

And the people revered Hashem, and they believed in Hashem and in Moshe His servant. (14:31)

A Jew should strive to attain such a sublime level of *emunah* in Hashem that he truly believes with a clarity of vision. Let us explain. People accept the notion that “seeing is believing.” This means that in order to really believe, one must actually see the phenomenon. Hence, belief in a given concept is a step lower than actually seeing it. This is not the *Torah* perspective. The **Chidushei Ha’Rim** asserts that as *Bnei Yisrael* stood at the shores of the Red Sea and experienced unprecedented miracles, they were privy to a revelation of Hashem which was unparalleled. The *Torah* states that first *Bnei Yisrael* “saw” miracles. Only afterwards did they “believe” in Hashem. Their visual perception was insufficient. Their consequent *emunah* was the epitome of conviction. *Emunah* is faith so strong that one actually senses its reality.

We see this phenomenon in practice. The most erudite secularist will concede that our “eyes” make mistakes. That which we perceive as reality is often a figment of our imagination. One example is the color of the ocean. A picture of the ocean appears to be blue. Standing at a distance, gazing at the ocean, one sees blue. We know, however, that water has no color. The blue is the reflection of the sun against the water. Hence, seeing is not believing! Believing, true *emunah*, however, should be an unshakable and unmistakable form of vision.

Sfas Emes expounds upon this idea, questioning the “need” for the word “*vayaaminu*” “*they believed*,” after “*vayiru*,” “*they saw*.” What advantage does believing effect after one has already seen a spectacle and visually confirmed his belief? He responds that *emunah* is the acceptance of what one sees and believes into the heart and mind of the individual, so that it becomes a resolute part of the person’s ideological conviction. When one has *emunah sheleimah*, perfect faith, he is imbued with a perception that does not falter with the blandishments of the *yetzer hora*, evil inclination, or the vicissitudes of trial and travail. His belief constitutes his perception of reality! Seeing is not believing. Believing, however, takes what one sees and makes it “real.”