

Yisrael saw the great hand that Hashem had inflicted upon Egypt; and the people revered Hashem and they had faith in Hashem. (14:31)

This *pasuk* teaches us an important principle for catalyzing fear of and faith in, Hashem: seeing the entire picture, past, present and future; looking at everything in the context that it is part of a larger picture. *Horav Nissen Alpert, zl*, distinguishes between the *yad*, hand, of Hashem, to which (the Torah states) *Klal Yisrael* had not been privy, and earlier images of spiritual expression, such as *etzba Elokim*, the finger of G-d. When *Klal Yisrael* stood at the banks of the Red Sea and looked back to the past, they realized that they were now seeing the hand of G-d, history in its entirety. The significance of the word *yad*, hand, is that a hand alludes to the ability to see something as a whole, as a complete picture – not as “fingers,” snippets of miracles not tied together to express an entire continuum. For the Jewish People, the past, present and future now all came into focus as a single unified image – in its entirety.

Prior to this, while the Jews were in Egypt – Egyptians saw what was termed as the *etzba*, finger, of G-d. They did not see the *yad*, hand. What this means is that, while they bore witness to many great, wondrous miracles which clearly indicated Hashem’s awesome power, all they saw was the here and now. They were unable to appreciate anything beyond the immediate impact of the miracles. They clearly saw and recognized the greatness that was occurring before their very eyes, but they were, alas, unable to take a broader view in order to comprehend G-d’s plan in its entirety.

When *Klal Yisrael* stood at the *Yam Suf*, they saw it all in its entirety. They were now able to perceive what had been missing earlier. *Zeh Keili v’anveihu*; “This is my G-d and I will beautify Him.” *Zeh Keili*; they perceived Hashem in the present. *Elokai Avi*; G-d of My Father; Hashem in the past. *Hashem yimloch l’Olam vaed*; “Hashem will reign forever and for all eternity”. Everything came together – past, present and future. It was all one, all due to the *yad ha’gedolah*, great hand, of Hashem. When they saw it all, they were inspired to such an elevated level of *yiraas Shomayim* and *emunah*, faith in Hashem that they leaped into the sea.