

אני לדודי ודודי לי

She could not imagine that there existed someone else in the world with such outstanding qualities. She knew that deep down she loved him with all of her heart and soul and that the feeling was mutual. Though she was aware that only with him would she attain true happiness, she wanted freedom and her overpowering love for him loomed as a potential yoke that would hamper it. Her only option was attempting to ignore and stifle her deep felt emotions, thereby slowly burying them ever deeper into her subconscious, however, it was not to be. The depth of her love was too great to deny and the clear knowledge of her only true path to happiness did not bear obfuscation. Despite her many attempts at denial, the overpowering love buried deep within her eventually burst forth like a volcano. With it came ultimate happiness as she accepted upon herself that yoke of love which she had always known deep down was her only path to true bliss, uniting her eternally with the love of her life.

Shir HaShirim is a description of this struggle with *Klal Yisroel* described as the bride and Hashem as the groom. Therefore, despite the absence of any mention of the, “awe of Heaven and acceptance of the yoke of its rule,” Rashi explains the words of Reb Akiva describing *Shir HaShirim* as “Holy of Holies” with the following words: ***For its entirety is expressions of awe of Heaven and the acceptance of the yoke of its rule.*** (Rashi, *Shir HaShirim* 1:1)

The ***yoke of the rule of Heaven*** should not be confused with the yoke of a kingdom on Earth. It is rather a far different sort of yoke, one that comes with the acknowledgement of ultimate love and the eternal happiness it brings which we at times subconsciously attempt to deny for a mere fleeting pleasure. For this reason, we preface our twice daily acceptance of, “the yoke of Heaven” in the recital of *Shema*, with the blessing: *The One who chooses Yisroel with love.* This is also why we immediately follow it with the mitzvah: ***And you shall love Hashem with all of your heart, and your soul and all of your might!***

