WHAT’S MIRIAM DOING HERE?
Metzora – 2014

How are the following two verses connected?

1. Devarim 24:8-9

In cases of a skin affection be most careful to do as the levitical priests instruct you. Take care to do as I have commanded them. Remember what the L-rd your G-d did to Miriam on the journey after you left Egypt.

FIRST ANSWER

Background Reading - Bamidbar 12

How are the following two comments similar/different?

2. Rashi Devarim 24:9

If you wish to take precautions against being stricken with a skin affection at all, then do not speak slander in the first place. Remember what was done to Miriam, who spoke against her brother, Moses, and was stricken with lesions.

3. Ramban Devarim 24:9

We remember the great punishment which G-d inflicted upon the righteous prophetess who spoke only about her brother upon whom she had bestowed her mercy and whom she loved as herself. And she spoke nothing wrong to his face, but only, in privacy, between her and her holy brother, Aaron. Yet all her good deeds were of no avail to her. You, too...will not be saved.
SECOND ANSWER

4. Devarim 25:17

Remember what Amalek did to you on your journey, after you left Egypt.

5. Ramban Devarim 24:9

In my opinion this actually is a positive commandment… I might think this means in your heart. But “In cases of a skin affection be most careful to do” refers already to forgetfulness of the heart. How then can I fulfill the injunction “Remember what the L-rd your G-d did to Miriam” I must conclude that it means verbal utterance... It appears from here our rabbis considered this a commandment, not as a narrative and advice on how to be saved from plagues as Rashi explained it. And how is it possible that, concerning slander which is as weighty as bloodshed, there should not be a real negative commandments against it in Torah... But this verse contains a great admonition to refrain from it in public and in private, whether with intention to hurt and to shame or with no intent to harm at all. And this commandment is one of the 613 commandments...

THIRD ANSWER

6. Shabbat 97a

Said Reish Lakish: A person who suspects innocent individuals will be bodily afflicted...

7. Legends of the Jews – Aaron and Miriam Slander Moses

When the seventy elders were appointed, and the spirit of the Lord came upon them, all the women lighted the candles of joy, to celebrate by this illumination the elevation of these men to the dignity of prophets. Zipporah, Moses' wife, saw the illumination, and asked Miriam to explain it. She told her the reason, and added, "Blessed are the women who behold with their eyes how their husbands are raised to dignity." Zipporah answered, "It would be more proper to say, 'Woe to the wives of these men who must now
abstain from all conjugal happiness!" Miriam: "How does thou know this?"
Zipporah: "I judge so from the conduct of thy brother, for ever since he was
chosen to receive Divine revelations, he no longer knows his wife." Miriam
hereupon went to Aaron, and said to him: "I also received Divine revelations,
but without being obliged to separated myself from my husband," whereupon
Aaron agreed, saying" "I, too, received Divine revelations, without, however,
being obliged to separated myself from my wife." Then both said: "Our
fathers also received revelations, but without discontinuing their conjugal life.
Moses abstains from conjugal joys only out of pride, to show how holy a man
he is." Not only did they speak evil of Moses to each other, but hastened to
him and told him to his face their opinion of his conduct. But he, who could
be self-assured and stern when it touched a matter concerning God's glory,
was silent to the undeserved reproached they heaped upon him, knowing
that upon God's bidding he had foresworn earthly pleasures.

8. Targum Yonatan Devarim 24:9

Be careful not to falsely suspect another person in order that you not be smitten.
Remember what the Lord your God Did to Miriam who falsely suspected Moshe of
something that wasn’t true, and she was smitten by skin affection

9. Chizkuni Devarim 24:8-9

Do not grant special honor to important people by exempting them from banishment from the camp.
Remember what God did to Miriam - even though she was sister to the king and high priest, she
was nevertheless banished outside the camp for the entire seven-day period.

Based on articles by Rabbi Menachem Liehtag and Rabbi Yaakov Bieler