

"And Hashem said to Moshe, 'Why do you cry out to Me? Speak unto the Bnei Yisrael and let them journey forward.'" (14:15)

Rashi explains Hashem's response to Moshe as he stood in supplication before Him. Hashem told Moshe, "Now, when *Bnei Yisrael* are in distress, is not the appropriate time to prolong one's prayer. Let them go forward, for the merit of their forefathers and their own *emunah*, faith, which they have exhibited is sufficient cause for the sea to split before them." This interpretation is enigmatic. Moshe was praying to Hashem during a time of severe crisis for *Bnei Yisrael*. Hashem told Moshe that now, when *Bnei Yisrael* were teetering on the brink of disaster, was not a time for prayer. When is a more propitious time to entreat Hashem, if not when there is danger? What else should Moshe have done, if not pray to Hashem?

Horav Dovid Shneur, Shlita, infers a profound lesson from this "dialogue." People often declare that if Hashem would only remove all of those obstacles which prevent them from seeing Him properly, they would commit themselves totally to His service. This is not the proper sequence of events necessary to serve Hashem with devotion. Man must take the first step toward spiritual commitment; the rest will come from Hashem. This was Hashem's imperative to Moshe, "Why are you standing here praying for *Bnei Yisrael*? Let them go forward and do something! They have sufficient merit to justify the splitting of the Red Sea for them." It was essential that *Bnei Yisrael* take that proverbial "first step" and the rest would be history. Prayer must serve as a positive communion with Hashem, not as an excuse for deferring the acceptance of responsibility. We must pray and we must act. Hashem will respond to our actions.