



**Many waters cannot quench the love and rivers will not drown it. (Shir HaShirim 8:7)**

Reuven and Shimon were both slaves to powerful masters. Reuven's master, Alexander, was feared by all, his power and temper had ruined the lives of anyone who ever got in his way. In contrast, Shimon's master, Avraham, though even more powerful, was loved by all for his piety and generosity. Out of great fear, Reuven served Alexander with alacrity, carrying out his every order to the smallest detail, whereas Shimon did the same for Avraham but out of love, enjoying every task he had the opportunity to perform for him. One day, Reuven confided in Shimon that he had had enough, Alexander's ever growing demands were too much and despite his mortal fear he was going to attempt escape. Upon seeing Shimon's shock that he would take such a grave risk Reuven said, "You would do the same if your master would work you that hard." "You've got it all wrong," replied Shimon, "you serve your master out of fear so the suffering you're willing to endure has a limit despite that fear. I, on the other hand, serve my master out of love so I enjoy each opportunity to serve him. If he would work me harder, it would only bring me even more joy at the opportunity to show my devotion and become even closer to the most powerful and beloved person in the land."

Similarly, the *Sefer Hayashar l'Rabbeinu Tam* explains our Pasuk:

"The pious man considers every labor and trouble a pleasure and a joy in serving G-d, blessed be He. For our father, Avraham, peace be upon him, was afflicted with wanderings and was tried by many trials, yet he endured them and accepted everything graciously. For from his very youth, the Creator, blessed be He, tried him by journeys, and afterwards by having Sarah taken from him twice, and after that by circumcision, and after that by directing him to send Yishmael away, and after that by instructing him to slaughter Yitzchak. **If his service had been out of fear and not out of love, it could not have endured all those trials.** But because of his love for G-d, blessed be He, **everything was sweet in his eyes.** As it is said (Shir HaShirim 8:7), 'Many waters cannot quench love.'"

Avraham spoke directly to Hashem! He felt his presence constantly and knew with the greatest clarity that the harm he would inflict upon himself by disobeying Him would be so much greater than any of the trials he was faced with. How can it be that Avraham's fear of Hashem itself would not have sufficed to pass the tests that Hashem gave him?

We see from here that no matter how fearful one is of another, there is a limit to what he will do out of that fear before he breaks. However, when one serves Hashem out of love there is no limit, to the contrary the greater the yoke of His rule, the more enjoyment it will bring him to provide an even greater service to his Beloved!

If we took a little bit of time each day to focus on Whom we have the opportunity to serve, the sole Creator and Sustainer of heaven and earth Who created it all just for us, and Who loves us beyond any love we can ever imagine, we would rejoice at every opportunity to fulfill His will. The harder the task, the happier we would be at the chance to show our devotion and become even closer to the only One that will ever matter!

