

These are the words that Moshe spoke to the entire people of Israel (1:1) – Rashi comments that Moshe spoke to everyone at once so no one would later claim that had they been there they would have said otherwise. **Rav Yitzchak Dov Koppelman ztl.** of Lucerne asked what bringing them together helped. After all, by bringing them together he ran a risk of being answered directly? He explained that when the report would have come out, the people would have provided an answer. However, now that they heard it live, directly from Moshe, they were emotionally moved. When they heard it directly they knew they would have no answer for him.

In the Midbar, in the Arava... (1:1) – While Rashi and many of the other commentaries note that the places mentioned are really just hints to different episodes that the people encountered through the ages, Rashbam insists that these are directions to understand Moshe's location. **Rav Hirsch ztl.** explains that when one refers to a Torah lesson, the precision of location helps the listener remember the message too. **Rav Amital ztl.** added that the Torah also needs to be applied to the precise circumstances in which one finds oneself. The Torah needs to be translated into the language of the particular culture where one is. It is for this reason that the Torah cites the exact time and place. Where exactly did Moshe deliver his message? "In the desert, in the Arava, opposite Suf, between Paran and Tofel, Lavan and Chatzeirot and Di-zahav." When did he give this message? "In the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month." The application needs to be precise, to fit the audience one addresses as well as possible.

Moshe explained the Torah as follows (1:5) – Rav Schachter Shlita explained that this is a reference to Moshe's handing over of the Torah here refers to the Torah She'Baal Peh. However, in the end, the original conquering of the land was with the power of Torah Sh'B Ksav which has the ability to be destroyed like the klaf of the Sefer Torah itself. Ultimately in the times of Esther and Achashveirosh the Jews will unite under Torah She'Baal Peh, a gift that will be with them forever more.

How can I myself alone bear your care and your burden and your strife (1:12) – Rashi explains that Moshe cried out from the tri-part difficulties of leadership – the fact that his every move was constantly under scrutiny, that his litigants could not let go and that everyone seemed to accuse him of scheming with the other side. **Rav Yaakov Neuberger Shlita** once asked why Moshe would invite others to join him in this misery? Why would that solve his problem? He answered using an old teaching of **Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook ztl.** who noted that when you are righteous and come up against wickedness, add more righteousness in order to counteract it. Rav Neuberger added that perhaps this was Moshe's intent – not to challenge evil by criticizing it but rather by increasing the amount of righteousness that would hopefully turn it around.

And judge righteously between man and his brother (1:16) – Rav Pam ztl. reminded his students about how difficult it is for a person to remain impartial when money is on the table. He told a story of the author of the Sma who once was involved in a Din Torah when the verdict went against his way. Upset at having lost he asked for an explanation of the argument of the court. They cited as proof – the Sma's own commentary to Choshen Mishpat!

And you came close all together (1:22) – Rashi explains that they came with a mob mentality. **Rav Baruch Mordechai Ezrachi Shlita** explains that the disarray is as much an indictment of the people as it

is of the way they approached the issue at hand. It wasn't just the fact that there was no orderliness, it was also the fact that the people acted in a manner that displayed what he calls a lack of Torahdik-ness. In other words, the fact that people act in a pushy, me first, loss of focus for order leads to not just a lack of focus but God-forbid a focus on the self at the expense of the centrally inspired heavenly goal of Hashem. The mob mentality of then – and now – is antithetical to Torah values and a recipe for success as a nation.

And you complained in your tents (1:27) – What do the tents have to do with it? **Rav Dovid Feinstein Shlita** noted that the tents is a reference to the Jewish mothers who pass down the fundamentals of the faith. In the same way that they pass that down, they would unfortunately need to pass down a new tradition – that of Atem Becheesem Bechiya Shel Chinam – you cried an unnecessary cry, so I will give you something to cry about in the future.

Haftorah: You shall not be able to continue to bring a false Mincha (Yeshayahu 1:13) – **The Meshech Chochma** comments that the stress on a korban mincha comes from the fact that it cannot be brought as a korban in partnership. It is either brought by an individual or on behalf of the whole Tzibbur. Since the single unity of the people didn't exist, the bringing of the Korban was Shav – it was under false pretenses of a legitimate Tzibbur while it was merely a korban HaShutfin.