

## Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; and may the earth hear the words of my mouth. (32:1)

There seems to be a disparity between the Torah's description of Moshe *Rabbeinu's* oratory to the Heaven and the way he addressed the earth. He says *haazinu*, "Give ear, "pay attention, as if he was speaking directly to Heaven. Also, he uses the word, *adabeirah*, "I will speak," which is a stronger, more direct form of communication. In contrast, Moshe tells the earth *v'sishma*, "and hear," listen in, as I convey *imrei fi*, words of my mouth. It is almost as if Moshe is talking directly to Heaven, and he is requesting earth to listen in on the conversation. How are we to understand this?

In his *Ben Ish Chai*, **Horav Yosef Chaim Mi'Bagdad, zl**, explains that *Mussar*, rebuke, given directly to the offender, often falls on deaf ears. The guilty party does not want to hear that he did something wrong. He is not interested in listening to a litany of complaints against him. Thus, one who wants to give effective rebuke should direct it to someone who is innocent, in such a manner that the guilty party is privy to "listening in." Overhearing a conversation which really was supposed to be directed to him, the true offender will begin to think. After all, it was not a personal attack. He will take the message at face value, listen to the implications which concern him and hopefully change his less-than laudatory habits.

*Shomayim*, heaven, is a metaphor for *tzaddikim*, the righteous, whose lives are *Himmeldik*, Heavenly. Their focus on spiritual pursuit removes them from the realm of the physical dimension. *Eretz*, earth, are those people who are unable to extricate themselves from their earthliness. Moshe spoke to the *tzaddikim* with the hope that the average person, whose earthliness caused him to sin, would take the hint and listen to his words. Moshe spoke harsh words to the sky, because he wanted the earth to listen and get the message.