

The last story in the *parasha* this week recounts Miriam speaking negatively about her brother Moshe. She is immediately stricken with *tzarrat* and as a consequence needs to be sent out of the camp for seven days. The Torah relates that the Jewish people did not travel for seven days as they waited for Miriam to be absorbed back into the camp.

וַתִּסָּגֵר מִרְיָם מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה שִׁבְעַת יָמִים וְהָעָם לֹא נָסַע עַד הָאֶסָּף מִרְיָם

So Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not travel until Miriam had entered.

Why was Miriam deserving of this honor? Rashi answers:

זה הכבוד חלק לה המקום בשביל שעה אחת שנתעכבה למשה כשהושלך לַיָּאֹר, שנאמר (שמות ב, ד) ותתצב אחותו מרחוק וגו':
This honor was accorded her by the Omnipresent because of the time she remained with Moses when he was cast into the river, as it says, "His sister stood by from afar to know what would be done to him"
(Exod. 2:4)

Rashi writes that this *kavod* was accorded to Miriam because she waited for a few moments* when Moshe, as a young baby, was thrown into the Nile. Miriam watched not to show *kavod* to Moshe, but to make sure he would remain alive. Because she waited and watched over him, the Jewish people waited for her 80 years later, and thereby she was given *kavod*.

Chizukuni explains the magnitude of the moment. This event happened on 23 Sivan in the second year in the desert, just as Bnei Yisrael were about to travel for one more week to enter Eretz Yisrael. They were one week away from reaching their destination, and still they waited an extra week until Miriam was able to rejoin the people for their journey.

Targum Yonatan elevates this waiting further by explaining:

ההוא זכותא הוון כל ישראל אשתין רבוון דהינן סכום תמנין לגיונין וענני יקרא ומשכנא ובירא לא זייעין ולא נטלין עד זמן
דאיתסיאת מרים נביאתא ומן בתר כדין נטלו עמא מחצרות ושרון במדברא דפארן

Through this merit all 600,000 people from Bnei Yisrael, the clouds of glory, the Mishkan and the well did not move and did not travel until Miriam was healed.

More than 3,000,000 people (including men, women, and children) waited 7 extra days for one person. Now that is showing *kavod*.

We discussed in class how important it is to wait for others who are just a few moments behind, as a way of demonstrating *kavod* to that person. Ask your children for the examples that we discussed. Just as the people waited in the desert for Miriam, we should also wait and show *kavod* for our friends, as that shows that we respect them as people and desire that they be part of the group.

* Tosafot calculates the amount of time as 20 minutes, since we are rewarded 500x the amount of the *mitzvah* - go calculate it!