife, either because they disliked her (for her ethnicity or for other reasons) or conversely because they felt he had unjustly separated from her. Their complaint as quoted, however, rests on their claim that G-d had spoken to them as well as Mosheh.

G-d responds in the person of the narrator that Mosheh was the most *anav* of men (nowadays *anav* is generally translated "humble", but the King James used "meek"; hence the translation of T'hilim 37:11, *va'anavim yirshu aretz*, as "the meek shall inherit the earth). In His Own voice G-d summons Miriam and Aharon and offers an account of the uniqueness of Mosaic prophecy, which seems generally to say that it is verbal as opposed to visual. In the midst of that defense, we find verse 7: "Not so My servant Mosheh: In/regarding all my house (*b'khol beiti*) he is *ne'eman*." (Note the irony of the Torah's recording G-d's account of the uniqueness of Mosheh's prophecy by – so far as the text records – speaking to Mosheh, Miriam and Aharon simultaneously and in the same manner.)

Question: What is the relevance of Mosheh's *ne'emanut* to either a) his siblings' criticism or b) G-d's defense?

Possible meanings and interpretations of *b'kholbeiti neeman*:

1) He has an excellent reputation among the Jews

This responds tangentially at best to a, and seems to have little to do with B. See however Sh'mot 19:9.

2) He is always in my house

This responds implicitly to a if we assume that constant presence in G-d's house prevents a marriage relationship, and the relationship to b is unclear but not terribly problematic.

3) He is the most accurate prophet.

This relates easily to b. It can be related to a if we assume that Mosheh claimed a Divine mandate for either his marriage or his separation.

4) He is responsible for my entire house (See Midrash T'hilim 90).

5) He is trustworthy not to abuse the power of his prophecy (See Netziv; see also the end of verse 8)

6) He is trustworthy not to reveal My secrets (See Chizkuni).

I leave it to you to work out the connections between 4-6 and context (I haven't necessarily isolated the right details of the context) and look forward to your suggestions.

Shabbat Shalom!

RK