

WHY DO YOU CRY OUT TO ME?*

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה

מַדְּהִיתְצַעֲק אֵלַי

דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל

וַיֵּסְעוּ:

And the Lord said to Moses:
Why do you cry out to me?
Speak to the children of Israel
and they will go forward.

And the Lord said to Moses—God speaks to Moses because he too, not only the children of Israel, is crying out, fearful not of the Egyptians but that the leaders will keep the people from following him. *Why do you cry out to me?*—God rebukes Moses for remaining immobilized, “prolonging in prayer” (Rashi) while the children of Israel are threatened by the pursuing Egyptians, waiting passively for God’s salvation. *Speak to the children of Israel and they will go forward*—Your lack of confidence in their courage and their leaders is misguided; they are only waiting for you to give the order to go into the sea—and they must act before I will act to save them.

* Exodus 14:15 (in Beshalach)