

# Sadness – What's The Antivenom?

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“And the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, you will be cursed more than all the cattle and more than all the beasts of the field; you shall crawl on your belly, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.”  
Genesis 3:14

There are four elements; *eish*, which is fire; *ru'ach*, which is air; *mayim*, which is water and *afar*, which is dirt, or earth, or dust.

*Afar*, the lowest element is the most static, non-dynamic element. It's related to *atzvut* (which is a heavy depression), sluggishness and an inability to get going in life. *Afar* is the food of the serpent. This is what the snake dines on. We

know that this was the curse of the serpent in Bereishis, that he should crawl on his belly and he should eat dust. The serpent takes in this *afar* and digests it and it becomes his venom.

Rebbe Nachman explains that we have to guard against this heavy poison. We have to be very careful to not allow ourselves to get depressed, to feel emotional inertia, to get into a cycle of doom and gloom.

What's the antivenom? *Emunah*. If you're feeling down, learn *emunah* because faith will bring you to joy. With *emunah*, we are able to lift ourselves out of deep sadness and depression.

It's very difficult if you are feeling down to accept this, because you're hurting. Also, it's difficult to help others who are feeling down because the truth is, life is hard. Also, we have to validate another person's perceptions of their experience, as well as our own.

Yet, at the same time, as Jews, we must begin to believe that ultimately, depression and sadness are a rejection of *emunah*. We must also believe that by learning *emunah*, thinking *emunah*, talking *emunah*, reading it, listening to classes on it—whatever it takes, little by little, sadness will leave and joy will replace it.

May you have a day where you rise above the dust...and shine!

***Today's mini-lesson is dedicated to Moshe Chaim ben Chava.***