

Moshe wrote this song on that day, and he taught it to the Bnei Yisrael. (31:22)

It is noteworthy that the prophecy concerning the vicissitudes and challenges facing the Jewish People in the future is written as a song. The *Bostoner Rebbe, zl*, observes that, indeed, it is typical of the Torah and Hashem's great love for the Jewish People. Even when the Almighty wanted to warn and rebuke the nation through Moshe *Rabbeinu*, He did so with a song. For a song has the ability to move the heart, to rebuke with love, to involve the whole person and to teach him as well.

Rebuke is also an attitude. For example, one sees another person doing something that is offensive to him. He can either rebuke the offender or leave the room. Once he leaves, no one is present to take offense. Thus, the activity in which the offender is engaged is no longer offensive.

A classic example of the above scenario would be the following episode: *Horav Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik, zl*, the *Bais HaLevi*, once visited *Horav Yankele Gezundheit, zl*, *Rav* of Warsaw. The *Brisker Rav* and the *Rav* of Warsaw were having a delightful conversation in the living room when suddenly they heard the Jewish maid break out in song.

Since it is forbidden for Jewish men to listen to a Jewish woman, other than family, sing, *Rav Gezundheit* immediately jumped up from his seat about to proceed to the kitchen to tell the young woman to quiet down. *Rav Yosha Ber* also jumped up – but not to go to the kitchen. He grabbed *Rav Yankele's* arm and steered him outside of the house, straight into the street.

Two different reactions. Two great men. *Rav Gezundheit* was startled, but before he could express himself, *Rav Yosha Ber* explained his actions, "Your maid works hard all day. Apparently, the work is getting to her, and her only form of pleasure is singing. While the *halachah* clearly prohibits us from listening to her sing, it is not sufficient reason for us to prevent her from singing, thereby taking away her joy. We should just simply walk outside and the issue will be resolved."

There is a time for rebuke, and there is a time to circumvent rebuke. Perhaps, the woman should have thought twice before beginning to sing loudly, but if this was her means of joyful expression, so be it. The rabbi should/could pick himself up and walk outside, allowing her to have some pleasure. Yet, there are those who often look, almost lay in waiting, for someone to make a mistake, thus allowing them to issue words of rebuke. Giving *mussar*, reproach, is important and very helpful, but it should be something that one does only because he must. Otherwise, it is not *mussar*, but rather, self-aggrandizement.

I just had occasion to read a vignette that presents a similar connotation: An "older" *bachur*, a thirty-year-old single *yeshivah* student, was *davening Shacharis* in a *shul*. When the worshippers came to the *tefillah*, *Va'yevarech David*, as customary, they all stood up to recite the prayer. The *bachur* recited the prayer without budging from his seat. One of the more "outspoken" worshippers

was peeved by the young man's actions and not-so-subtly brought it to his attention. "What? Are you too good to stand up for David *Ha'melech's* blessing?" the man snarled.

Not one to take this rebuke "sitting down," the young man replied, "I have been 'sitting' for thirty years (waiting for a spouse), but that does not seem to bother you. You are only concerned with my 'sitting' through the *Va'yevarech David* prayer."

There are those who seem to enjoy rebuking others, actually waiting for the opportunity to present itself. This is not the Torah way. Rebuke should be expressed as a song – with harmony throughout.