



לע"נ ליבה בת

ר' ראובן ע"ה

Mrs. Libby Lobel a"h

## COMPLAINING ABOUT BEING DIFFERENT

The *passuk* tells us that after Aharon died, the people lodged a complaint against Hakadosh Baruch Hu. They said they were tired of the circuitous route that they were taking, ותקצר נפש העם בדרך, *they were fed up with the difficulties of traveling around for many days* and וידבר העם באלקים ובמשה, *and they began to speak against Hashem and Moshe*, למה, *why did You take us out of Mitzrayim*, העליתנו ממצרים, *there's no lechem and there's no mayim* (Bamidbar 21:4-5).

I have a simple question. There was no *lechem*? What do you mean? *Man* fell every single day! *Mayim*? What do you mean there was no *mayim*? There was water from a rock. There was a rock that traveled along with them and all you had to do was put a stick on the rock and the water came right to your door. There was plenty of water!

But the Rabeinu Bachaye explains (ibid 21:5) that the nature of their complaint was that their existence was not normal, or natural. They said, "We don't have *lechem* like all the other nations have *lechem*. We don't have *mayim* like everybody else has *mayim*. All the *umos haolam* have all their needs provided whether they are *tzaddikim* or *reshaim*. They have *lechem*. They have *mayim*. But we don't get our food delivered like everyone else. We don't get a week's worth of food at once like everybody else does; it comes one day at a time. And for everyone else, *mayim* is *hefker*. But for us, when Miriam died, the water stopped. Everything is dependent on reward and punishment, *sechar v'onesh*. Why can't we just be like every other nation?"<sup>1</sup>

People don't like to be subjected, to be tied to *onesh* and *sechar*. You like to go into your closet and take out some clothes, and not only if you're a good boy will the clothes come off the hanger. And if you're not a good boy, the hanger gets stuck and the shirt gets stuck to the hanger. They didn't like that. And they started to say, ונפשנו קצה, very strong language. We are disgusted, בלחם הקלקל, with this bread that's just light and insatiable. It doesn't satiate us. It's also the same thing every day. If you weren't a *tzaddik*, the *man* wouldn't fall next to your door. You had to go looking for it. And there is a very strange thing with this kind of food - it's a food after which you never go to the bathroom! It was amazing. If you ate *man*, it was *nichnas* but not *yotzei*. So they said, "Did you ever hear of a food that goes in and doesn't have to come out? That's not natural! That means somewhere in our bodies our food is putrefying. It's rotting. That's not good." It was a *gevaldige nes* but they looked at things in a very negative manner.

## REPEATING THE SAME MISTAKES

Now, we have to read these *pesukim* because, sadly, there are many people today who are repeating the same mistakes. There are many people who view the life of *shomrei Torah umitzvos* as a harsh life. It's a type of life where you can't just come in and grab a piece of bread and chew on it. A *goy* goes into a store, sees a piece of bread. He grabs a piece and puts it in his mouth. With us, we have to wash. We have to have a towel. We have to have a *keili*. We have to have enough water. We can't just do *mayim achronim*. We have to make a *brachah*, *al netilas yadayim*. Our hands have to be dry, etc.

If you ever have a *ba'al teshuvah* come to your house, it's very interesting to see this dynamic, and their initial reaction. You have to know how to deal with the guy in the right way. So a fellow comes to your table. He sees the table is set beautifully. He sees little rolls next to each person's place. His mouth starts to salivate. The first thing he says to himself is: "Let me taste a piece of this," and he puts his hand on the bread. You say to him, "Whoa! One second. You have to wash first." He's already getting confused. "My hands are clean. I just washed," he tells you. "Oh, no, no, you've got to wash for

**כי אין לחם ואין מים.** יש לתמונה והלא המן היה יורד להם בכל יום ויום, גם רבוי המים היה להם מנס הסלע שנתחדש להם עתה. אבל זו היתה תלונתם, אמרו הנה עניינו משונה אין לנו לחם ומים כשאר האומות כי שאר האומות אם היו זכאין או חייבין יש להם לחם לשובע ואצ"ל המים אבל אנו עיקר כל התנוותינו ומאכלנו ומשתנו בענין מיוחד כי אין לנו לחם ביום אחד לימים הרבה כשאר האומות שנפשו שבעה בספק המזון שראוין בין ידיהם ועממם, ואינו עמנו כי אם דבר יום ביומו, ואפילו המים שהן הפקר לכל העולם ואין לאדם מחיה זולתם כבר נסתלקו ממנו כשמתה מרים שנסתלק הבר, ומאחר שכל עניינו נמשכן אחר העונש והשכר הנה אנו מחודשים בהנהגה יותר משאר האומות. ועוד כי אותו הלחם הבא אלינו דבר יום ביומו לחם קלוקל הוא ועתיד הוא להתקלקל בבני מעים ונפשו קצה בו, וכי יש ילוד אשה שמכניס ואינו מוציא. וזו היא הדבה שהוציאו מן שהיה להם לכבוד ומעלה היו נותנין בו דופי, כי למעלת דור המדבר שהיו כמלאכי השרת היה המן בא להם דבר יום ביומו כדי שיהיו עיניהם תלויות תמיד אל ה' כענין שכתוב (תהלים קכג) הנה כעני עבדים אל יד אדוניהם וגו', והענין היה להם להרגיל נפשם במדת הבטחון והאמונה בשם יתברך, ולפי שחטאו בהוצאת דבה נעשו בעונש נחש המוציא דבה, זהו שכתוב וישלח ה' בעם את הנחשים השרפים, ודרשו רז"ל יבא נחש שאוכל מינין הרבה וכלם בפיו טעם אחד ויפרע מאוכלי המן שאוכלין מין אחד וטועמין מינין הרבה. ועוד שנענשו בעונש זה, כי הנחשים האלו שנענשו בהם היו הנחשים עצמן שהיו במדבר למינין הרבה, הוא שכתוב (דברים ח) המולוכך במדבר הגדול והנורא וגו', וכל ארבעים שנה לא נזק בהם אחד מישראל, שהיה ענן אחד משבעה עננים לפניו והורג נחשים ועקרבים שלא יזיקום, והיה הענן החיו מיוחד לפלא הזה, ועכשיו בשנת הארבעים כשהוציאו דבה בדבר שהוא לחם מדה טובה ומעולה שלח הקב"ה בהם את הנחשים השרפים, וזוהו שלא אמר וישלח ה' בעם נחשים שרפים אלא הנחשים השרפים שבמדבר, כלשון (שמות ח) הנני משליח בך את הערוב, כלומר הערוב שבמדברות, כי לא היה בריאה חדשה לשעה אלא שכבר היו הנחשים והערוב במדבר. והיה מספיק הנחשים והוסיף את השרפים, קרי ביה השרפים, השרפים, ומפני שעד עכשיו היה הענן שורפם כדי שלא יזיקו לישראל ואז היו השרפים, וכיון שחטא ישראל היו הם השרפים. וענין בלחם הקלוקל לשון בויו הוא, קל שבקלים.

bread.” Okay, so he rolls his eyes. Okay, I’ve got to wash for bread. Then, you can’t talk. Shhhhh! After he washes he starts to talk right away. “Can we eat now?” he asks. And everybody goes, “Shhhh!” Then you tell him to wipe his hands really well because his hands are half wet, so now, he can’t eat the bread until his hands are dry. Next, he’s got to sit down and wait for everybody else. He’s looking around trying to figure out what’s going on, “What are they waiting for already?” And then somebody makes a *brachah* and they say, “*Nu nu*, okay now.” So he starts to talk again. “Mmmm,” he says, “this is good,” as soon as he puts it in his mouth. Everybody says, “Shhhh! No, wait, wait, wait. You’ve got to swallow your food first before you can talk.” He goes, “Listen, I’m going to swallow it soon. Don’t worry about it.” You tell him, “No, you’ve got to swallow it first.” The guy says, “What else do I have to do?!” Now, the guy obviously doesn’t see any beauty in any of this, because he lacks understanding. Then if you go out to the bathroom in the middle of the meal you have to wash again. He touches his shoes, okay now go wash again. And so on and so forth.

## ROYALTY LIVES DIFFERENTLY

People develop negative attitudes and they don’t see the fact that we’re royalty, the fact that Klal Yisrael are *bnei melachim*. I was reading an article about how the President made a Chanukah party and he invited *frumme Yidden* to his Chanukah party. It was an amazing ceremony that had a lot of involvement, planning, dishes, etc. How many dishes per person do they need? How much silverware do they need per person? They had to switch glasses, and use this glass and that glass and napkins. It’s unbelievable how detailed and elaborate that affair was! Over there, you don’t just go and *chap* a roll and shove it down your throat! No one does that. Over there, it’s a ceremony of what they serve first, because royalty lives differently.

We are royalty. We are not *beheimos*. And Hashem did miracles for us. Try to imagine in those days when they didn’t have water sources like we have today. In those days, water had to be drawn from a well. I’ve tried drawing water from a well. It’s not an easy thing. I have enough difficulty getting water out of those wells where they have those pumps. Even with that you have to lower it all the way down, and then you have to raise it all the way up. Good. So you finally get a little water for yourself. But it’s a little brown. In the *midbar*, all you had to do was go over to the rock! The rock was producing water. That’s unbelievable. That’s like a *nes* of a *nes*. The biggest *nes* in the world! But it’s not regular. It’s not normal. Normal for who? It’s normal for animals. It’s normal for *goyim*. And there’s normal for Yidden. It’s normal for royalty. A person has to know that Hashem was training us in the *midbar*, but they got so fed up with this that they came and said, “We’re *mamash* disgusted with this unnatural lifestyle.”

So what happens? Hashem sends fiery snakes. They start to bite. And then what happens? Moshe Rabeinu puts up this pole. On top of the pole he makes a copper snake and he tells everybody to look at the copper snake and get healed.

## SLANDERING HASHEM’S GIFTS

The first thing we want to understand is, what is the *middah keneged middah* over here? Everything in the Torah is a *middah keneged middah*. The Torah is a lesson. What do we learn from here? A person who gets a snakebite, or something like a snakebite, wants to know what he did wrong to get bitten. For that, you have to look at *Chazal*. One of the things *Chazal* tell us is that the Yidden were *motzi’ei dibah*, they slandered the gifts of Hashem. So if a person gets a snakebite, he should think, “Have I ever slandered gifts of Hashem?” Did you ever complain? That’s number one. Rashi says that they were *motzi’ei dibah* (slandered), much like the first snake who came to Adam and Chava and was also *motzi dibah*, so they were bitten by a snake.<sup>2</sup>

I want to share with you another *pshat*, a very nice *pshat*. The original snake came to Adam and Chava and he seduced them to eat from the *eitz hada’as*. What was the punishment of the snake? *ועפר תאכל כל ימי חיך*, all the days of your life you’re going to eat dust (Bereishis 3:14). Now, the *gemara* in *Yoma* says that this was a *kelalah* (curse). That’s a very strange *kelalah*. Dust is something that’s found all over. If you go up to the roof, you’ll find dust. If you go into the basement, you’ll find dust. Wherever you go you always find dust. That’s why the *gemara* (Berachos 57a) says that if a person has a dream and he sees a snake in his dream, it’s a sign that *פרנסתו מזומנת לו*, he’s going to have *parnasah* readily available! (Rashi) Why? Because the snake’s *mezonos* are always available to him. So tonight, I give you all a *brachah*, dream about snakes! But if you read about snakes and you try to get yourself to dream about them, that doesn’t mean anything. So the question everybody asks is: “What kind of *kelalah* did the snake get? It’s not an *onesh*. It sounds like an amazing *brachah*!”

And the answer is a very big *yesod* that we have to get into our minds and we have to live with. The *onesh* of the snake is that he was distanced from Hashem and he has no *kesher* with the Ribono Shel Olam. He does not need to ever depend on Hashem like all other creatures have to. Anyone who seeks his food is forced at times to turn to Hashem. Like it says, *הכפירים שואגים לטרף ולבקש מקל אכלם - the lions roar for prey, seeking their food from G-d* (Tehillim 104:21). However, the *kol*, the sound of the *nachash* - this the Ribono Shel Olam doesn’t want to hear. Hashem says, “Here is your portion. Get away from Me. Don’t talk to Me. I don’t want a *kesher* with you.” Do you know why mankind has to work the hardest for its

וינשכו את העם. גבא נחש שְׁלָקָה על הוצאת דבה וְפָרַע ממוציאי דבה, גבא נחש שְׁקָל המיניו נְטַעְמִיו לו טעם אֶחָד וְפָרַע מְפּוּזִי טוּבָה שְׁדָבַר אֶחָד מִשְׁתַּנְּהָ לָהֶם לְכַמּוֹת מְטַעְמִים (תנחומא)

food and *parnasah*? It's not an accident. Because Hashem wants mankind to be dependent on Him, to constantly come to Him and say, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu, *Tatte gib essen. Tatte gib parnasah.*"

### DO YOU FEEL DEPENDENT?

You know that most people are jealous of those who are very wealthy? But you should know that that is foolish jealousy. It's like being jealous of the snake. Do you know why? Because the *passuk* says regarding a person who's wealthy, *יש עושר שמר לבעליו לרעתו*, a wealth that's collected (or hoarded) by a person is *לרעתו*, for his evil (Koheles 5:12).<sup>3</sup> It's a punishment. One of the ways it's a punishment is that he's not *taloy* (dependent) on Hashem. It's amazing. I've asked this question to many wealthy people I've met: "Do you feel dependent on Hashem?" So some *ashirim* tell me that they're always worried. You know what I tell them? "You're a *gebentched* (blessed) *ashir*." I've told this to quite a few *ashirim*. You're a *gebentchte ashir*. When the guy tells me, "The only thing I'm worried about is *shnorrers* knocking on my door," then I say, "You're a cursed *ashir*." That means, if you're not worried about your money, you're not turning to Hashem. You never have to think twice. You know it's guaranteed.

A person who is dependent on Hashem - that's his biggest *brachah* in this world because that's the greatest motivator of a person to have a bond with Hashem. At most, people want to have a *kesher* with Hashem like they have with the government. You don't bother me. I don't bother you. I'll pay my taxes. You take my garbage out, provide me with an army. You provide me with police services. I don't want to be involved with you. You don't want the police coming to your house. You don't want the soldiers coming to your house. Some people get financial assistance from the government, but they don't like the government. You simply go in to get your check, but you don't want to be a personal friend of your caseworker. You basically want to be in and out. "Give me my check, tell me how I'll get the money and I'm going on with my life." So most people understand that you don't want to be dependent on the government. But Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants us to be dependent on Him. That's the greatest *zechus*.

If you see a *yungerman* who is challenged with *parnasah*, you should know, ultimately they all make it. I never saw a *yungerman* yet living out of a paper bag or a big brown cardboard box. Have you? No. You haven't. But most *yungerleit* are dependent on Hashem. But they say, "I'm learning Torah, Hashem. I should be the one to be taken care of. The *gvir* down the block who is working all day and never comes into the *yeshivah* to learn, why doesn't he have to worry? And I have to worry where is my *parnasah* coming from?"

The answer is: that's your *brachah*. It's not a *kelalah*. The *gemara* says in *Yoma* the *talmidim* asked Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai how come the *man* fell every day. Why didn't the *man* fall once in six months, or once a year? What was the problem? So Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai told them, "I'm going to tell you a *mashal*. There was a *melech basar vedam* who had a child and he gave him *mezonos* once a year. The son would come and get cash, once a year, from his father. You know what the problem was? He never came to visit his father the rest of the year. When his father heard he was coming, he knew it was time again to collect the money."

### THE COPPER SNAKE "THERAPY"

A person has to know that every *melech*, every father, would like his children to have a *kesher* with them. So if the kid doesn't come to his father, the father tells him, "From now I'm giving you money daily. I'm going to give you money each day, to live for that day. I'm not giving you money [in large amounts, every so often] because I want to see you every day."

He [Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai] said the people in the desert had a family of four or five kids and they had to provide their kids with food. Every morning the father woke up and asked, "Where is our food coming from today?" His wife told him, "Go collect some *man* outside." So it was the opposite [from the snake]. The whole purpose of the *man* - the way it came down - was *punkt* the opposite from the case of the *nachash*. It was to create a very strong bond with Hashem. But a lot of us, in our stupidity, reject that bond!

So now you can understand the *middah keneged middah*. *ויאמר ה' אל משה*, Hashem says to Moshe, *עשה לך שרף* - make for yourself a serpent and put it up on a pole and anybody who gets bitten by the snake will take a look at it and live. *Chazal* ask, in a *mishnah* in *Rosh Hashanah*, what was the purpose of looking at the snake? Does a snake heal you? Does a snake make you feel better? No. What does the *mishnah* say? The *mishnah* answers that whoever looked at the snake, subjected his mind to Hashem. That was the whole idea of looking at the snake. It was to connect to Hashem. Now we can understand why they were healed by looking at the snake: They were originally complaining about the *man*. They didn't like the way the *man* was forcing them to be connected to Hashem. They wanted to live like the nations of the world. But Hashem said no. Hashem said, "Now focus on Me, focus on your source of *brachah* and that's how you're going to be *mesaken* this *chet*. You have to be dependent on Me."

<sup>3</sup> יש רעה חולה ראיתי תחת השמש עֹשֶׂר שְׂמוֹר לְבַעְלָיו לְרַעְתּוֹ

## THE PURPOSE OF CHALLENGES

Now, you have to understand something. Every one of us is going to have something we're waiting for. One is going to wait for children. One is going to wait for a *shidduch*. One is going to wait for a job. One is going to wait for a better job. One is going to wait for his sickness to go away and one is going to wait to be able to deal with a condition that Hashem gave him. But all of these people think that they were cursed. How sad of a mistake that is! And how sad it is to think that these thoughts will help Hashem make your issues go away! There could be nothing further from the truth! What you have to do is say to Hakadosh Baruch Hu, "I know You're doing this for me to improve and get closer to You. I know You're doing this to make me aware that there's nothing in my life that happens at any time without You." If a person does that then a person is "getting it."

Sometimes I see couples who need children. They go through different steps. Some couples get full of despair. They get down. I could understand that, but that's not going to help their problem. The next group of couples are able to say, "*Gam zu letovah*, this is for the best." You know what the problem is? They have no idea why it's for the best. They just say, "*Gam zu letovah*. Hashem knows what He's doing." If I'm struggling with *parnasah*, I'm sick, or I'm this, I'm that, "*gam zu letovah*. It's up to Hashem. I'm in Hashem's hand." It's a big *madreigah*, don't get me wrong.

### YOU ARE ONLY HALFWAY THERE!

Today, I spoke to a wonderful person who I met out of state a few weeks ago. I could see his face was lit up. He was in a wheelchair and I was watching this person. I could see in his eyes there was light. I went over to him and I began to talk to him. He said to me, "It's all good. It's all good." I said, "Could we talk?" I gave him my number. I said, "Call me." We've been playing phone tag for a couple of days now. Today, he got hold of me. The perfect time. He said to me, "I have no *safek* that what I'm going through is for my good, whether I see the good or I don't see the good." He said he feels bad for his wife because his wife doesn't see the good. That's common. He said, "I am at peace with it. I know it's from Hashem. *Gam zu letovah*."

I told him that's only half the trip. Now you've got to be *botei'ach* in Hashem. *Bitachon* wasn't on his radar. He is a wonderful person. He reached a very high *madreigah*, no *ta'anos*, no *tevi'os*. "I accept what Hashem wants. Hashem knows what's best. I accept. *Ad kan*." I told him, "Now, go further. Be *botei'ach* in Hashem. If you run around to doctors to try to heal the situation, they don't heal you, it's definitely a waste of time and a waste of money. But if you have *bitachon* in Hashem, for every little bit of *bitachon* and trust in Hashem that you have, you're going to get a tremendous *mitzvah*."

Here's a person who is struggling with *parnasah*. It's a very very common thing. The wife is upset. The husband is upset. What a *nebach*. On top of all their *tzaros*, they're *mosif tzaros* on their *tzaros*. Not only are they not going to get any benefits from their *tzaros*, they're being *mosif tzaros*. Then you have another couple who says, "This is what Hashem wants. *Gam zu letovah*. Hashem knows what He's doing. I don't have to know what Hashem is doing." Then there's another couple who says, "No. I'm going to be *botei'ach* in Hashem. Hashem provides *parnasah*. I understand Hashem wants me to improve. I'm going to improve." It's a great improvement to be *mekabel* the *tzaros*, but it's a greater improvement to be *botei'ach* in Hashem and say, "Hashem You can make it better."

### GETTING HEALED WITH ONE'S SICKNESS?!

There's an amazing question in this *parshah*. If it's not the *nachash* that kills and it's not the *nachash* that's *mechayeh*, but it's Hakadosh Baruch Hu, then why in the world would Hashem command Moshe Rabeinu to put a pole with a *nachash* on it? Does that make any sense to you? I would have expected Moshe to get a pole and put a *sefer Torah* up there. Write on a sign לנגדי תמיד אוי עוד מלבדו, שויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד. Everybody should look at that sign. What are you putting up snakes for?

So the *emes* is that the *Rishonim* grapple with this question. The Ibn Ezra says, "This is something that's way above and beyond me. Only Hashem knows the reason for this. I can't even start." Now, the Ramban talks about this, and he says an incredible thing. He says that the *darchei haTorah* is to always show the miraculous hand of Hashem, that everything is from Hakadosh Baruch Hu. That Hashem could heal you *with* the sickness that you have, because Hashem controls everything. Generally speaking, somebody who is bitten by a snake is not going to want to get healed by it! It's the opposite - snakes scare him. The last thing you want to do to heal this guy, is to show him a video of snakes in a snake pit. The guy will go nuts. People who went through the Holocaust when they would see a dog, they would go nuts because it reminded them of the dogs they saw in the concentration camps. And here they get bitten by fiery snakes and Hashem says, "No, look at the snake. The snake is going to heal you," in contrast to the norm. Because you have to know it's not the snake that heals. It's Hakadosh Baruch Hu. להודיעם כי ה' ממית וה' מחיה. That's the whole idea here.

A person who went through a trauma with a dog, and now for the rest of his life he's scared of dogs never got the message that it wasn't the dog, it was Hashem. He never understood that. He remained in his little understanding. That's why Hashem said to Moshe, "Go put the snake up there. They have to look at that snake and see Hashem, not the snake." To look at that snake and say, "Snakes? What snakes?" Look at that snake! A copper snake. I'm sure Moshe Rabeinu made

a good one with big fangs sticking out. Maybe he put a little fire on the edges there. Like it was smoking. You looked at it, *shrek*, you just want to run away! No. Look at it. And see Hashem. You see Hashem? You're healed.

Many of us go through challenges in our lives and we're traumatized and we never get to the fact that it's Hashem. We never get to the awareness that it's Hashem. We say that's how it is and that's how it is. Dogs bite. Cats scratch. Snakes bite. All snakes have poison.

### SEEING "PAST THE SNAKE" IN CHINUCH

Now a lot of parents are *mechanech* their kids terribly. You know why? Because you see a kid run around and the mother says, "Be careful, you're going to get kidnapped. You're going to get kidnapped." When I hear a parent say that to a child. I want to say, "Do you know you're wrecking your kid's life?" The father says, "What do you mean?! I'm concerned about my kid! I want to protect my kid." I asked him, "When was the last time you had a kid that was kidnapped? When was the last time that you had a friend whose child was kidnapped? The last time you saw a kidnapped kid was on the milk bottle and 90% of them were taken away by one of the parents." They were all kids who were taken by one parent away from the other parent. I mean it's crazy stuff. Okay, once in a while you have a *nebach* story, like that of Leiby Kletzky. It was *taka shomu shamayim*. He fell into the hands of some *meturaf meshugene she'ein kemoso*, but that was such a *meshugene* story, and such a crazy story, it's clear to me it's Hashem. Clear to me it was from Hashem! It was so abnormal. I don't care if the guy was a crazy Yid. He wasn't a Spic. He was a Yid for Hashem's sake.

A couple of years ago there was a lady in the Catskill mountains who had her kid on the porch and a bear came out of the woods, grabbed the kid by the head and *shlepped* him into the woods. People said, "That's it. I'm not going to the Catskills anymore." Somebody will take their place. I bet you that family goes to the Catskills. What do they do, lock their kids in the house all day long? Or shoot all the bears? Of course not. That was such a queer story. It's clear it was from Hashem. That's not normal to happen. Bears don't bite people. Dogs don't bite people. If you tell your kid that dogs bite people, dogs do this, animals are dangerous, they're all poisonous, they're all sick. Where is Hashem here? "Forget about Hashem. Now we're talking about *teva*. I'm trying to save my kid's life." Rabbosai, there's no such a thing. Hashem is *meimes*. Hashem is *mechayeh*. You have to look at Hashem and see past the snake. If you can be *meshabed* your *lev* to *avinu shebashamayim*, you're heading in the right direction.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu should help us get over our fears, over our blindness and see beyond the way things appear and see the Hand of Hashem behind everything.

#### ✧ THE BOTTOM LINE ✧

When the Jews complained about their "unnatural" lifestyle in the midbar, they projected their inner desire to be like the other nations, to live within the realm of "nature" and not be "dependent" on Hashem for their everyday, basic needs. The copper snake that Moshe made reminded them of the ultimate curse of self-reliance and the lack of dependency on Hashem. Dependency on is actually the greatest bracha there is, since it gives us a valuable opportunity to have a stronger connection to Hashem. The different challenges that we experience are also designed to draw us closer to Hashem. This coming week, besides accepting that my current struggles or tzaros - whether with my parnasa, health, or shidduchim - come directly from Hashem, I will also be botei'ach in Hashem that He can make it better. As an exercise, I will, bli neder, begin to say the following, "Hashem, I know that everything You do is only good, is for my benefit, and because You love me. This challenge that You sent me also has to be good and for my benefit. Thank you for always taking care of all my needs, Hashem. I love you Ribono Shel Olam! Please help me to be happy with Your malchus. I know that You can send me the yeshua, which I am waiting and hoping for, and relying on You to provide!"



