



And They Believed in the Lord and in Moshe Parshas Beshalach

My father was fond of telling the story which he heard from the elderly Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch of Krinik. The later told my father of his trip to visit Rabbi Asher of Karlin back in 1873, Rabbi Asher led his community for only one year, and Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch of Krinik merited visiting him during this time.

When the Rebbe entered the *Tisch* on Rosh Hashanah eve, he poured his cup of wine and prepared to say the blessing. The Rebbe raised the cup, but then replaced it and began to look at those who had gathered before him. What was the Rebbe looking for? He motioned to one of the young participants and asked him to come closer. Fearfully, the young man approached the Rebbe, who in turn whispered in his ear: "If I can sense your thoughts, all the more so you must believe the G-d knows them". He did not clarify. The Rebbe continued on with the ceremony and recited the *Kiddush*.

Father would sit and tell us this story, stressing the moral. There is no question the Rebbe was a great leader, who knew his community well, and in that respect this incident was not extraordinary. What was special with this event, and what can be learned from it, is that through strong spiritual leaders and proper guidance one can come closer to G-d.

Father would explain the verse in our weekly parsha in the following manner: "And Israel saw the great hand, which the Lord had used upon the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in Moshe, His servant."¹ The Jewish Nation at that moment were on a very high spiritual level, as our Sages have taught us that the vision even the most simple person saw at the time of the parting of the sea was higher than the visions the prophet

Yechezkel witnessed. Even so, the Torah states: "and they believed in the Lord and in **Moshe, His servant.**"

The proper path is not to completely rely on oneself, but rather one should seek guidance from a spiritual mentor who can help him choose his path, as we are taught in Perkei Avos: "Rabbi Nehorai said: Go on voluntary exile to a place of Torah, and do not say that the Torah will follow you, for it is your companions who will make it your permanent possession. **Do not rely upon your own understanding.**"²

It's true, you have studied and achieved much on your own, but you should "not rely upon your own understanding", you should seek spiritual guidance. Why is this so? One can go astray, and so he needs someone to keep him in check, making sure he stays on the proper path.

Father would add that a spiritual guide can help you with a closer encounter of G-d.

At the conclusion of the ceremony the Rebbe went to his rooms. Many asked the young man what the Rebbe told him. He told that as the Rebbe was about to say the blessing over the cup of wine he had misguided thoughts about G-d and the Rebbe. The Rebbe sensed this and immediately set him back on the proper path. "I accepted the Rebbe's advice and returned to believe in G-d".

¹ Shmot 14, 31.

² Perkei Avot 4, 18.