

Her story was both unusual and fascinating, a true 20th-century tale. Hedwig Eva Maria Kiesler was born in 1914 in Vienna, Austria. A beloved only child, Hedwig always attracted attention for her striking looks. By the time she was 16 she had embarked on a successful theatrical career.

Soon drawing the attention of Hollywood producers, in her early 20s Hedwig came to America and signed a contract with MGM. She continued to land parts opposite the most popular and talented actors of the day, including Spencer Tracy, Clark Gable and Jimmy Stewart. The public-relations department at MGM put out the claim that she was "the most beautiful woman in the world", and by Western standards she may have been.

Oh. I forgot to tell you that MGM changed her name. Hedwig Eva Maria Kiesler -- Jewish at birth - - became Hedy Lamarr.

But Hedy Lamarr was more than just a pretty face and talented actress: As a hobby, she invented. Since she made two or three movies a year, each one taking about a month to shoot, Hedy had spare time to fill. In Hollywood, she set up an inventor's corner in the drawing room of her house, complete with a drafting table, lamp and all the necessary drafting tools. When German submarines began torpedoing passenger liners during WW2, Hedy said, "I've got to invent something that will put a stop to that."

Her desire would give rise to the invention for which she would become famous many years later. Hedy Lamarr co-invented the technology for spread spectrum and frequency hopping communications. This new technology became important to America's military during World War II because it was used in controlling torpedoes. Those inventions have more recently been incorporated into Wi-Fi and Bluetooth technology, and led to Hedy Lamarr being inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame in 2014.

Hedy Lamarr was famously beautiful -- but there was a lot more to her than what met the eye. Looks can be deceiving. And looks certainly don't tell the whole truth -- as we see time and again in life, and in the Torah.

Let me ask you a question. What did Moses look like? Anyone know? Tall? Short? Fat? Red hair? What did Aaron look like? Miriam? We haven't got a clue!

I don't know if you've previously noticed, but classical Jewish texts -- the Torah, in particular -- are remarkably sparse on background information and physical descriptions. You never get a description of somebody unless it is strictly necessary for the narrative. When do you need to know that somebody is beautiful? When somebody might threaten to take his wife and kill him or to explain why they fell in love at first sight. So we discover that Sarah and Rachel were beautiful. But beyond that, we find no further details of their beauty.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, former Chief Rabbi of the British Empire, has a fascinating theory to explain the lack of attention to physicality in the Torah.

A dominant culture in today's world is the culture of sight. A sight culture is one in which the central intellectual act is seeing. The Greek word *theoria* means 'seeing'. *Theory* is something you see. Or the Latin word *idea*. We watch videos. If you drop the soft consonant 'v' from video, it's apparent that *video* comes from *idea*; An idea is something you see. Greek culture is a sight-oriented culture. Now what does a visual culture produce? Statues. Paintings. Architecture. Sculpture. A visual culture produces theater and drama. Through the visual arts, Greek culture reached a pinnacle that rarely if ever has been surpassed.

In Judaism, where is the art? Where's the architecture? Where are the paintings? Where is the drama, the theater? There isn't much. And classically, there's hardly any. This is fascinating because this shows that Judaism is not a culture of the eye. And it is not just, as you might think, because the second commandment prohibits the making of graven images. It goes much further.

When we look at somebody, what is the first thing we see? Obviously the most important thing we look at is their face. But what other clues do we have about their identity, their class, their lifestyle? Their clothes. Now, with the exception of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, where do clothes appear and play a role in the book of Genesis? Here are four examples

1) Jacob dresses up in Esau's clothes.

2) Joseph's brothers take his cloak and spill blood on it and say he has been torn by a wild beast.

3) Joseph in Egypt. When Potiphar's wife (Mrs. Robinson!) tries to seduce him she is holding onto his garment and he runs away. And she says, "See, this is proof that he tried to rape me."

4) Tamar dresses up as a prostitute.

What is common to these four occasions? The answer is: Clothes deceive!

(1) It wasn't Esau; it was Jacob. (2) Joseph hadn't been killed by a wild animal. (3) Joseph hadn't attempted to assault Potiphar's wife. (4) Tamar was not a woman of ill-repute. In all of these incidents, for good or bad, clothes were used to deceive. Sight not only doesn't reveal the truth, but reveals the opposite.

What is the Hebrew word for a garment? *Beged*. What is the Hebrew for betrayal? *Oshamnu*, *bagadnu*. Look at that! The very word that means 'clothes' means 'betrayal'! In Judaism, it is not what you see that tells you what there is. If you rely on sight, chances are you'll get it wrong.

In the 1960s a new form of advertising was discovered: Subliminal Advertising. Madison Avenue discovered that an image of their product on a single frame in a movie playing at 24 frames per second left a subliminal message imprinted in the mind of the viewer. This message was one of which he was totally unaware. Because of its extremely subtlety, the message managed to sneak under the defenses of the consumer and plant itself into his subconscious. And without knowing it, the next time he was shopping he had an over-powering attraction to Coca Cola over his usual brand of soda.

Optical illusions. Subliminal advertising. Beauty. All of these deceiving appearances can enter the coarser aspects of our physical make-up and lodge within the inner recesses of our consciousness -- and at times, within the depth of our soul.

This idea helps to explain a difficulty in today's Torah reading:

*"And the people feared Hashem, and they believed in Hashem and Moshe his servant" (Exodus 14:31)*

Was it only then they that believed in Hashem and Moshe?

When Moshe first came to the Jewish people they responded with *emunah* (trust); " ,,, and the people believed" (Ex. 4:31) Later they demonstrated deep *emunah* in reversing directions and

heading back towards the onrushing Egyptian army. They did not question Moshe, and without provisions simply followed him and Aharon into the vast desert wasteland. According to our tradition, the miracle of the splitting of the Red Sea happened in the merit of their prior *emunah*.

Clearly the Jewish people possessed and displayed *emunah* from the very beginning. Why does the Torah seem to imply that they had *emunah* only at did the parting of the Red Sea?

There are two types of knowledge; external, and internal. We may hear, taste, smell, touch or taste something but it doesn't necessarily change us. An internal level of knowledge, however, isn't just perception. When we know something internally, we're affected by that knowledge. When a realization enters our *kishkes* and becomes internalized there's a much greater chance we'll behave differently. This is the level of *emunah* the Jewish people attained at the Red Sea. Their *emunah* had grown bit by bit, becoming part of them, until that *emunah* became distinctly recognizable at the Red Sea.

This is why looks can be deceiving. We can't see the inner workings of the consciousness and soul. Not only can we be easily fooled by what we see (clothes, beauty), but we run perhaps an even greater risk in believing that looks tell us the whole truth when it may be only part of the story.

With Hedy Lamarr's looks, everything should have been simple. Actor George Sanders said that Hedy Lamarr was "so beautiful that everybody would stop talking when she came into a room." But MGM felt she was a casting challenge. She was considered too beautiful for ordinary roles and her beauty actually became an obstacle in her career: No one would believe her behind a department-store counter or accept her as someone unloved, unnoticed, unwed or unjeweled.

But Hedy Lamarr was deeply annoyed that few people saw beyond her beauty to her intelligence. "Any girl can be glamorous," she famously said. . "All you have to do is stand still and look stupid."

So there you have it. Sight does not tell you the truth. Not even close. And that's why Judaism isn't an eye culture. And it's not even a taste, smell, touch, or hearing culture. The five senses -- if used with caution -- are portals to a culture of wisdom, understanding, and *emunah*.

The Jews knew who G-d and Moses were before crossing the Red Sea. They demonstrated the acceptance of this truth when they prepared the first *Pesach*. Yet it was only through cumulative *emunah* that at the Red Sea their *emunah* had deepened and their perception had changed.

Looks can be deceiving. Our eyes certainly don't tell us the whole truth. With this understanding, our challenge is to work on developing a continually deeper *emunah* -- a knowledge based upon belief and trust in Hashem,