

"Enough of your dwelling by this mountain. Turn yourselves around and journey." (1:6,7)

Hashem tells *Bnei Yisrael* that one year at *Har Sinai* was sufficient. They had achieved remarkable benefits at this place. The *Torah*, the *Mishkan* with its various vessels, and their spiritual leadership all were established at *Har Sinai*. The time had come to move on. Let us examine this statement. Imagine that one is living in a community in which he has abundant material benefit, amazing financial success, and many friends. Are we going to tell him that since he is achieving such a high level of success, the time has come to move away? Is this not essentially what Hashem was telling *Bnei Yisrael*?

Horav Shmuel Undsdorfer, zl, cites a dialogue from the *Kuzari* as basis for responding to this question. When the *Chaver* told the king of the Khazars that he was planning to move to *Eretz Yisrael*, the Holy Land, the king looked at him incredulously and asked, "How can such a wise man as you think that one piece of land is holier than another?" The *Chaver* then began to patiently explain to the king that, indeed, some areas are more likely to attract spiritual holiness than others -- and that *Eretz Yisrael* is the holiest place on earth.

When Moshe sought to encourage the people to continue their journey towards *Eretz Yisrael*, he feared they would challenge him. "Why should we leave? Everything seems to be fine right over here," they would counter. "Why should we enter into conflict with the seven nations who inhabit *Eretz Yisrael*. Let us simply stay put," might be their response. "Do you think *Eretz Yisrael* is a holier place? Is the *Shechinah* not everywhere?" In order to circumvent such a response, Moshe attempted to demonstrate to them that, indeed, one place could be holier than the next. After all, material and spiritual benefits were in abundance right here -at *Har Sinai*. Now that he had brought their attention to the sublimity of this particular place, it would be much easier to "encourage" them to ascend to a holier place - in fact the holiest place on earth - *Eretz Yisrael*.