

## These are the words Moshe spoke to all Yisrael...(1:1)

*Chazal* tell us that these "*devarim*," words, constituted the content of Moshe's speech - *divrei tochachah*, words of reproachment. Moshe spoke to all of the *Klal Yisrael*, so that no individual would later say, "Had we been present we would have challenged his words." Anyone who had an objection to Moshe's admonishment had the opportunity to challenge Moshe, although nobody did so. Offering *tochachah*, reproach, is a serious endeavor which should not be undertaken lightly. It obliges every member of the Jewish community to try his hardest to improve his fellow man. Indeed, as **Horav Shlomo Breuer, zl**, writes, "The rebellion against Hashem's *Torah* could never have reached such tragic proportions, if men -- by virtue of their conviction and zeal for His *Torah* -- did not stand idly, focused on their own personal considerations." Many people have thought that the Divine cause would continue to best be served by political expediency. In other words, they believed we should be silent, in order not to "rock the boat." Actually, the individual who admonishes truthfully -- in order to bring someone back to a life of *Torah* and *mitzvos* -- will ultimately find more favor than the individual who flatters people with a glib tongue.

Moshe *Rabbeinu* did not offer praise; rather he admonished *Bnei Yisrael* with *divrei tochachah* that comprised his farewell. His legacy is truth. His legacy catalyzes blessing by modelling the way to achieve closeness too Hashem. Moshe's words flowed from a heart that demonstrated love for his people. Moshe directed his words to all of the people. Why? Only a minority had sinned, only a minority had complained, only a minority had been dissatisfied and rebelled. Why should everybody have been admonished? If Moshe had not assembled the entire people, each group would have blamed the other for the sins that had been committed. The old would have blamed the young, the rich the poor, the intellectuals the ignorant ones, and so the list goes on.

Moshe lays the blame for all of the tragic events in the course of their travels at the feet of every single Jew. He directs his *tochachah* both towards the perpetrator and to the one who should have prevented the crime. Those who were actively involved in the sin, as well as those who were indifferent, who looked away, who ignored, who were apathetic, are all equally responsible! Our mutual responsibility towards one another demands that we work ceaselessly in convincing our fellow man to accept a life of *Torah* consciousness. By accepting Moshe's admonition, by standing up to their responsibility, *Klal Yisrael* earned Hashem's blessing.