

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*, "the 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*, *zi*, 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." When the true offender overhears a conversation, which really was supposed to be directed to him, he will begin to think. After all, it was not a personal attack. Therefore, he will take the message at face value, and listen/pay attention to the implications which concern him. Hopefully, this will cause him to 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 the physical/material realm, 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.