

# ALWAYS A BENEFACTOR NEVER A DEBTOR

## YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Vaeschanan

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

**Hourly Video: Vaeschanan**

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## Revealing The WHY Behind the Quintessential Disappointment

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1. The Jews merited three gifts in the desert due to Avraham's hospitality.
2. He hosted the angels and he offered the shade of his tree, water to wash their feet, and bread.
3. Gemara: We merited the wellspring of Miriam that provided water for forty years in the desert.
4. As the water was offered to the angels through an intermediary, it now came through Moshe – unlike the Manna and Clouds of Glory.
5. Had Avraham offered the water himself Moshe wouldn't have had to hit the rock.
6. Why didn't G-d give Moshe clarity not to hit the rock?
7. It was in the Jews' best interest Moshe should not enter into the land.
8. A most serious sin of the desert was the Baal Peor.
9. If not for Pinchas' zealotry the Jewish people would have been destroyed.
10. Moshe's burial location was opposite Baal Peor.
11. Midrash: The deity of Baal Peor emerges yearly to prosecute the Jews for idolatry; when it sees the burial location of Moshe it sinks back into the ground.
12. The prosecution is quelled.
13. Initially Moshe was not aware of the importance of not crossing the Jordan.
14. For the sake of the survival of the Jewish people Moshe could not enter into the land.

## Successor As Extender

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1. G-d said to Moshe, "The conquest of the land will only come through Yehoshua.
2. Mishnah: Moshe received the Torah and transmitted it to Yehoshua.
3. Rashi: Yehoshua was most qualified to be the bearer of responsibility for the Torah; he was the youth who never separated from his Rebbe's tent.
4. Gemara: Moshe is the equivalent of the sun, and Yehoshua, the moon.
5. Yehoshua's total being was a reflection of his teacher.
6. Moshe tells the Jews they will worship idols after he dies.
7. Midrash: Although they did not become idolaters until after the death of Yehoshua – as long as Yehoshua was alive Moshe considered it as if he was alive.
8. Moshe was told to pass his spirit on to Yehoshua.
9. Moshe caused the sun to stand still; so did Yehoshua.
10. Midrash: The King, through Justice, establishes the land.
11. The King is Moshe – king of Torah.
12. The power to rule lies in one's dimension of Torah.
13. Yehoshua, a reflection of Moshe, also had this power.
14. The camp of Yehuda – tribes representing Torah – were first in formation.

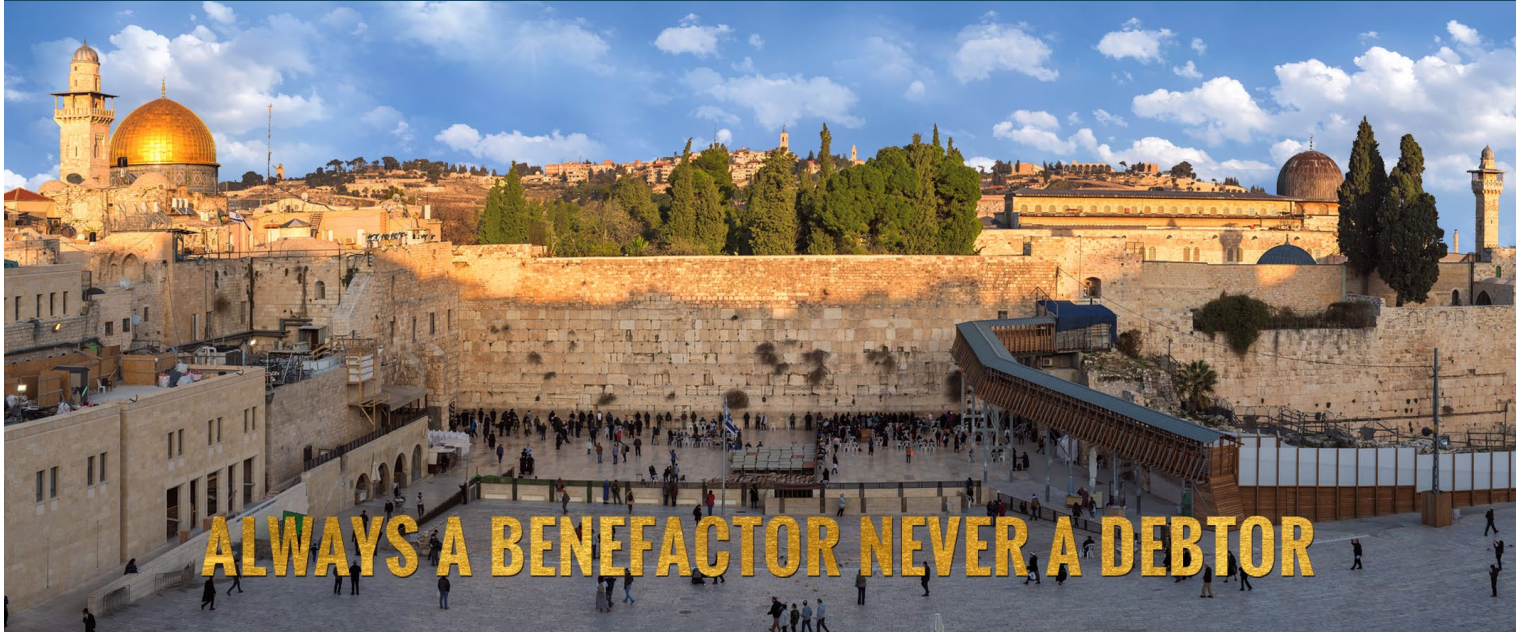
## Cognizant Of The Medium Enables The Connection

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1. Moshe says to the Jews "You who cleave to G-d are all alive today."
2. Maharal of Prague: G-d who is the source of all that exists, if one attaches himself to that source, is fully alive and functional.
3. Rambam: All blessings are Rabbinical except for grace after the meal.
4. Gemara: One has an obligation to recite 100 blessings daily.
5. A blessing that does not contain the name of G-d and that He is King of the universe is not a blessing.
6. Baal Haturim: The word in Hebrew to cleave is "deveikim."
7. The numerical value of the letter Kuf is 100.
8. Many letters in the Torah have a small crown-they are called Tagim.
9. The Crown on the letter Kuf: One who wants to cleave to G-d must say 100 blessings a day.
10. The recitation of the blessings creates a cognizance of G-d's presence in one's life.
11. Perceiving G-d as Master, Almighty, and King creates the setting to be worthy to cleave.

## Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Vaeschanan



### The Gaze of Moshe was Synonymous with Blessing

*Torah:* “I implored Hashem at that time saying, ‘My Lord, Hashem/Elokim, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your strong hand...Let me now cross and see the good Land that is on the other side of the Jordan...’” Moshe supplicated G-d to annul the decree that he should not be allowed to enter into the Land. Despite his supplications, G-d would not annul the decree. G-d said to Moshe, “Do not continue to speak to Me further about this matter. Ascend to the top of the cliff and raise your eyes westward, northward, southward, and eastward, and see with you eyes (the Land of Israel) for you will not cross the Jordan.”

*Midrash:* “G-d said to Moshe, ‘You have requested from Me to see the good Land and I will allow you to see the entire Land.’ As it states, ‘G-d showed him the entire Land.’” Although it is not humanly possible to see every aspect of the Land, G-d allowed Moshe to do

so. If G-d had decreed that Moshe was not to enter into the Land, what is the value of Moshe visually seeing it?

*Chazal:* Anything upon which Moshe gazed was subject to blessing because he had “a good eye (*aayin tova*).” Since Moshe had such an intense love for the Jewish people, he wanted them to have the greatest level of blessing in the Land. By allowing Moshe to gaze upon every aspect of the Land with his “good eye” it would ensure that the Land would provide them blessing at a maximum level. If the Jewish people would be the recipients of G-d’s blessing in the Land, it would assist them to excel and advance spiritually thus advancing their service of G-d.

Moshe’s love for the Jewish people was thus rooted in his love for G-d. It was because he wanted G-d’s Glory to be increased through the service of the Jewish people that he wanted to gaze upon the Land. Moshe’s love for G-d surpassed all of those who had preceded him. Although the Holy Patriarchs loved G-d at a

unique level, no one had reached the level of *Moshe* who was considered by G-d as “the most faithful in My Household.” Despite the fact that in addition to *Moshe*, the Patriarchs were also referred to as “servants of G-d” only *Moshe* is referred to as “the most faithful in My Household.”

It was only because of his intense level of love for G-d that *Moshe* wanted to enter into the Land. He understood that after they had entered into the Land the Jewish people would be able to fulfill their objective in existence, which is to glorify G-d as it states in the Prophets, “For My Glory I created it.” Wanting the Jewish people to glorify G-d at the most advance level, *Moshe* believed that he should enter into the Land along with them in order to guide and lead them to this ultimate level of service. However, since he was denied entry, *Moshe* understood that if he were to gaze upon the Land with his “good eye” he would be able to fulfill his desire to facilitate the success of the Jewish people in their service of G-d. Thus, the “good eye” that *Moshe* possessed was rooted in his love for G-d.

*Mishna in Ethic of our Fathers*: “A person who possesses these three characteristics: a good eye, humble spirit, and minimal physical needs he is considered to be a student of *Avraham*, our Patriarch. However, one who possesses the three characteristics of: an evil eye, inflated spirit, and insatiable desire is considered to be a student of *Bilaam* the evil one.” Why does the *Mishna* compare and contrast the good eye of *Avraham*, our Patriarch with the evil eye of *Bilaam* the evil one? One would think that the *Mishna* should have compared the good eye of *Moshe* with the evil eye of *Bilaam*, especially since *Moshe* was the counterbalance to *Bilaam*.

*Chazal*: *Bilaam* was the prophet of the nations of the world in the same way that *Moshe* was the prophet to the Jewish people. *Avraham*’s “good eye” existed prior to Sinai when the Jewish people were taken as G-d’s holy nation. Therefore, *Avraham*’s “good eye” was unrelated to the Jewish people. It was part of his innate goodness. Contrasting it with the evil eye of *Bilaam*, who was a personification of evil. *Moshe*’s good eye, on the other hand, existed because he wanted to bring about the ultimate level of goodness for the sake of G-d through His Chosen people. His “good eye” was a direct outgrowth of his love for G-d and the Jewish people. Therefore, the *Mishna* contrasts the good eye of *Avraham* to the evil eye of *Bilaam* because they were rooted in their essence.

## The Basis for Moshe Being Denied Entry into the Land

*Torah*: *Moshe* supplicated G-d to allow him to enter into the Land; however, G-d did not heed his prayers.

*Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh*: The reason G-d did not annul the decree and allow *Moshe* to enter into the Land was because it would have been a detriment to the Jewish people. Anything in which *Moshe* had participated in developing and established assumed a permanent and eternal status and could not be destroyed. If *Moshe* would have entered into the Land, he would have built the Temple. In so doing, it could not have been destroyed. The verse in Prophets tells us that at the time of the destruction of the First Temple, “The Wrath of G-d had been poured out on the wood and stone.”

*Chazal*: If G-d’s Wrath had not been expended on the Temple, it would have had to come upon the Jewish people. This would have destroyed them. If *Moshe* would have built the Temple, the Jewish people would have been destroyed. The destruction of the First Temple was an act of Mercy, although it was an expression of the Attribute of Justice. Therefore, *Moshe* was not permitted to enter into the Land.

If in fact, the explanation of *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh* is correct, why did *Moshe* supplicate G-d to be allowed to enter into the Land if it would mean the certain destruction of the Jewish people? One must say that *Moshe* had believed that if he would have been given permission to enter into the Land together with the Jewish people, his level of influence and leadership would have not allowed them to sin. Thus, he would have established the Jewish people for eternity.

*Sforno*: The reason G-d did not allow *Moshe* to enter into the Land differently. *Moshe* had said to the Jewish people, “G-d has become enraged with me because of you.” *Sforno* states, “*Moshe* could not enter into the Land so that there should be ‘crying for generations.’ What is meaning of ‘crying for generations?’ When the spies had returned with their slanderous reports about the Land, the Jewish people bewailed their predicament and cried believing what they had heard.

Despite the fact that G-d had promised them that the Land would be filled with blessing and they would conquer it miraculously, they believed that they were doomed. They had said, ‘We, our wives and our

children, will be disgraced and wasted.’ Because their cry was unwarranted and unfounded, G-d decreed, ‘Since you have cried today without a reason to do so, there will be crying throughout the generations with reason.’

G-d said, ‘Because of what you have said today, you will be the cause of your suffering in the future.’ What did the Jewish people say? They had said, ‘We, our wives and young children will be disgraced and wasted away.’ Based on what they had said, the generation between the ages of twenty and sixty perished in the desert. What happened to their young children?

King David in Psalms: ‘So He raised His Hand against them, to cast them down in the desert, to throw down their progeny among the nations, and scatter them among the lands.’ Because the generation of the spies had said, “our young children will be disgraced and wasted away,” future generations of Jews are going to be destined for exile and be destroyed and assimilated among the nations. Thus, they will be disgraced.

*Sforno*: “If *Moshe* would have entered into the Land the future progeny of the Jewish people would have never sinned. Thus, they would not have been worthy of exile. The decree that G-d had made regarding the future of the progeny would have never come to pass. The sin of the Jewish people bewailing their predicament was a desecration of G-d’s Name. The only way the decree could have been annulled would have been if they would have repented out of love for G-d and not out of fear of him. G-d’s punishment needed to be meted out. Therefore, *Moshe* was denied entry into the Land despite his supplications.”

## **Maintaining One’s Cognizance of G-d**

*Torah*: “*Moshe* said to the Jewish people, ‘But you who cling to *Hashem*, your G-d – you are all alive today. (*Vatem HaDevakim Ba’Shem Elokeichem Chayim Kulchem HaYom*)’.” Meaning, the source of life for the Jew is rooted in his cleaving to G-d.

*Baal HaTurim*: “There is a crown on the letter ‘*ku*’ in the word ‘*HaDevakim* (you who cling)’. The numerical equivalent of the letter ‘*ku*’ is one hundred. This alludes to the one hundred blessing that one should recite each day.”

*Torah in Devarim*: “*Moshe* said to the Children of Israel: And Now, O Israel, what (*mah*) is *Hashem*, your G-d, asking of you?”

*Chazal*: The word “*mah* (what)” should be read as “*meiah* (one hundred).” G-d is asking the Jew to acknowledge Him every day by reciting one hundred blessings. Through one’s acknowledgement of G-d by reciting the one hundred blessings, it will create a sense of appreciation and gratitude to the Creator in every aspect of one’s life. It is through this acknowledgement that the Jew will cleave to G-d.

*Rambam* in the *Laws of Blessings*: The only blessings that is a *Torah* obligation are the ones recited after one is satiated after eating a meal (*Birchas HaMazon*–Grace After Meals). “All of the other blessings were legislated by the Rabbis. There are three classifications of blessings. ‘*Birchas HaNoya*’ (blessings that are recited before one benefits from something), ‘*Birchas Mitzvos*’ (blessings that one recites prior to performing a *mitzvah*) and ‘*Birchas Shevach v’Hodoyah*” (blessings that are recited to express praise and thanks to G-d). What is the value and purpose of all of these blessings? It is to continuously be cognizant of G-d as the Creator and revere Him.”

*Gemara* in Tractate *Berachos*: A blessing is only valid if the Name of G-d is mentioned in the context of “His Kingship.” The text of the blessing must contain “Blessed are You *Hashem*, our G-d, King of the universe...” in order for it to be a valid blessing. Simply mentioning the Name of G-d would not be sufficient. By continuously acknowledging G-d as the “King of the Universe” in every aspect of one’s life, it will create a state of mind that will cause one to cleave to the source of life, Who is G-d Himself.

*Chazal* legislated blessings for every context of one’s life. In addition to reciting blessings before partaking of a food item, or performing a *mitzvah*, there is blessing that one recites upon seeing a rainbow.

*Gemara* in Tractate *Berachos*: The blessing that one recites upon seeing a rainbow is to remember the covenant that G-d made with the world, that He would not destroy it again after the Great Flood, despite the fact that mankind may deserve to be destroyed.

*Gemara*: One recites a blessing after hearing a clap of thunder because every person has a certain distorted

aspect in their heart and the sudden sound of thunder is intended to straighten that delusion by humbling the individual for that moment.

## The Tzaddik's Understanding of his Obligation to G-d

*Torah:* G-d decreed that *Moshe* would not enter into the Land of *Canaan*, rather he would pass away on the trans-Jordan side.

*Va'eschanan:* "I implored (*Va'eschanan*) – *Hashem* at that time..." *Moshe* supplicated G-d to allow him to enter into the Land of Israel despite the prior decree that he would not be allowed to do so; however, G-d did not heed his request.

*Torah:* *Moshe* reprimanded the Jewish people for the sin of the spies. After the sin they bemoaned their predicament and cried. Despite their expression of remorse, G-d did not accept their repentance.

*Sforno:* The reason G-d did not heed their cries was because they had caused a desecration of His Name by believing the slanderous reports of the spies, rather than having faith in G-d. The weeping of the Jewish people was a result of being informed by G-d that they would all perish in the desert. Thus, their crying was not out of love for G-d but rather they were repenting because of their own situation. Had their repentance been based upon the desecration of G-d's Name that they had brought about, rather than upon themselves, G-d would have forgiven them. Although *Moshe* supplicated G-d for forgiveness to allow him to enter into the Land, his prayers were not heeded. Why was this so?

*Sforno:* *Moshe's* supplications were not accepted because he did not pray immediately upon being told of the decree. Rather he waited until this very moment. As a result of the success of his past supplications on behalf of the Jewish people, *Moshe* believed that it was not necessary to beseech G-d immediately. He could do that at another time. However, he was mistaken. Since he did not pray immediately, G-d was not receptive to his plea.

*Rashi* citing *Sifri:* When *Moshe* supplicated G-d he used the expression of "implored (*Va'eschanan*)."  
"*Va'eschanan* (I implore)' is a term of supplication that implies that the basis for the request is rooted in G-d's graciousness. In essence, the supplicant is asking

that G-d should respond despite his lack of being deserving. When a *tzaddik* prays to G-d, although he has sufficient merit upon which he could base his request, nevertheless, because he sees himself as unworthy, his request from G-d is to grant him a gift (*matnas chinum*)."

*Amidah* (Silent Prayer) recited on Shabbos morning: "*Moshe* rejoiced in the gift of his portion..." What was his portion? *Moshe* received a portion in *Torah* that will never be equaled by any person. He also was given a unique level of responsibility for the spiritual future of the Jewish people that was commensurate with his portion. *Moshe* rejoiced being privileged and honored for being able to serve G-d, the Omnipotent One and Master of existence. He was only able to appreciate this responsibility as the ultimate privilege because he was G-d's faithful servant. As it states, "You (G-d) called him a faithful servant."

Because *Moshe* was the most humble person to ever walk the face of the earth, he was able to see G-d on a level that was unequalled by any other human being. He therefore rejoiced, despite his level of obligation. He did not for one moment feel that he was deserving of reward for his unparalleled service of G-d, but rather, the honor of being able to serve His Maker itself was the reward.

This is the reason *Moshe* did not feel that he was deserving of anything. It is only the *tzaddik*, who sees G-d as his benefactor and the ultimate master, who can experience serving G-d as a privilege. It is only the Jew who lives for himself, that cannot understand and appreciate who G-d is. He sees his obligation as a semiburden and thus does not internalize it as a privilege.

Blessing recited before the study of *Torah:* "You have chosen us from all the nations to give us Your *Torah*." The Jew must understand that he was chosen to be given something that has a dimension of value which is one of a kind. As King Solomon writes in *Proverbs*, "G-d said to the Jewish people, 'I have given you a special/good commodity, do not abandon it.'" If one truly understands this, one is able to comprehend what is stated in the *Mishna* in *Ethics of our Fathers*, "If you had learned an enormous amount of *Torah*, do not pride yourself in it because it is for that that you were created."

We find that the First and Second Temple are alluded to by the *Torah* as "the collateral" of the Jewish people.

Meaning, that G-d destroyed the First and Second Temple rather than destroying the Jewish people. He had taken both Temples as collateral, rather than bringing total destruction upon His people. *Moshe*, not being allowed to enter into the Land guaranteed the survival of the Jewish people. This is because had he crossed into the Land and built the Temple, it could have never been destroyed.

Anything with which *Moshe* had been associated assumed a dimension of eternity and permanence because of his own level of holiness. Although we are pained and we mourn and grieve the destruction of the Temple, we must appreciate G-d's Kindness for taking it from us rather than His expending his Wrath upon His beloved people. In actuality, we are not mourning the destruction of the edifice, but rather the distance between G-d and ourselves that is caused by our sins.

## The Jews' Relevance to the Infinite

*Torah*: *Moshe* blessed the Jewish people by saying, "May Hashem, the G-d of your forefathers, add to you a thousand times yourselves, and bless you as He has spoken to you."

*Rashi* citing the *Midrash*: "After receiving *Moshe's* blessing, the Jewish people said to him, 'G-d blessed our forefather that we should be as numerous as the stars in the heavens (unlimited); however, your blessing states that we should increase a thousand fold. The blessing to our forefathers has relevance to the infinite however, your blessing is limiting because it has relevance to the finite.' *Moshe* responded, 'My blessing is an addition to the one you have already received from G-d. He had blessed you to be unlimited and I am adding to His blessing that you should be a thousand fold of the unlimited.'"

G-d had blessed the Jewish people that they should be "as numerous as the stars in the heavens." Although the actual number of stars is beyond human capacity to compute, factually there are a finite number of stars. G-d, however, does know the number of stars as *Chazal* tell us that He displays the stars every day by number and by name and He later withdraws them by number and by name. The infinite only has relevance to G-d Himself.

Anything that exists within creation, such as the stars in the heavens and the grains of sand on the shore,

although their number is incalculable, they are in fact finite. Thus, the Jewish people were blessed with a number that is beyond the human capacity to be able to fathom. The blessings that G-d had given the Holy Patriarchs were all within the context of the incomprehensible and not to be fathomed.

*Mishna* in *Ethics of our Fathers*: "One should be as careful with the observance of a seemingly light *mitzvah* as one is careful with the adherence to a more stringent *mitzvah*, because one does not know the extent of the reward of any *mitzvah*." Meaning, the merit and reward that is associated with a *mitzvah* is beyond human comprehension. One may believe that he understands the innate value of a *mitzvah* based on his own evaluation, which is based on the stringency of the *mitzvah*, it is beyond the grasp of a human being to understand the innate value of a *mitzvah*. One appreciates a *mitzvah* regarding its performance; however, regarding its impact and effect upon the physical and spiritual realm it is beyond human comprehension.

The Jew must understand that anything that has relevance to the Jewish people as His Chosen cannot be quantified. It may present itself as something that is to quantifiable in the physical sense, but its innate essence is not. For example, the physical act of wearing tefillin is a relatively minor procedure; however, its significance and value cannot be fathomed. We see this applied regarding our Patriarch *Avraham*. When he went to battle against the four mightiest kinds in the world in order to rescue his nephew Lot, he had defeated them and their armies with only his servant Eliezer. How is it possible that one individual together with his slave should bring about such a victory?

*Gemara* in Tractate *Bava Metzia*: One is permitted to alter the truth in several contexts. One of these instances is if a *Torah* scholar is asked if had studied a certain number of tractates of *Torah*. The *Torah* scholar is permitted to reply that he has not, despite the fact that he has.

*Rashi*: The reason he is permitted to alter the truth is in order to preserve his humility. However, based on our understanding of the unquantifiable nature of *Torah* and the Jewish people, it is not possible for the *Torah* scholar to be quantified by the number of tractates that he had learned.

*Vilna Gaon* based on the *Jerusalem Talmud*: The principle of “The study of *Torah* is the equivalent of performing all of the *Mitzvos* (*talmid Torah kineged kulom*)” means that even every word of *Torah* is the equivalent of all the *Mitzvos* combined. Thus, it is not possible to quantify the study of *Torah* by the *Torah* scholar by any degree.

*Chazal*: Even the most advanced angel is not able to comprehend the spiritual make up of the soul of the Jew. This is because the soul of the Jew comes from under the Heavenly Throne of G-d, which is a more advanced location than the location from where the angel emanates.

*Zohar*: “G-d, the *Torah*, and the Jewish people are all one.” The commonality between each of these entities is that each of them in their own right (to a degree) are all-encompassing. G-d Himself is the totality of

everything in the absolute sense. The *Torah* itself is the wisdom of G-d, which is unlimited. The Jewish people, who were created for G-d’s Glory and to cleave to Him through the *Torah*, causes them to assume a profile that has a semblance of the infinite. Thus, anything that has relevance to the Jewish people is not comprehensible within the human context. This is true for the good as well as the bad.

*Mishna* in Tractate *Berachos*: “Just as one blesses for the good, one must bless for the bad (*Baruch Dayan Ha’emes*).” Because the true understanding of all that transpires within existence is in its essence good; however, that appreciation cannot be fathomed by man.



**Yad Avraham Institute**