

Hashem said to Moshe: “why do you cry out to Me? Speak unto Bnei Yisrael that they go 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 prayer. Let them go forward. The merit of their forefathers and their own *emunah*, faith, which they have exhibited, are sufficient reason for the Sea to split before them.” This interpretation is enigmatic. Moshe was praying to Hashem during a time of severe crisis. Hashem told Moshe that now, when *Bnei Yisrael* were teetering on the brink of disaster, was not a time for prayer. There is no more propitious time to entreat Hashem than when there is danger. How else should Moshe have confronted the problem, if not by praying to Hashem?

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