



## HAFTORAH INSIGHTS

BY REBBETZIN DR. ADINA  
SHMIDMAN  
DIRECTOR,  
OU WOMEN'S INITIATIVE



# Chosen Love

### MALACHI 1

Imagine a parent turning to a child — a child who has tested limits, pushed boundaries, and still carries the marks of past mistakes. The parent says, softly but certainly, “I love you.” And the child, caught between doubt and longing, replies, “How do I know? How can I be sure?”

This is the moment Malachi captures in the opening of our Haftorah: *אהבתי אתכם, אמר ה', I have loved you, says Hashem.* And the Jewish people respond, *ואמרתם במה אהבתנו, How have You loved us.*

Rather than defiance, the Abarbanel hears deep vulnerability. The people are not denying Hashem's love but rather they ask poignantly and powerfully *במה — Because of what?* What makes us worthy of this love? Is it only because we are children of Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov? Are we loved only as heirs of the past — or are we valued as individuals with our own worth?

Hashem's answer is striking and profound. *Was not Esau Jacob's brother? Yet I loved Jacob.* The Abarbanel reflects that if Hashem's love were only for the sake of the forefathers, Esav, equally a grandson of Avraham, would have shared in it. But he does not. This proves that Hashem's love is not a mere extension of ancestral merit. It is a love uniquely chosen and directed to us and for us.

Hashem is saying - I love you for you — not just for who came before you and not only because of where you come from, but because of who you are, and who you are meant to be.

This Haftorah holds a mirror up to every generation: We are not only heirs to a legacy — we are beloved, individually and profoundly in the eyes of Hashem. May this truth fill us with humble confidence and renewed purpose — to live lives worthy of such love. ■