

# **SECRET LOVE, SWEETEST**

## **Parshas Saitzai**

**By Rabbi Menachem Rokeach**

Hashem's love of Israel is mentioned many times in NACH (Prophets and Scriptures) (Malachi 1:2; Jeremiah 31:3; Hoshaiiah 11:1; etc. etc.) but only once in Chumash. Even there it is not mentioned straightforward, but indirectly, in the context of Bilaam Horosho who wanted to curse "But Hashem your G-d refused to listen to Bilaam, and... reversed the curse to a blessing for you, because Hashem loved (loves) you" (Parshas Saitzai 23:6). [Another passage speaks of Hashem's love of Israel, Devorim 7:13, but it is in the context of numerous blessing (love you, bless you, multiply you, etc., etc.)]

This reversal from Bilaam's intention into a blessing seems to be basic in the very priestly blessing, recited before the Mitzva of Birchas Kohanim. The Bracha of the Kohanim is "Boruch... and commanded us to bless His people Israel with love BEAHAVO". Now where in the Torah is it commanded to recite the blessing "with love"? Love is not mentioned in the commandment to bless Israel, in Parshas NOSO (Bamidbar 6:22-27). The answer is found in the above statement, Hashem reversing Bilaam's intentions into blessing, KI AHAIVCHO, because Hashem loves you. In the very blessing of the Kohanim, Rashi indicates a "transformation" into a gracious countenance. Also in the prayers of the listeners (to the priestly blessing) there is a reference to a "transformation" into blessing.

The reason for this INDIRECT form of Hashem's love of Israel is that in this indirect form the love is a higher level of love, the secret love. In marriage it is not the loud music accompanying the bride and groom after the chupa. That is only an introduction to the validity of chupa, in the YICHUD privacy room.

The priestly blessings with love (in the context of transformation instead of a direct statement) is a reference to that higher level of love, Hashem's secret, private, love of Israel.

Matriarch Sarah was first named Sarai and changed to Sarah (Beraishis 17:15). Sarai means my princess, the private princess of her husband. Sarah indicates her becoming the princess, matriarch of the whole nation. The saintliness of her private relationship, indicated in her former name Sarai, was continued. When the Malochim asked where is Sarah? Abraham replied she is in the tent in privacy, in modesty.

It is for this reason that the letter YUD in Sarai, her former name, was given by Moshe to Joshua (Bamidbar 13:16). Targum Jonathan explains this letter YUD was appropriately implanted in Joshua's name when he emulated Sarah's quality of modesty and humility.

The less ostentation, the less display, the more privacy, the deeper the relationship. The more secretive Hashem's love of Israel, the deeper and more enduring, the more confirmed and validated the priestly blessing with love.

