

SEVENTH DAY PESACH 1983
Rabbi Joseph Radinsky

Why do we read in the Torah reading that the Jewish people only believed in G-d and Moshe after they saw that the Red Sea had split? Why didn't they believe in G-d and Moshe, His servant, in Egypt after they had seen all the plagues? What was so special about the Red Sea? If we look carefully at the text and what happened perhaps we can understand this problem. The text says "Beshalach Paro" "when Pharaoh sent them out". This implies that he forced them out. The Rabbis explain that six months earlier the slavery had actually ended when the plagues had begun and they had got used to Egypt and many of them did not want to leave. In Egypt the plagues had not afflicted the Jewish people. They had afflicted the Egyptians. The difference between what happened on the Red Sea and what happened in Egypt is that in Egypt the Jewish people continued on their natural course. The supernatural things affected the Egyptians. At the Red Sea the exact opposite occurred. The waters supernaturally parted. When they went back to their natural course then the Egyptian army was destroyed. In Egypt many Jews were not concerned about the plagues. Just like today when, as long as we keep to what we think is the natural and proper order, we are not concerned if catastrophies happen to other people. We talk about normal health and normal way of living when actually there is no such thing as normal. At the Red Sea the Jewish people learned that the normal things cannot be taken for granted. It was the normal process of the sea which saved them. This teaches us a very important lesson, that we should be just as thankful for continued good health as we are for a miraculous cure from a dread disease. Having everything run normally and not being harmed by the normal course of nature is as much a wonder as supernatural events. So many times people do not understand that. People do not appreciate what they have. The Jewish people did not appreciate that they had G-d's protection in the normal course of events. Today so many people do not appreciate what they have. They complain about everything. We should be careful to appreciate what we have. True, things could be better and we should want to make them better but this does not mean that we should not appreciate what we have. In today's life everyone is always running after the new. Something is a little, throw it out. The car is a little old, change it. If a wife is a little old, get rid of her. We do not learn to appreciate what we have. All we do is complain and complain. We should

appreciate what we have. It is only in this way that we learn to believe in G-d and in Moshe, His servant also. This reminds me of the story of the man who asked his friend if he knew the difference between irritation, frustration, and exasperation. If someone calls you in the middle of the night at 2:00, that's irritation. If they call back a half hour later and ask once again, "Where's Sam?", that's frustration. If a half hour later someone named Sam calls and says, "Do you have any messages for me?", that's exasperation.