

אור החיים הקדוש · האזינו · ראשון

Explanatory English · Line-by-Line Edition

HA'AZINU · 1ST ALIYAH

The Hebrew is the original Ohr HaChaim. Each passage is paired with its AI-assisted explanatory English, beside it on wide pages and beneath it on smaller screens. Brief clarifications are marked within the English. In plain words and Lemaaseh are separate AI-assisted study aids.

פסוק א

Deuteronomy 32:1

הָאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶדְבָּרָה וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי־פִי:

Give ear, ye heavens, and I will speak; And let the earth hear the words of my mouth.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:1:1

Give ear, heavens, and I will speak, etc. First, we must examine why Moshe said, "and I will speak" (וְאֶדְבָּרָה), rather than phrasing it as, "Give ear, heavens, to my words."

הָאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְגו'. יֵשׁ לְהַעִיר רֵאשׁוֹנָה לְמָה אָמַר "וְאֶדְבָּרָה", וְלֹא אָמַר עַל זֶה הַדָּבָר "הָאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְדַבֵּר".

Second, why did he not group them together and say, "Give ear, heavens and earth," or, "Hear, heavens and earth"?

ב' לְמָה לֹא כָלַל אוֹתָם יַחַד וַיֹּאמֶר "הָאֲזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ", אוֹ "שְׁמַעוּ שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ":

Third, why does Moshe use haazanah, "giving ear," when he addresses the heavens, but shemiah, "hearing," when he addresses the earth? What accounts for the change in wording?

ג' לְמָה לְשָׁמַיִם אָמַר לְשׁוֹן הָאֲזִנָּה וְלָאָרֶץ אָמַר לְשׁוֹן שְׁמִיעָה:

Fourth, why did he address the heavens with a direct command, "Give ear" (הָאֲזִינוּ), while addressing the earth in the third person, "and let the earth hear" (וְתִשְׁמַע), when he should have said, "and hear, O earth" (וְשִׁמְעֵי הָאָרֶץ)?

ד' לְמָה לְשָׁמַיִם אָמַר לְשׁוֹן צִוִּי "הָאֲזִינוּ" לְנוֹכַח, וְלָאָרֶץ אָמַר "וְתִשְׁמַע" שֶׁהִיא לוֹ לֹאמַר "וְשִׁמְעֵי הָאָרֶץ":

Fifth, why did he use the term "and I will speak" (וְאֶדְבָּרָה) for the heavens, which denotes harsh speech (דְּבִיר קָשָׁה), while using "the words of my mouth" (אִמְרֵי פִי) for the earth, which denotes soft, gentle expression (אֲמִירָה רַכָּה)?

ה' לְמָה לְשָׁמַיִם אָמַר "וְאֶדְבָּרָה" דְּבִיר קָשָׁה וְלָאָרֶץ אָמַר "אִמְרֵי פִי" אֲמִירָה רַכָּה:

Sixth, why was he precise to say "the words of my mouth" (אֲמָרִי) rather than simply saying "my words" (אָמַרִי)?

ו' לָמָּה דִּקְדָּק לומר "אֲמָרִי כִּי" וְלֹא אָמַר "אָמַרִי":

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:1:2

I have seen that Chazal in the Sifrei said: Because Moshe was close to heaven, he said, "Give ear, heavens," whereas Yeshayahu, who was far from heaven, said, "Hear, O heavens" (Yeshayahu 1:2). According to their words, some of these questions about the wording are resolved, but not all of them.

וְרֵאִיתִי לְרַבּוֹתֵינוּ וְכַרְוֹנָם לְבָרְכָה (בספרי) שֶׁאָמְרוּ: מֹשֶׁה שֶׁהָיָה קָרוֹב לַשָּׁמַיִם אָמַר "הֶאֱזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם" וְיִשְׁעִיָּה שֶׁהָיָה רָחוֹק מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם אָמַר "שִׁמְעוּ שָׁמַיִם" (ישעיה א:ב), עַד כָּאן. וְלְדַבְרֵהֶם נִתְּשָׁבוּ קֶצֶת מִהִדְקְדוּקִים, לֹא כָּלָם.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:1:3

The Ohr HaChaim now offers another approach. First, we need to understand the word haazinu, "give ear." It can describe two different situations. It can mean "bend your ear toward me," or it can address an ear already close to the speaker.

וְחוּץ מִדֶּרֶכָם נִרְאָה לומר, וְקוֹדֵם נִשְׁכַּל עַל דְּבַר מִשְׁמַעוֹת תִּיכַת "הֶאֱזִינוּ", וְהִנֵּה הִיא סוֹבֶלֶת שְׁנֵי דְרָכִים: אֶחָד, הִטָּה אָזְנוֹ, וְהַשְׁנִי, תִּאֲזִין אֲזִנָּה.

According to the first interpretation, it indicates that the listener is far away and must bend his ear in order to hear, for without bending his ear, he would be unable to hear.

לְדֶרֶךְ הָרֵאשׁוֹן יִגִּיד שֶׁהַשּׁוֹמֵעַ רָחוֹק וְצָרִיךְ לְהִטּוֹת אָזְנוֹ כְּדֵי שְׂיוּכַל לְשִׁמּוֹעַ, שֶׁכֵּן לֹא הִטִּית אָזְנוֹ אִינוּ יָכוֹל לְשִׁמּוֹעַ.

In the second reading, the listener is already so close to the speaker that he can be addressed directly with "give ear." This is the reading Chazal chose when they described Moshe as close to heaven.

וְלְדֶרֶךְ הַשְּׁנִי יִגִּיד שֶׁכָּל כֹּה אֵין הַשּׁוֹמֵעַ קָרוֹבָה לַמִּשְׁמַע שֶׁלֹּא אָמַר הָאֵזֶן. וְדֶרֶךְ זֶה בּוֹ בִּפְחוּרֵי חֲזוֹל.

The word also allows the first reading, however, and the wording does not force us to choose between them. The Ohr HaChaim therefore develops the first reading, in which the listener must lean in from a distance. He will use it to answer all the questions raised at the beginning.

וְכִינוּן שֶׁהַמִּלָּה סוֹבֶלֶת גַּם כֵּן דֶּרֶךְ הָרֵאשׁוֹן, וְאִין הֶכְרַע, אֵינוֹ נִלְךָ בּוֹ, וּבָזָה יִתְּשָׁבוּ כָּל הַדְּקְדוּקִים עַל נִכּוֹן.

Although the earlier Sages chose another interpretation, the Torah has seventy faces, as the Ohr HaChaim has already explained (Bamidbar Rabbah 13:16). In Aggadah, the Torah's non-halachic teachings, another interpretation may differ from theirs, provided the disagreement is not in a matter of halachah. Here there is an additional reason to offer another reading: as he will soon explain, both readings can fit the same pasuk.

וְהָגַם שְׁקֵדמוֹיֵנּוּ בְּחֵרוֹ דֶּרֶךְ אַחֵר, כְּבָר
אָמְרָנוּ שְׁשִׁבְעִים פָּנִים לַתּוֹרָה (במדבר רבה
יג, טז), וּבְעֵינֵינוּ הָאֲגָדָה יְכוּלִים לְפָרֵשׁ הָגַם
שִׁיחָהּ הַפְּרוּשׁ מִנְגִיד לְדִבְרֵיהֶם כָּל שְׂאִין
הַנִּגִּיד בְּדִבְרֵי הַלָּכָה, וְיָמָּה גַם שִׁישׁ לָנוּ
לְהַסְבִּיל שְׁנֵי הַדְּרָכִים בַּפָּסוּק כַּאֲשֶׁר אֲבָאָר
בְּסִמּוּד:

Now, the path by which we resolve all the questions about the wording is as follows: Since the heavens are physically high above, in accordance with the plain meaning of the matter, Moshe called upon them to bend their ear, saying to them, "Give ear" (הִאֲזִינוּ), meaning: bend your ear to hear my words.

הִנֵּה הַדֶּרֶךְ שֶׁאֲנוּ מִשְׁבִּים בּוֹ כָּל הַדְּקָדוּקִים
הוּא עַל זֶה הַדֶּרֶךְ, לְפִי שֶׁהַשָּׁמַיִם הֵם
עָלְיוֹנִים כַּפֶּשֶׁט הָעֵינָן, לָזֶה קָרָא לָהֶם מֹשֶׁה
שִׁישׁוּ אָזְנָם, וְאָמַר לָהֶם "הִאֲזִינוּ", פְּרוּשׁ
הָטוּ אָזְנוֹכֶם לְשִׁמְעַי דְּבָרִי,

But to the earth, he said, "and let the earth hear" (וְתִשְׁמַע), meaning it will hear on its own without bending an ear. This is because the earth stands directly before him, and is close enough to hear the very articulation of the speech coming out of his mouth. This is why he said, "the words of my mouth" (אִמְרֵי פִי), because the earth is so close to him.

וְלָאָרֶץ אָמַר "וְתִשְׁמַע", פְּרוּשׁ מַעֲצָמָה
בְּלֹא הִטִּית אָזָן, כִּי לִפְנֵי הוּא עוֹמֶדֶת,
וְיִכּוּלָה לְשִׁמְעַי חֲתוּךְ הַמֶּאֱמָר הַיּוֹצֵא מִפִּי,
וְהוּא אָמַר "אִמְרֵי פִי", לְהִיטָהּ כָּל כָּךְ
קְרוֹבָה אֵצֶלּוּ.

Through this approach, we gain a resolution to all the questions about the wording. Since one listener is far and the other is near, Moshe divided his call to each one in the manner appropriate for them.

וְלַדֶּרֶךְ זֶה הָרוּחָנוּ יָשׁוּב כָּל הַדְּקָדוּקִים, כִּי
לְפִי שֶׁאֶחָד רָחוֹק וְאֶחָד קְרוֹב, לָזֶה חִלַּק
הַהֲעָרָה לְכָל אֶחָד כַּפִּי הָרְאוּי לוֹ.

To the distant one (the heavens), he called to bend its ear, and undertook upon himself to call out in a loud voice, which is the meaning of "and I will speak" (וְאָדַבְרָה, implying strong, loud speech). To the near one (the earth), he called out in the manner appropriate for it, indicating that he would speak to it as well, but it does not require a loud shout; rather, it will hear on its own, even without a loud voice, simply by hearing the articulation of the letters directly from his mouth.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:1:7

Through this path, we can also resolve the words of Yeshayahu, who said, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth" (Yeshayahu 1:2). He attributed "hearing" to the heavens, even though they were far from him, and "giving ear" (bending the ear) to the earth, even though it was close.

The reason for this is as Yeshayahu himself concluded: "for Hashem has spoken." This means the reason he ordered them in this way is because it is Hashem Who spoke. Relative to the Speaker, Who is Hashem, the heavens are closer, as it is written, "The heavens are heavens for Hashem" (Psalms 115:16), and it is written, "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool" (Yeshayahu 66:1). Therefore, Yeshayahu said, "Hear, O heavens" to what Hashem spoke, because they do not need to bend their ear; but "give ear, O earth," because being far from Him, the earth must bend its ear to hear.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:1:8

Perhaps both interpretations of the word "Give ear" (הֶאֱזִינוּ) are correct, in the following manner: Relative to the physical mouth of Moshe that articulates the letters, the meaning is as we have explained (that the heavens are far and must bend their ear).

לְרַחוּק קָרָא שְׁיִטָּה אֲזִינוּ, וְהִתְנָה עַל עֲצָמוֹ
לְקָרָא בְּקוֹל גָּדוֹל, וְהוּא אָמַר "וְאָדַבְרָה",
וּלְקָרוֹב כְּפִי הָרָאִי לוֹ הָעִירוּ שְׁגָם אֵלָיו
יְדַבֵּר, אֲלֵא שְׁאִינוּ צָרִיךְ לְקָרִיָּאָה, כִּי
מֵעֲצָמוֹ יִשְׁמַע הֵגֶם שֶׁלֹּא יִקְרָא בְּקוֹל גָּדוֹל,
אֲלֵא בְּחִתּוּף אוֹתִיּוֹת מִפִּי תִשְׁמַע בּוֹ.

וּלְדַרְךָ זֶה יִתְּשִׁבוּ דְבָרֵי יִשְׁעִיָּה שְׁאָמַר
(יִשְׁעִיָּה א:ב) "שְׁמַעוּ שָׁמַיִם וְהֶאֱזִינוּ אֶרֶץ",
שֶׁנִּתְּנוּ שְׁמִיעָה לְשָׁמַיִם הֵגֶם שֶׁהֵם רְחוּקִים
מִמֶּנּוּ, וְהֶאֱזִינָה לְאֶרֶץ הֵגֶם שֶׁהִיא קְרוֹבָה.

הַטַּעַם הוּא, כְּמוֹ שְׁגָמַר אוֹמֵר יִשְׁעִיָּה עֲצָמוֹ
וְאָמַר "כִּי ה' דִּבֶּר", פְּרוּשׁ טַעַם שְׁאָמַר
בְּסִדֵּר זֶה לָהֶם כִּי ה' דִּבֶּר, וּבְעֶרְךָ הַמְדַּבֵּר
שֶׁהוּא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא יוֹתֵר הֵם קְרוֹבִים
הַשָּׁמַיִם, דְּכָתִיב (תהלים קטו:טז) "הַשָּׁמַיִם
שָׁמַיִם לָה'", וְכָתִיב (יִשְׁעִיָּה סו:א) "הַשָּׁמַיִם
כְּסֵאִי וְהָאֶרֶץ הָדוֹם רַגְלִי", וְלָזֶה אָמַר
"שְׁמַעוּ שָׁמַיִם" מֵה שֶׁדִּבֶּר ה', כִּי אֵינָם
צָרִיכִים הִטִּית אָזְנוֹ, וְ"הֶאֱזִינוּ אֶרֶץ" לְהִיּוֹתָהּ
רְחוּקָה, צָרִיכָה לְהִטִּית אָזְנָהּ לְשִׁמוּעַ.

וְאוּלֵי שֶׁתִּיכַח "הֶאֱזִינוּ" יִצְדָּקוּ בָּהּ שְׁנֵי
הַדְּרָכִים, עַל זֶה הַדְּרָךְ: בְּעֶרְךָ בְּחִינַת פֶּה
מִשָּׁה הַמְּחַתֵּף הָאוֹתִיּוֹת תִּהְיֶה הַכּוֹנֶנָה
בְּדַבְרֵינוּ,

But relative to his soul, which is spiritual, the meaning is in accordance with the words of Chazal. The text itself supports this, for it was regarding Moshe's soul that Chazal said (Sifrei Ha'azinu 1) that he was close to heaven. His physical self, however, spoke on the earth, and one cannot deny physical reality.

וּבְעֶרְךָ נִשְׁמָתוֹ שֶׁהִיא הָרוּחָנִיּוֹת תְּהִיָּה
הַפִּנְיָה כְּדִבְרֵי רַבּוֹתֵינוּ וְכָרוֹנָם לְבָרְכָהּ,
וְהַדְּבָרִים מוֹכִיחִים כֵּן, שֶׁעַל נִשְׁמָתוֹ שֶׁל
מֹשֶׁה הוּא שָׁאֲמָרוּ חֲכָמֵינוּ וְכָרוֹנָם לְבָרְכָהּ
(ספרי האזינו א) לְפִי שֶׁהָיָה קָרוֹב לַשָּׁמַיִם,
כִּי עֲצֻמוֹתָו בָּאָרֶץ יְדַבֵּר, וְאִין לְהַכְחִישׁ
הַמּוֹחַשׁ.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:1:9

Furthermore, Moshe intended to speak to the two components from which man is constructed: one is the spiritual part, which is referred to by the name "heavens," and the other is the physical part, which is referred to by the name "earth." This is similar to what Chazal alluded to (Sanhedrin 91b) on the verse, "He calls to the heavens from above, etc." (Psalms 50:4).

עוֹד נִתְכַּוֵּן שֶׁדַּבֵּר עִם שְׁנֵי הָרִכְבוֹת שֶׁמֶהֶם
בְּנוֹי הָאָדָם, אֶחָד חֵלֶק הָרוּחָנִי שִׁתְיָחַס
בְּשֵׁם הַשָּׁמַיִם, וְאֶחָד חֵלֶק הַגּוֹפָנִי שִׁתְיָחַס
בְּשֵׁם הָאָרֶץ, וְכִדְרָה שֶׁרָמְזוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ וְכָרוֹנָם
לְבָרְכָהּ (סנהדרין צא:) בַּפֶּסוּק "קְרָא אֶל
הַשָּׁמַיִם מֵעַל" וְגו' (תהלים נ:ד).

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:1:10

When he spoke to the spiritual aspect within man, he called to it and said, "Give ear, heavens." This means the heavenly parts of man, which are hidden in secret, are called upon to bend their ear. To this aspect, he spoke with strong words (דְּבוֹר קָשָׁה), because the soul can bear the authority of the Creator's demands, as it recognizes its spiritual obligation.

וְכִשְׁדַּבֵּר לְרוּחָנִיּוֹת שֶׁבָּאָדָם קָרָא אֵלָיו
וְאָמַר "הֶאֱזִינוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם", פְּרוּשׁ, חֵלְקֵי
הַשָּׁמַיִם שֶׁלְּהִיוֹתָם טְמוּנִים בְּנִסְתָּר, לְזֶה
קָרָאם לְהֶאֱזִין, וְאָמַר בְּנִגְדוֹ דְּבוֹר קָשָׁה, כִּי
הַנֶּפֶשׁ תִּסְבּוֹל מְרוֹת בְּעִנְיַי הַבוֹרָא, כִּי
תִּכְפֹּר חַיּוּבָהּ.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:1:11

But to the body, which is revealed, he said, "and let the earth hear," meaning the earthly parts of man. To this physical aspect, he spoke "the words of my mouth," because the body, by its physical nature, is far from intellectual and spiritual concepts, and therefore requires gentle words (אֲמִירָה רַכָּה) to be receptive to hearing.

וְכַנְגֵּד הַגּוֹף שֶׁהוּא בְּנִגְלָה, אָמַר "וְתִשְׁמַע
הָאָרֶץ", פְּרוּשׁ, חֵלְקֵי הָאָרֶץ, "אֲמַר פִּי", כִּי
הַגּוֹף לְהִיוֹת טָבַעוֹ רְחוּק מִהַמְשַׁכְּלוֹת צָרִיךְ
אֲמִירָה רַכָּה לְשִׁמְעוֹ.

Moshe also intended to speak to the different groups within Yisrael: first, their leaders and great figures; second, the masses of the people who do not hold prominent titles.

He referred to the leaders by the name "heavens," because they are on a high spiritual level. He addressed them first with the command, "Give ear, heavens." After that, he said, "and let the earth hear," meaning that the masses, who are compared to the "earth," will hear on their own when they see their leaders walking on the proper path. This is as the Sages of blessed memory said in the Zohar (Part II, 36a): "If the head of the nation is corrected, the whole nation is corrected."

עוד נתכוון לדבר עם הדרגות הנמצאים
בישראל: אחד הם גדולייהם וראשיהם, ב'
המה המון העם שאין להם שם בעם.

וכנה לגדולים בשם שמים שהם במדרגה
גדולה, והקדימם ודבר להם בצווי "האזינו
השמים", ואחר כך אמר "ותשמע הארץ",
פרוש מעצמם ישמעו ההמון הנמשלים
לארץ, כשיראו גדולייהם הולכים בדרך
נכון, וכאמרו זכרונם לברכה (זוהר חלק
ב לו.) וזה לשונם: אי רישא דעמא אתתקון
כולא אתתקון.

There is another hint here. By giving ear to Torah, people themselves can become worthy of the name "heavens." On this reading, haazinu means: listen, and through that listening you become like the heavens.

This follows the idea of "I said, you are elohim" (Tehillim 82:6), a description of human spiritual stature. The Ohr HaChaim refers to his longer explanation in Bereishis: through righteous deeds, even physical matter can be transformed into spiritual form; through wicked deeds, spiritual form can be reduced to mere matter. For clarity, "matter" and "form" here contrast the physical side of a person with the spiritual character that shapes it. His point is that our deeds can raise the physical toward the spiritual, or pull the spiritual downward.

עוד ירמוז: אם יאזינו דברי תורה אז יהיו
נקראים שמים, והוא אמרו "האזינו" – בזה
אתם נחשבים שמים,

על דרך אמרו (תהלים פב:) "אני אמרתי
אלהים אתם", וכמו שהארחנו בפךרשת
בראשית, שעל ידי מעשה הצדיקים גם
החמר מהפכים אותו ועושים אותו צורה,
ועל ידי מעשה הרשעים מהפכים הצורה
לחמר.

We have already established that spiritual form is referred to by the name "heavens," and physical matter is referred to by the name "earth." When Moshe said, "and I will speak" (וְאָדַבְרָה), implying harsh speech, he meant: do not only listen during times of goodness, but even when I speak harshly in rebuke for sin, you must still give ear.

וּכְבֹּר אֶמְרָנוּ כִּי הַצֹּרֶחַ תִּתְיַחַס בְּשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם,
וְהַחוֹמֶר יִתְיַחַס בְּשֵׁם אֶרֶץ. וְאָמְרוּ
"וְאָדַבְרָה", פְּרוּשׁ, לֹא בְשָׁעַת הַטּוֹבָה לְבַד
תִּאֲזִינוּ, אֲלָא אֶפְלוּ בְשָׁעָה שֶׁיִּדְבֵּר קִשּׁוֹת
בְּתוֹכָהֶן עַל עֶזְרֵן צָרִיכִין לְהִאָּזֵן.

And when he said, "and let the earth hear the words of my mouth," he meant that even after the soul departs from the body, leaving only the physical element of the "earth," even then, this earth will hear the words of my mouth.

וְאָמְרוּ וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ וגו'. פְּרוּשׁ, שֶׁאֶפְלוּ
אַחַר פְּרִדַּת הַנֶּפֶשׁ מִהַגּוּף וְתִשְׁמַע בְּחִינַת
הָאָרֶץ לְבִדְהָ, אַף עַל פִּי כֵן תִּשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ
אִמְרֵי פִי.

He explains this through a passage in the Zohar Chadash, Bereishis, on "Let there be lights." It describes a future heavenly voice calling at every grave marker: "Go out and see. Come out from beneath the worn covering of dust, and awaken from your sleep, daughters of Tzion." The passage connects Tzion with a tziyun, a grave marker, as in "What is this marker?" (II Melachim 23:17). For clarity, this wordplay identifies the sleepers being summoned as those lying in the graves. This concludes the cited passage.

פְּרוּשׁ, עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֶמְרָם בְּסִפְרֵי הַזֶּהר (זהר
חדש בראשית בפסוק "וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי
מֵאֵרֶת") וְזֶה לְשׁוֹנוֹ: "צִיּוֹנָה וְרִאֲיוֹנָה" וגו',
עֲתִידָה בֵּת קוֹל לְאַתְעָרָא בְּכָל צִיּוֹנָא
וְצִיּוֹנָא גְבֻתִי קִבְרֵי וְאוֹמְרֵת "צִיּוֹנָה
וְרִאֲיוֹנָה", פּוֹקוּ מִתְּחוֹת בְּלִיאוֹתָא דְעַפְרָא
וְאַתְעָרוּ מִשְׁנַתְכוֹן בְּנוֹת צִיּוֹן, כְּמָה דְאַתְ
אִמַּר "מָה הַצִּיּוֹן הַלֵּז" (מלכים ב כג:יז), עַד
כָּאן.

This is the promise that Hashem makes to the righteous: that their physical bodies will hear His call even after they have returned to the earth, which is the meaning of "and let the earth hear the words of my mouth." From the inverse of this statement, you learn that one who does not give ear to the word of Hashem in life, his body resting in the earth will not hear that calling voice, and his dust will not be awakened at the resurrection.

הוּא הַמְּאָמֵר שֶׁמִּבְטִיחַ ה' לַצַּדִּיקִים שֶׁיִּשְׁמַע
גּוֹפֶם אַחֲרֵי שִׁיחָהּ בָּאָרֶץ, וְהוּא אָמְרוּ
"וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי פִי". וּמִמוֹצֵא דְבָר
אַתָּה לְמַד שֶׁמִּי שֶׁלֹּא יִאָּזֵן דְּבַר ה' לֹא
יִשְׁמַע גּוֹפּוֹ הַשּׁוֹכֵן בָּאָרֶץ אֶת קוֹל הַפְּרוּז
הַהוּא וְלֹא יִהְיֶה עֲפָרוֹ נִנָּעֵר.

בפשוט · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim begins with six questions about the different ways Moshe addresses heaven and earth. His first approach reads the contrast in terms of physical distance: heaven must lean in to hear Moshe, while the earth is close enough to hear his words directly. He then shows how this can coexist with Chazal's reading that Moshe's soul is close to heaven. Other readings address the soul and body, and then the leaders and the rest of the people. A final reading teaches that listening to Torah, including rebuke, can raise a person's physical life toward the spiritual. He connects that listening with the future call that awakens the righteous from the earth.

למעשה · Lemaaseh

When a Torah teaching challenges something we are doing, pause before dismissing it. The Ohr HaChaim on this pasuk says that giving ear includes listening to rebuke, even when the words are hard to hear. One practical step is to identify what the teaching asks us to reconsider, and give that point our full attention.

פסוק ב

Deuteronomy 32:2

**יֵעָרֵף כַּמָּטָר לִקְחֵי תִנּוֹל כִּטְל אִמְרָתִי כְשֶׁעֵיָרֵם עָלַי-דָּשָׁא
וְכַרְבִּיבִים עָלַי-עֹשֵׁב:**

My doctrine shall drop as the rain, My speech shall distil as the dew; As the small rain upon the tender grass, And as the showers upon the herb.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:2:1

"May my teaching fall like rain." The Ohr HaChaim begins with the teaching in Pirkei Avos 3:17, "If there is no flour, there is no Torah." Flour stands for the livelihood that enables a person to learn.

יֵעָרֵף כַּמָּטָר לִקְחֵי. פְּרוּשׁ, עַל דֶּרֶךְ אִמְרָם
זְכוּנָם לְבָרָכָה (אבות ג, יז) "אם אין קמח
אין תורה" וכו',

Just as Hashem sends rain to feed and sustain us, we are called upon to learn Torah. Moshe's comparison asks that Torah flow from our mouths in response to the rain Hashem provides. The pasuk can thus be read: let My teaching fall, just as I cause the rain to fall. The comparison is between the drops of rain Hashem sends and the words of Torah we speak.

The Ohr HaChaim explains that Hashem first prepares a person's livelihood and then asks him to learn Torah. Material support makes that learning possible.

Consequently, you learn from this matter that if they do not drop words of Torah from their mouths, Hashem has no desire to give rain.

This also explains the Ohr HaChaim's reading of "If there is no flour, there is no Torah" (Pirkei Avos 3:17). He reads it as a conclusion one can draw: when the flour is missing, the Torah is missing. In this reading, a lack of sustenance points back to a lack of Torah learning.

The reason the verse refers to the study of Torah with the term "ya'arof" (shall drop) is to compare it to the action of rain, which drops down.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:2:2

Alternatively, the verse hints that just as the withholding of rain causes death to man, so too the withholding of Torah will break him (from the root "arof," to break the neck). He connects this warning to Yeshayahu 1:19 to 20, which contrasts willingness to obey with refusal, and warns that refusal leads to the sword.

The verse repeats itself using different terms, "likchi" (My teaching) and "imrati" (My speech), corresponding to the two Torahs: the Written Torah and the Oral Torah.

יִכּוֹן הַכְּתוּב בְּמֵאמָר זֶה כִּי כְמוֹ שֶׁה' נוֹתֵן
מָטָר לְזוֹן וּלְפָנִים, כְּמוֹ כֵּן צָרִיכִין הֵם
לְלַמּוֹד תּוֹרָה, וְזֶה שִׁיעוֹר הַכְּתוּב: יִטֵּיף כְּמוֹ
שֶׁאֲנִי מִטֵּיף הַמָּטָר לְקַחִי, וּכְאִלוּ אָמַר
יִצְרָף לְקַחִי כְּמָטָר,

שָׂאִין הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא שׂוֹאֵל מִהָאָדָם
לְלַמּוֹד תּוֹרָה עַד שֶׁמֵּכִין לוֹ כֹּדִי פִּרְנָסָתוֹ,

וּמְמוּצָא דְּבַר אֶתָּה לְלַמֵּד שָׂאֵם לֹא יִטֵּיפוּ
מִפִּיקֵהם טִיפֵי תּוֹרָה אֵין חֶפֶץ ה' לְתֵת מָטָר.

וְהוּא מָה שֶׁפִּרְשְׁנוּ בְּמֵאמָר הַתֵּנָא (אבות
ג,יז) "אִם אֵין קָמַח אֵין תּוֹרָה" פִּרּוּשׁ, אִם
רְאִיתָ שֶׁאֵין קָמַח דַּע שֶׁאֵין תּוֹרָה.

וְטַעַם שֶׁכָּנֶה לְלַמּוֹד תּוֹרָה לְשׁוֹן זֶה
יִצְרָף, לְדַמּוּת לְמַעֲשֵׂה הַמָּטָר שֶׁהוּא
מִטֵּיף.

עוֹד יִרְמֹז כִּי כְדֻרָּה שֶׁהַמָּטָר מְנִיעֵתוֹ תְּסוּבֵב
מֵיתָה לְהָאָדָם, כְּמוֹ כֵּן מְנִיעֵת הַתּוֹרָה
תַּעֲרִפְנוּ, עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֲמָרוּ (ישעיה א:יט-כ)
"אִם תֵּאָבֹוּ וְגו' וְאִם תִּמָּאֲנוּ וְגו' חֲרֵב וְגו'."

וְכַפֵּל לּוֹמַר בְּמִלּוֹת שׁוֹנוֹת "לְקַחִי
אִמְרָתִי", כְּנֶגֶד שְׁנֵי תוֹרוֹת – תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכָתָב
וְתוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל פֶּה.

Likchi, "My teaching," refers to the Written Torah, which Hashem handed to Moshe, written with the finger of Elokim. Although the direct gift was the Aseres HaDibros, the Ten Commandments, everything written in the Torah is included within them. The Ohr HaChaim cites the Zohar, volume 2, 93b, for this point.

And corresponding to the Oral Torah, it says "imrati" (My speech), which refers to matters that were transmitted by word of mouth, from mouth to mouth.

The verse compares the Written Torah to rain and the Oral Torah to dew. This is because the Written Torah is the primary foundation and root of everything, whereas the Oral Torah consists of the applications and fine details that are not explicitly stated in the Written Torah but are only hinted at. This is the concept the verse employs in its metaphor, comparing the Written Torah to rain, which is the foundation and primary source of everything, and the Oral Torah to dew, which sustains and preserves what the rain has produced, just as the Oral Torah does for the Written Torah.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:2:3

He offers another reading based on the teaching of the masters of the Torah's inner wisdom, cited in Be'er Heitev, Orach Chaim 238, in the name of the Arizal. In this teaching, the time for learning the Written Torah is the day, rather than the night.

כַּנְגִיד תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכֶתֶב אָמַר "לְקַחִי" שֶׁהִיא
נִתְּנָה מִיָּד לְיָד מִשָּׁה כְּתוּבָה בְּאֶצְבָּע
אֱלֹהִים, וְהִגַּם שֶׁלֹּא נָתַן אֶלָּא עֲשֶׂת
הַדְּבָרוֹת, בָּהֶם כָּלוּלִים כָּל מֵה שֶׁכְּתוּב
בְּסֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה כְּמֵאמָרם זְכוֹרָנָם לְבִרְכָּה
(זוהר חלק ב צג:).

וְכַנְגִיד תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל פֶּה אָמַר "אִמְרָתִי"
שֶׁהִיא דְּבָרִים שֶׁנִּמְסְרוּ בְּמֵאמָר פֶּה אֶל פֶּה.

וְכֵנֶה לְתוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכֶתֶב מְטֵר וּלְתוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל
פֶּה טֵל, לְפִי שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכֶתֶב הִיא הָעֵקֶר
וְיִסוּד כָּל דָּבָר, וְתוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל פֶּה הִיא
תְּקוּנִים וְדִקְדּוּקִים שֶׁאֵינָם מִפְּרָשִׁים בָּה
אֶלָּא נִרְמָזִים, וְהוּא עֲנִיָּן שֶׁלֹּקַח הַכְּתוּב
בְּדַמְיוֹנָה שֶׁדָּמָה תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכֶתֶב לְמֵטֶר
שֶׁהוּא יִסוּד וְעֵקֶר הַכֹּל, וְתוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל פֶּה
לְטֵל שֶׁהוּא תְּקוּנָה וְהַעֲמָדָה מֵה שֶׁעָשָׂה
הַמֵּטֶר כְּמוֹ שֶׁהִיא תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל פֶּה לְתוֹרָה
שֶׁבְּכֶתֶב.

עוֹד יִרְצֶה עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֲמָרָם אֲנָשִׁי אֶמֶת (באר
הַיֵּטב או"ח סי' רל"ח בשם האריז"ל) כִּי
מִצְוֹת עֵסֶק תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכֶתֶב אֵינָה אֶלָּא בַּיּוֹם
וְלֹא בַּלַּיְלָה,

Similarly, Chazal taught in a Beraita (Midrash Shocher Tov 19:7) that during those forty days Moshe was with Hashem, he was able to distinguish between day and night by the subject matter Hashem was teaching him. When Hashem taught him the Written Torah, he knew it was day. When Hashem taught him Mishnah, Moshe knew it was night. The Ohr HaChaim adds that there is a deeper reason for this teaching about not learning Scripture at night, but does not develop that reason here.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:2:4

For this reason, the verse compares the Written Torah to rain, which does not fall constantly but only during the rainy season, and not during the summer. Go and learn from what happened to Rava (Taanis 24b) when he troubled Heaven to bring down rain out of its proper season.

In the same way, Scripture is meant specifically for its designated time, which is the day and not the night.

And the verse compares the Oral Torah to dew. Just as dew never ceases, falling in summer and winter, day and night, so too the Oral Torah has no time that is not its proper time.

The sun's drying up the dew does not disprove the comparison. That disappearance comes from the sun acting upon it, not from the dew itself having an appointed time when it must stop.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:2:5

As the small rain upon the tender grass, and so on. This can be explained in light of what Chazal taught in a Beraita (Midrash Mishlei, Chapter 10): Rabbi Yishmael said: When a person is brought to judgment, if he possesses knowledge of Scripture, they ask him, "Why did you not study Mishnah?" If he possesses knowledge of Mishnah, they ask him, "Why did you not study Talmud?" and so on in this manner.

וְכֵן אָמְרוּ בְּבִרְתָּא (מדרש שוחר טוב יט, ז)
שְׁמִשָּׁה בְּאוֹתָן אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם שֶׁהָיָה אֵצֶל ה' הָיָה מִכִּיר בֵּין הַיּוֹם לַלַּיְלָה מִהֶלְמוֹד שֶׁהָיָה ה' מְלַמְדוֹ, כְּשֶׁהָיָה מְלַמְדוֹ מִשְׁנָה הָיָה יוֹדֵעַ שֶׁהוּא לַיְלָה, וְיֵשׁ טַעַם בְּדִבְכָּר שָׂאִין לְמוֹד מִקְרָא בַּלַּיְלָה.

וְלָזֶה כָּנָה תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכֹתֵב לְמָטָר, שָׂאִינוּ תָמִיד אֶלָּא בִּימֹת הַגְּשָׁמִים אֲבָל לֹא בִּימֹת הַחֶמָּה, וְצָא וּלְמַד מִה שֶׁאַרְעֵי לְרִכָּא (תענית כד:) עַל שֶׁהִטְרִיחַ לְהוֹרִיד גְּשָׁמִים שֶׁלֹּא בְּעֵתָם,

כְּמוֹ כֵּן הַמִּקְרָא הוּא דִּוְקָא בְּזִמְנוֹ הַמְּגֻבֵּל לוֹ יוֹם וְלֹא לַיְלָה.

וְדָמָה תּוֹרָה שֶׁבָּעַל פֶּה לְטַל, כְּמוֹ שֶׁהִטַּל לֹא מִפְּסִיק קוֹץ וְחֶרֶף יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה, כְּמוֹ כֵּן תּוֹרָה שֶׁבָּעַל פֶּה אֵין לָהּ זְמַן שָׂאִינוּ זְמַנָּה,

וְאֵל תִּקְשֶׁה שֶׁהִטַּל יִפְרִיחוּ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ כִּי אֵין הַמְּנִיעָה מִצַּד הַטַּל:

כְּשֶׁעִירָם וְגו'. יִתְבָּאֵר עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֲמָרָם בְּבִרְתָּא (מדרש משלי י'): אָמַר רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעֵאל, כְּשֶׁמַּעֲמִידִין אֶת הָאָדָם בְּדִין, אִם יֵשׁ בְּיָדוֹ מִקְרָא שׁוֹאֲלִין מִמֶּנּוּ לָמָּה לֹא שָׁנָה, וְאִם יֵשׁ בְּיָדוֹ מִשְׁנָה שׁוֹאֲלִין מִמֶּנּוּ תִּלְמוּד, וְכֵן עַל זֶה הַדֶּרֶךְ.

Notice what this teaching implies. Someone who has learned Scripture is not immediately asked why he has not learned Maaseh Merkavah, the deepest teachings about Hashem's heavenly chariot. He is asked about the next level he could have reached. The demand is to put in the effort for one stage beyond what he has already achieved, according to his ability.

This is what the verse means by "as the small rain upon the tender grass, and as the showers upon the herb." That is, just as Hashem sends small drops of rain upon the tender grass which is small, and heavy showers of rain upon the mature herb which is large and can withstand it, The same comparison applies to the demands of Torah: each person is addressed according to what he has the strength and ability to attain.

There is both a leniency and a stringency in this principle: a leniency for one who is unable to achieve more, as he is not held accountable for what is beyond him; and a stringency for one who is highly capable, as they demand everything from him, even the deepest secrets of the Divine Chariot.

הנה מעומק דברי הבריתא מוכיחים
הדברים שמי שיש בידו מקרא אין שואליו
ממנו מעשה מרכבה, אלא מדרגה אחת
כפי יכולתו יותר ממה שטרח, שעליו היה
לטרוח גדר למעלה מזו.

והוא אומר "כשעירם וגוי וכרביבים" וגו',
פרוש, כשעור שימטיר ה' טפין קטנים על
הדשא שהוא קטן, וכרביבים שהם טפין
גדולים ועבים עלי עשב שהוא גדול שיכול
לסבול, כדמיון זה מצוות התורה כל אחד
כפי כח שיכול להשיג.

ויש בזה להקל ולהחמיר: להקל על מי
שאינו יכול להשיג יותר, ולהחמיר על מי
שיכול הרבה, ששואליו ממנו הכל ואפילו
מעשה מרכבה.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:2

בפשוט · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim first connects the rain that sustains us with the Torah we are expected to learn, and warns of the danger of withholding that learning. In one reading, rain and dew represent the Written and Oral Torah: the first is the foundation, and the second develops and preserves its meaning. Another reading, drawing on the Torah's inner teachings, connects the comparison to designated times for learning. Finally, gentle rain on small growth and heavier rain on larger growth teach that each person is expected to advance according to his own capacity. This both limits the demand on someone unable to attain more and increases the demand on someone capable of more.

Choose the next step in learning that is within your reach and requires real effort. The Ohr HaChaim's point is that a person is asked about the next level he could have attained. Neither someone else's accomplishments nor the difficulty of a much higher level should distract us from the step that is ours to take.

כִּי יִשֶׁם יְהוָה אֶקְרָא הָבוּ גִדּוּל לֵאלֹהֵינוּ:

For I will proclaim the name of the LORD; Ascribe ye greatness unto our God.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:3:1

For I will proclaim the name of Hashem. The meaning is that the ultimate focus and intent of Moshe's words in this song is the name of Hashem. This is in line with the teaching of Chazal in the Zohar (Volume 3, 98b) that the entire Torah is comprised of the holy names of Hashem. It is regarding this Torah, which is His blessed name, that Moshe says in the previous verse, "May my teaching drop as the rain." The word "ekra" (translated here as "I will proclaim") can also be understood as related to the word "yekar," meaning preciousness and glory, indicating that Moshe is declaring the preciousness of Hashem's name.

כִּי יִשֶׁם ה' אֶקְרָא. הַפְּנוּנָה כִּי הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר
אֵלָיו יִכּוֹן בְּמֵאמָרָיו הוּא שֵׁם ה', עַל דֶּרֶךְ
אֲמָרָם זְכוּרָם לְבָרָכָה (זוהר ח"ג צח:): כָּל
הַתּוֹרָה כְּלָה שְׁמוֹתָיו שֶׁל הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ
הוּא, וְעַלֵּיהּ הוּא אוֹמֵר "עֲרַף כַּמָּטָר לִקְחֵי"
שֶׁהִיא הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁהִיא שְׁמוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ, וּפְרוּשׁ
"אֶקְרָא" מִלְּשׁוֹן יָקָר.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:3:2

Moshe also hinted that although he previously compared the study of Torah to rain and dew, which sustain physical life, a person's primary intention in learning should not be for physical benefits. Rather, the purpose must be to read the book of Hashem's Torah, which is His very name, in order to "ascribe greatness to our God." This is what is called learning Torah for its own sake (Torah lishmah), to magnify and glorify His honored name.

עוֹד רָמַז, שֶׁהֵגֵם שֶׁתִּלָּה לָהֶם עֶסֶק הַתּוֹרָה
בְּטַל וּמָטָר, לֹא תִהְיֶה הַפְּנוּנָה בְּלִמּוּד עַל
זֶה, אֲלָא לְקִרּוֹת בְּסִפְרֵי תוֹרַת ה', וְהוּא
אָמַר "כִּי", פְּרוּשׁ, יִהְיֶה טַעַם "שֵׁם ה'
אֶקְרָא" פְּרוּשׁ, לְקִרּוֹת בְּתוֹרָתוֹ שֶׁהִיא שְׁמוֹ
יִתְבָּרַךְ כְּדִי שִׁיתֵּן גִּדּוּל לֵאלֹהֵינוּ, וְזוֹ תִקְרָא
תּוֹרָה לְשִׁמְהָ לְגִדּוּל וּלְפֶאֶר שֵׁם כְּבוֹדוֹ.

When Moshe says "I will proclaim" (ekra) in the singular, he refers to what each and every individual of Israel does when they study. Alternatively, this can be understood in light of the teaching of Chazal in Tikkunei Zohar (Tikkun 69, page 112a) that the souls of all those who occupy themselves with Torah study are sparks of Moshe Rabbeinu. This is true not only for the generation of the wilderness, but in every generation until the end of time; anyone who studies Torah is bound up with Moshe. For this reason, Moshe attributes the Torah study of all Israel to himself, saying "I will proclaim."

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:3:3

Another explanation is that the phrase "For I will proclaim the name of Hashem" provides the reason for the instruction that follows: "Ascribe greatness to our God." This is based on what Chazal taught in Midrash Shocher Tov (29:12) regarding the verse, "Enthroned upon the praises of Israel" (Psalms 22:4). The Midrash explains that Hashem did not assume His throne of praise until the heavenly hosts declared, "Blessed is Hashem, the God of Israel." He did not find the same satisfaction when they called Him "the God of heaven and earth" or "the God of the angels."

Therefore, Moshe speaks his good words here and says: Ascribe greatness and supreme value to this unique relationship, for Hashem desires to be called specifically "our God." This is achieved through our proclamation, "For I will proclaim the name of Hashem," by reading the Torah which is His name. When Israel is actively engaged in Torah, the praise of the angels calling Him "the God of Israel" is a true praise and magnification.

וְאָמְרוּ "אֶקְרָא" הוּא מַה שִׁיעֲשֶׂה כָּל אֶחָד
מֵהֶם, אוֹ עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֲמָרָם וְכִרּוֹנָם לִבְרָכָה
(תִּיקוּנֵי זוֹהַר תִּיקוּן סט דף קיב). שְׁנִפְשׁוֹת
כָּל עוֹסְקֵי תוֹרָה הֵם נִיצוֹצֵי מֹשֶׁה, וְלֹא דוּר
הַמִּדְבָּר לְבַד אֲלָא עַד סוֹף כָּל הַדּוֹרוֹת כָּל
הָעוֹסֵק בַּתּוֹרָה כְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּמֹשֶׁה, וְלֹזֶה כִּנּוּי
עֵסֶק הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵלָיו וְאָמַר
"אֶקְרָא", וְהִבּוֹ:

עוֹד יִרְצֶה אָמְרוּ "כִּי שֵׁם ה' יִגוֹי נְתִינָת
טַעַם לְהִנָּאֵמַר אַחֵר כִּךְ שֶׁהוּא "הִבּוֹ גִּדְּל
לֹא לְהִינּוּ", וְהוּא עַל דֶּרֶךְ מַה שֶׁאָמְרוּ
זְכִּירוֹנָם לִבְרָכָה (שׁוֹחֵר טוֹב כט, יב) בְּפָסוּק
(תהלים כב, ד) "וְיָשֵׁב תְּהִלּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל"
שֶׁלֹּא יֵשֵׁב ה' עַל כִּסֵּא הַתְּהִלּוֹת עַד
שֶׁאָמְרוּ צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם "כְּרוּךְ ה' אֱלֹהֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל", וְלֹא הָיָה לוֹ נִחַת רוּחַ כְּשֶׁאָמְרוּ
לוֹ אֱלֹהֵי שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ וְאֱלֹהֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים.

וְלֹזֶה בָּא דְּכִירוֹ הַטּוֹב כָּאֵן וְאָמַר הִבּוֹ גִּדְּל
וּמַעֲלָה לְדַבֵּר זֶה שֶׁאֵינּוּ חִפְץ לְקַרֵּא אֲלָא
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְהוּא אָמְרוּ "לֹא לְהִינּוּ", כִּי
בְּאִמְצָעוֹת שְׁקוּרָאִים בַּתּוֹרָה שֶׁהוּא שֵׁם ה',
וְהוּא אָמְרוּ "כִּי שֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא", בְּזֶה
כְּשֶׁמְשַׁבְּחִין הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים וְאֹמְרִים "כְּרוּךְ ה'
אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל" שֶׁבַח זֶה יֵשׁ בּוֹ גִּדְּלָה וְשִׁבְחָה.

However, if Israel is not occupied with Torah, and yet the angels call Him "the God of Israel," this praise would be deeply deficient and inappropriate, for they would be associating His divinity with a people who are not connected to His Torah, through which He chose to associate His name with us. Our Rabbis in the Sifrei have offered many other interpretations of this verse, in the manner of a hammer that shatters a rock into many sparks.

מֶה שֶׁאֵין כֹּן כְּשֶׁאֵין יִשְׂרָאֵל עֹסְקִים בְּתוֹרָה
וְאוֹמְרִים הַמְּלָאכִים "כְּרוֹךְ ה' אֱלֹהֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל" שֶׁבַח זֶה גְּרוּעַ מְאֹד מִטָּה מִטָּה
וְיִשְׁתַּקֵּעַ הַדָּבָר, שֶׁהָרִי הֵם מְכַחֲשִׁים חֵס
וְשָׁלוֹם כְּשֶׁאֵין עֹסְקִין בְּתוֹרָתוֹ
שֶׁבָּאֵמְצָעוּתָהּ יְחִס אֱלֹהוּתוֹ עָלֵינוּ.
וְרַבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכוֹרֵנָם לְבָרְכָה דְּרָשׁוּ הַרְבֵּה
דְּרָשׁוֹת (ספרי) וּכְפִטִּישׁ וְגו'.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:3

בפשוט · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim reads Moshe's proclamation as an expression of the preciousness of Torah, which Chazal describe as Hashem's Names. Torah should be learned for its own sake, to honor Hashem, even though learning also brings material blessing. He offers two explanations for Moshe's singular "I": it can speak for each individual learner, or express the connection of all Torah learners' souls to Moshe. Another reading explains that our learning gives substance to the praise of Hashem as Elokei Yisrael, the One who has chosen to be known through His relationship with us.

למעשה · Lemaaseh

Before beginning a seder, take a moment to direct your intention toward honoring Hashem through His Torah. The Ohr HaChaim distinguishes the benefits that learning brings from the purpose for which we learn. That intention can stay with us even when we are also hoping for help with our material needs.

הַצּוֹר תָּמִים פַּעֲלוֹ כִּי כָל-דַּרְכָּיו מִשְׁפָּט אֶל אֱמוּנָה וְאֵין נִזְוָל צַדִּיק וְיָשָׁר הוּא:

The Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice; A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, Just and right is He.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:4:1

"The Rock, His work is perfect." Moshe has just connected learning Torah with dew and rain. That raises a difficulty. A person may learn Torah yet struggle to earn a living and have no bread. He may also see someone who rejects Torah and despises its learners enjoy plenty of food, satisfaction and abundance, the very blessings promised to those who learn. What he sees appears to be the reverse of what he was told.

The Ohr HaChaim warns that this must not lead a person to rebel or, Heaven forbid, fall into heresy. Instead, he should accept the justice of Hashem's judgment and say that Hashem is true and His judgment is true. HaTzur, "the Rock," expresses strength and firmness. Here it describes Hashem's powerful hand governing a person, even when that person experiences hardship.

Even then, a person must affirm, "His work is perfect." This answers the first difficulty: someone whose conduct seems to call for a generous measure of good has instead received very little. The person's limited view does not make Hashem's work defective.

הַצּוֹר תָּמִים פַּעֲלוֹ. פְּרוּשׁ, לְפִי שְׁקָדִים וְאִמֵּר שְׁעֶסֶק הַתּוֹרָה יְסוּבֵב טַל וּמָטָר, לָזֶה הָעִיר שָׁאֵם הָאָדָם עֶסֶק בַּתּוֹרָה וּמִזִּנּוּתָיו קָשִׁים וְלֶחֶם אֵין, אוֹ שְׂרוּאָה אָדָם שָׁאֵין עָלָיו עַל תּוֹרָה וּמוֹאֵס בְּלוּמָדָהּ וּמוֹדֵדִין לוֹ בְּמָדָה גָּסָה אָכּוֹל וְשָׁבוֹעַ וְהוֹתֵר בְּעֵוִידִים שֶׁנֶּאֱמָרוּ לְלוּמְדֵי תּוֹרָה וְנִהְפֹּךְ הוּא,

לֹא מִפְּנֵי זֶה יִבְעֹט וְתִנָּלַד בּוֹ חֵס וְשָׁלוֹם מִיָּנוּת, אֲלֵא יִצְדִּיק הַדִּין עָלָיו וְיֹאמֶר ה' אֱמֶת וְדִינוֹ דִּין אֱמֶת. וְהוּא אֶמְרוּ "הַצּוֹר" – פְּרוּשׁ לְשׁוֹן תּוֹקֶף וְחֹזֶק, וְזֶה יִגִּיד אֶל יָד ה' הָרוּדָה בָּאָדָם.

אִם עַל פִּי כֵן תִּצְדִּיק וְתֹאמַר "תָּמִים פַּעֲלוֹ", זֶה כְּנֶגֶד מֶה שְׂרוּאָה אֶת שְׁדִּרְכוֹ לְמַד בְּגֶסֶה שֶׁל טוֹבָה וּמְדָדוֹ בְּדָקָה.

"For all His ways are justice" includes the opposite case too: someone whose conduct seems to call for little good receives a great deal. Both cases fall under Hashem's justice. The Ohr HaChaim explains that suffering does not come upon a righteous person unless he has become liable for it, and good does not come to the wicked unless their deeds have earned it.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:4:2

The verse continues, "A God of faithfulness and without iniquity" (El emunah v' ein aveil). Our Sages in the Sifrei explained: "A God of faithfulness" means He pays the righteous the reward for their righteousness in the World to Come; "and without iniquity" means He pays the wicked the reward for their good deeds in this world.

The deeper meaning of this teaching is based on what the Sages said in Midrash Tehillim on the verse, "You have put gladness in my heart, from the time that their corn and their wine increased" (Psalms 4:8). Dovid said that from the moment he saw the tranquility of the wicked, he drew a logical conclusion from the lesser case to the stronger case: If those who transgress His will receive such goodness, how much more so will those who perform His will! This is the meaning of "A God of faithfulness." The righteous person will find his faith in his reward from Hashem confirmed when he witnesses the attribute of "and without iniquity", which is the reward paid to the wicked in this world for their few merits.

וְגַמַּר אוֹמֵר "כִּי כָל דִּרְכָּיו מִשְׁפָּט" – כָּלֵל
בְּזֶה גַם אֶת שְׁדִרְכּוֹ לְמִדַּד טוֹבָה בְּדִקְהָ
וּמִדְדוֹ לוֹ בְּגִסָּה, "כִּי כָל דִּרְכָּיו מִשְׁפָּט", כִּי
לֹא הֵבִיא יְסוּרִין עַל הַצַּדִּיק עַד שְׁנִתְחַיֵּב
בָּהֶם, וְלֹא הֵבִיא טוֹבָה עַל הָרָשָׁעִים אֲלֵא
אִם זָכוּ לָהּ כִּפְי מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם.

וְגַמַּר אוֹמֵר אֵל אֱמוּנָה וְגוֹ', וְאָמְרוּ רַבּוֹתֵינוּ
זְכוּנוֹם לְבִרְכָּה (ספרי) "אֵל אֱמוּנָה" –
לְשַׁלֵּם לַצַּדִּיקִים צְדָקָתָם לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא,
"וְאִין עוֹל" – לְשַׁלֵּם לָרָשָׁעִים צְדָקָתָם
בְּעוֹלָם הָהָא.

וְהַכּוֹנֵה בְּמֵאֶרֶז זֶה עַל פִּי דְבָרֵיהֶם שְׁאָמְרוּ
(שׁוֹחֵר טוֹב ד) בְּפָסוּק "נָתַתָּ שְׂמִיחָה בְּלִבִּי
מֵעַתָּה וְדָגְנִים וְתִירוֹשׁ רַבּוּ" (תהלים ד:ח),
שְׁאָמַר דָּוִד כִּי מֵעַתָּה שָׂרָאָה שְׁלֹת הָרָשָׁעִים
נִשְׂאָ קַל וְחוֹמֶר בְּעַצְמוֹ: וְמָה לְאֵלוֹ שֶׁהֵם
עוֹבְרֵי רְצוֹנוֹ כִּךְ וְכוּ'. וְהוּא אָמְרוּ "אֵל
אֱמוּנָה", פֶּרוּשׁ, יִצְדִּיק הַצַּדִּיק אֱמוּנָת שְׂכָרוֹ
בִּה' כְּשִׁירָאָה מִדַּת "וְאִין עוֹל", שֶׁהוּא שְׂכָר
הָרָשָׁעִים שֶׁבְּעוֹלָם הָהָא עַל מַעֲוֵט זְכוּתָם.

The verse concludes, "Just and right is He" (tzaddik v'yashar hu). This means that the Master, Hashem of Hosts, created the world with strict justice, as it is written, "By justice a king establishes the land" (Proverbs 29:4). Our Sages of blessed memory also taught in Midrash Tanchuma that Hashem swore the world would stand on strict justice. However, we find that He possesses the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, which are entirely mercy. If He swore to establish the world on strict justice, what room is there for mercy?

צַדִּיק וְיָשָׁר הוּא. פְּרוּשׁ, כִּי הָאֲדוֹן ה' צָבָאוֹת
בָּרָא הָעוֹלָם בְּמִשְׁפָּט, דְּכָתִיב (משלי
כט:ד) "בְּמִשְׁפָּט יַעֲמִיד אֶרֶץ", וְאָמְרוּ
זְכוֹנֵם לְבָרָכָה (תנחומא שופטים)
שֶׁנִּשְׁבַּע ה' שְׁיַעֲמֹד הָעוֹלָם עַל הַמִּשְׁפָּט,
אֲבָל מֵצִינוּ לוֹ שֶׁלֹּשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה מִדּוֹת שְׂכוּלָם
רַחֲמִים, וְאִם נִשְׁבַּע עַל הַמִּשְׁפָּט מֵהַ מָּקוֹם
לְרַחֲמִים?

Indeed, the order of divine conduct is as follows: Initially, when Hashem sits in judgment, He establishes the strict law on its foundation. But when it comes to executing the sentence, He is appeased with mercy and reconciled through supplication. This is in line with the verse, "Hashem is righteous in all His ways, and pious in all His deeds" (Psalms 145:17). This means that when He comes to direct a matter, He directs it according to the line of strict justice; but in His actual deeds, meaning at the moment of execution, when a person comes and supplicates, He is a merciful and gracious God Who will show him mercy.

אֲכֵן הַסֵּדֶר הוּא עַל זֶה הַדֶּרֶךְ, כִּי מֵתַחֲלָה
כְּשִׁיוֹשֵׁב עַל הַמִּשְׁפָּט הוּא מַעֲמִיד הַמִּשְׁפָּט
עַל תֵּלוֹ, וְכִשְׁבָּא לְהַשְׁתַּלֵּם מִתְרַצָּה
בְּרַחֲמִים וּמִתְפַּיֵּס בְּתַחֲנוּנִים. וְהוּא עַל דֶּרֶךְ
אָמְרוּ (תהלים קמה:יז) "צַדִּיק ה' בְּכָל
דִּרְכָּיו וְחֶסֶד בְּכָל מַעֲשָׂיו", פְּרוּשׁ, כִּשְׁהוּא
בָּא לְהַדְרִיף דְּבַר הוּא מְדַרְכּוֹ עַל קוֹ הַדִּין,
אֲבָל בְּמַעֲשָׂיו, פְּרוּשׁ, בַּשְּׁעֵת מַעֲשֵׂה כְּשֶׁבָּא
אָדָם וּמִתְחַנֵּן – אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן יְרַחֲמֵהוּ.

This explains the two descriptions, tzaddik and yashar. Tzaddik, "just," means acting according to the requirements of justice. The Ohr HaChaim supports this through Rashi's explanation of the discussion in Avodah Zarah 6a. The Gemara asks whether Noach might have been a treifah, a person with a fatal physical condition. The answer points to the word tamim, "whole" or "perfect." The Ohr HaChaim then cites the question whether Noach was "righteous in his ways and perfect in his deeds." Rashi explains "righteous in his ways" as acting according to the law. That is the meaning of tzaddik here. It describes the initial judgment. Afterward comes yashar, acting beyond the strict requirement of the law. The Ohr HaChaim connects this with Chazal's explanation in Bava Metziah 108b of "Do what is right and good" (Devarim 6:18, and Rashi there).

וְהוּא אָמַר צַדִּיק וְיָשָׁר הוּא, פְּרוּשׁ צַדִּיק
עַל קו הַדִּין, וּכְפָרוֹשׁ רַשִׁי בְּמָה שֶׁאָמְרוּ
בְּגִמְרָא (עבודה זרה ו.) "וְדִלְמָא נַח טְרִפָּה
הָוָה", וּמִתְרַץ "תָּמִים כְּתִיב בֵּיהּ", וּמִקָּשׁוֹ
"וְדִלְמָא צַדִּיק בְּדַרְכֵּי תָמִים בְּמַעֲשָׁיו",
וּפִירָשׁ (רַשִׁי) "צַדִּיק בְּדַרְכֵּי עַל פִּי הַדִּין"
וְכוּ', וְזֶה בְּתַח לָהּ, אֲבָל אַחֵר כֵּךְ "וְיָשָׁר",
פְּרוּשׁ יָשָׁר לְפָנִים מִשּׁוֹרֵת הַדִּין, כְּאֶמְרָם
זְכוֹנָם לְבָרָכָה (בבא מציעא קח:) בְּפָרוֹשׁ
פְּסוּק "וְעָשִׂיתָ ה' יָשָׁר וְהַטּוֹב" (דברים ו:יח
וּבְרַשִׁי שם).

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:4

בְּפִשְׁטוּת · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim addresses the difficulty raised by a Torah learner who struggles for sustenance while someone who rejects Torah prospers. Both situations remain within Hashem's justice. Chazal's teaching that even the wicked receive payment for their good deeds strengthens the righteous person's trust in his future reward. He then explains how justice and mercy fit together: Hashem first establishes what justice requires, yet responds with mercy when a person turns to Him in prayer.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה · Lemaaseh

Bring a hardship into your tefillah without assuming that the outcome you can see is the whole account. The Ohr HaChaim makes room for prayer precisely while affirming Hashem's justice. Ask for His mercy and remember that what He gives another person does not tell us the full meaning of either person's situation.

שחת לו לא בָּנָיו מוֹמָם דֹּר עֲקָשׁ וּפְתִילָתָל:

Is corruption His? No; His children's is the blemish; A generation crooked and perverse.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:5:1

The Ohr HaChaim reads "He has corrupted for himself; not His children" as describing the harm people do to themselves when they corrupt their conduct. What do they lose? The standing of being called Hashem's children. He cites Chazal in Bava Basra 10a: when Yisrael follows Hashem's way, they are called children; when they do not, they are called servants. On this reading, "not His children" names the loss caused by their own corruption.

The word mumam means "their blemish." One might ask whether a blemish in the children also reflects a blemish in their Father, Heaven forbid. The pasuk answers that it is their own blemish. Hashem created a person upright; the corruption did not come from Him. The Ohr HaChaim cites Yeshayahu's vineyard image (5:1 to 2): the vineyard was carefully prepared, cleared of stones and planted with a choice vine, with the expectation that it would produce grapes. The image places the failure in what grew, rather than in the care given to it. That is the force of "their blemish."

שחת לו לא בָּנָיו. פְּרוֹשׁ, כְּשֶׁמִּשְׁחִיתִים דְּרַכָּם גּוֹרָמִים רָעָה לְעַצְמָם, וּמָה רָעָה גּוֹרָמִים – לֹא בָּנָיו, פְּרוֹשׁ שְׂאִינָם נִקְרָאִים בְּנֵי אֵל חַי, כְּאֶמְרָם וְכָרוֹנָם לְבָרָכָה (בבא בתרא י'). כְּשֶׁיִּשְׂרָאֵל הוֹלְכִים בְּדַרְכּוֹ שֶׁל מָקוֹם נִקְרָאִים בָּנִים וְכִשְׂאִין הוֹלְכִים וְכוּ' נִקְרָאִים עֲבָדִים, וְהוּא אָמְרוּ "שחת לו" שֶׁלֹּא יִקְרָאוּ בָּנָיו שֶׁל הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

וְאָמְרוּ "מוֹמָם", לִפִּי שֶׁיֵּשׁ מָקוֹם לוֹמַר סוּף סוּף יִגִּיעַ הַדָּבָר לְאֵב מוֹם הַבָּנִים חָס וְשָׁלוֹם, לָזֶה אָמַר "מוֹמָם", פְּרוֹשׁ הַמוֹם מֵהֶם בָּא לֹא מֵאֲבִינוּ, כִּי הוּא בָּרָא אֶת הָאָדָם יָשָׁר, וְכִמְאֹמֶר הַנְּבִיא (ישעיהו ה:א-ב) "פֶּרֶם הָיָה וְגו' וַיַּעֲזֹקְהוּ וַיִּסְקֵלְהוּ וַיַּטְעֵהוּ שׂוֹרֵק וְגו' וַיְקוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת עֲנָבִים" וְגו'. וְהוּא אָמְרוּ "מוֹמָם", פְּרוֹשׁ הַמוֹם מֵהֶם בָּא.

The concept of "blemish" can be understood in light of Chazal's teaching in Sotah 3a: "A person does not commit a transgression unless a spirit of folly enters him." This spirit of folly is a harmful spiritual force, and it is called a "blemish," based on the esoteric meaning of the phrase in Deuteronomy 15:21, "a bad blemish." The drawing of this harmful spiritual force upon oneself is entirely due to the person's own actions.

וּפְרוּשׁ מוֹם עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֲמָרָם וְכְרוֹנָם לְכַרְכָּה
(סוֹטָה ג.) אֵין אָדָם עוֹבֵר עֲבִירָה אֲלָא אִם
כֵּן נִכְנָסָה בּוֹ רוּחַ שְׁטוּת, שֶׁהוּא רוּחַ רָעָה
וְהִיא תִקְרָא מוֹם, בְּסוּד אֲמָרוֹ (דְּבָרִים
טו:כא) "מוֹם רָע", וְהַמְשַׁכֵּת חֵלֶק זֶה הָרַע
אֵינוֹ אֲלָא מִצַּד מַעֲשֵׂה הָאָדָם.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:5:2

Regarding "A generation crooked and perverse": If they were merely crooked, the words of the Torah would make the crooked paths straight. What caused them to become corrupted? It was because they are "crooked and perverse", meaning they stubbornly reinforce their own crookedness. The Ohr HaChaim says he sees this in his own generation with various types of heretics who follow a crooked path; when someone tries to straighten their crookedness, they stubbornly strengthen themselves in their difficult, crooked ways. This stubbornness is what brings about the destruction of their spiritual heritage.

דוֹר עָקָשׁ וּפְתִלְתִּל וְגו'. שָׂאֵם יְהִיָּה עָקָשׁ
לְבַד, וְדַבְּרֵי הַתּוֹרָה תְּשִׁים הַמַּעֲקָשִׁים
לְמִישׁוֹר, וּמִי גָרַם לָזֶה שְׁנִשְׁחָת - הֵיּוֹתוּ
עָקָשׁ וּפְתִלְתִּל, פְּרוּשׁ מִתְחַזֵּק בְּעַקְשׁוֹתוֹ,
כְּאֲשֶׁר עֵינֵינוּ רואות בְּדוֹרוֹת הַלָּלוּ מִיַּי
אֲפִיקוֹרְסוֹת דֶּרֶךְ עָקָשׁ, וּכְשֶׁאָדָם מֵיִשְׂרָאֵל
עָקְשׁוּתֵיהֶם הֵם מִתְחַזְּקִים בְּאַרְחוֹת עָקָשִׁים
קָשִׁים, וְזֶה אֲבָדוֹן מוֹלֶדֶת בֵּית.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:5

בְּפִשְׁטוּת · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that when Israel corrupts their ways, they bring harm only upon themselves by losing the cherished status of being called Hashem's children. This spiritual blemish originates entirely from their own choices, not from their Creator, who made them upright. He further explains that while ordinary crookedness can be corrected by the Torah, this generation is perverse because they stubbornly reinforce their own crookedness and resist all correction.

לְמַעֲשֵׂה · Lemaaseh

When we make a mistake, we must be careful not to become stubborn or defensive. The Ohr HaChaim teaches that while a simple error can easily be corrected by the Torah's guidance, the real danger lies in becoming 'perverse', stubbornly reinforcing our crooked ways and resisting correction. We can practice accepting constructive feedback with an open heart to keep our paths straight.

הֲלִיְהוֹה תִגְמְלוּ-זֹאת עִם נָבֵל וְלֹא חָכָם הֲלוֹא-הוּא אָבִיךָ קִנְיָךְ הוּא עָשִׂיךָ וַיְכַנְּנֶךָ:

Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? Is not He thy father that hath gotten thee? Hath He not made thee, and established thee?

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:6:1

"Is this how you repay Hashem?" Moshe speaks of repayment to make the contrast clear. Hashem has done good for them, so their response should be good in return. Instead, they are returning evil for the good He has given them.

הֲלִיְהוֹה תִגְמְלוּ זֹאת. אָמַר לְשׁוֹן גְּמוּלָה לְהַעֲרִיר שְׂבִמְקוֹם שִׁיגְמָלוּהוּ טוֹבוֹת כְּעַל כָּל אֲשֶׁר גָּמְלָם, הִנֵּה הֵם מְשַׁלְּמִים רָעָה תַּחַת טוֹבָה.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:6:2

Moshe calls them "a base people, and unwise." The Ohr HaChaim points out that "wise" is not the opposite of "base." These are two different failings. Even someone with a naturally base or ungrateful character would avoid treating Hashem this way if he had wisdom. He would recognize that withholding what is right only brings him loss, and that recognition would stop him from acting so badly.

עִם נָבֵל וְלֹא חָכָם. וְאִין חָכָם הַפְּכִיּוֹת הַנָּבֵל, לוֹמַר שֶׁהֵגֵם שִׁיְהִיו עִם נָבֵל מִטְבָּעָם, אִם הִיוּ חָכְמִים לֹא הִיוּ נָבִלִים עִם ה', כִּי הַנָּבֵל יִכִּיר שְׂחוּשָׁה מִיֹּשֶׁר אֲךָ לְמַחְסוֹר וְלֹא יִהְיֶה נָבֵל.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:6:3

This is why the verse concludes by saying, "Is He not your Father Who acquired you?" and so on. Moshe lists four distinct aspects of Hashem's relationship with us. First, He created man, and corresponding to this, the verse says, "Is He not your Father?" Second, He acquired us as servants by taking us out of the hand of Pharaoh, sustaining us in the wilderness, and bringing us to a land full of all good things; corresponding to this, the verse says, "Who acquired you" (kanecha).

וְהוּא מֶה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר אוֹמֵר "הֲלוֹא הוּא אָבִיךָ" וְגו', סֵדֶר אַרְבַּע חִלּוּקוֹת: א' שֶׁהוּא בָּרָא אֶת הָאָדָם, וּכְנֻדָּה זֶה אָמַר "הוּא אָבִיךָ". שְׁנִית, שֶׁקִּנְיָה אוֹתָנוּ לְעֶבְדִּים בְּמַה שֶׁהוֹצִיאָנוּ מִיַּד פַּרְעֹה וְהַחֲיָה אוֹתָנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר וְהָבִיא אוֹתָנוּ לָאָרֶץ מְלֵאָה כָּל טוֹב, וּכְנֻדָּה זֶה אָמַר "קִנְיָךְ".

Third, He refined us with an exalted and lofty refinement by placing His Divine Presence among us and granting us prophecy. This is a great refinement, making us a vessel fit to receive prophecy. Corresponding to this, the verse says, "He made you" (asecha), meaning a new making beyond the initial creation alluded to in the term "your Father."

ג' שִׁתְּכֵן אוֹתָנוּ תְּקוּן מְעֻלָּה וְרֵם בְּתֵת
שְׂכִינָתוֹ בְּתוֹכֵנוּ וְנִבֵּא אוֹתָנוּ, וְזֶה תְּקוּן
גָּדוֹל שֶׁעָשָׂה אוֹתָנוּ כְּלִי רָאוּי לְקַבֵּל
הַנְּבוּאָה, וְכִנְגַד זֶה אָמַר "עָשָׂךְ", פְּרוּשׁ
מַעֲשֵׂה חֵדֶשׁ מִלְבָּד הַבְּרִיאָה הָרְמוּזָה
בְּמֵאמֶר "אֲבִיךָ".

Fourth, He established us with an eternal preparation to merit the life of the World to Come, which is the ultimate purpose. Corresponding to this, the verse says, "and established you" (vayechonenecha). The point of all this is that even an ungrateful person would not act ungratefully toward such a benefactor unless he were completely devoid of intellect. This is why the verse describes them as "foolish and unwise."

ד' שִׁתְּכֵן אוֹתָנוּ הַתְּכוּנָנוּת הַנִּצְחָי לְזִכּוֹת בּוֹ
חַי עוֹלָם הֵבֵא שֶׁהוּא הָעֶקֶר. וְהַכְנָנָה בְּכָל
זֶה הוּא שֶׁאֵין הַנֶּבֶל עוֹשֶׂה נִבְלָה עִם גֹּדֶר זֶה
אִם לֹא לְצַד הַיּוֹתוֹ סֶכֶל, וְהוּא אָמַר "נֶבֶל
וְלֹא חָכָם".

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:6

בְּפִשְׁטוּת · In plain words

Moshe rebukes Israel for their ingratitude toward Hashem, calling them foolish and unwise. He explains that even a naturally ungrateful person would act properly out of self-interest if he had basic wisdom. Moshe then details four stages of Hashem's relationship with Israel: creating them as a father, acquiring them as servants from Egypt, refining them to receive prophecy, and establishing them for eternal life in the World to Come.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה · Lemaaseh

Reflect on the particular kindnesses the Ohr HaChaim identifies: Hashem created us, brought us out of Mitzrayim and sustained us, prepared us for His Presence and prophecy, and established us for Olam HaBa. Let that recognition shape one response of gratitude in our avodas Hashem. Moshe's question asks us to consider what we are giving back for the good we have received.

Torah Hebrew comes from Sefaria, Tanach with Ta'amei Hamikra. The Torah English is JPS 1917. Ohr HaChaim Hebrew comes from Sefaria, Vocalized Edition. These source editions are public domain. Hebrew wording and punctuation are preserved; web markup is removed and spacing is normalized.

The Ohr HaChaim English is an AI-assisted explanatory translation from the Hebrew. Summaries and practical reflections are editorial study aids. Published Eliyahu Munk English is retained in the source archive, separate from this edition.

אור החיים הקדוש • האזינו • שני

Explanatory English • Line-by-Line Edition

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The Hebrew is the original Ohr HaChaim. Each passage is paired with its AI-assisted explanatory English, beside it on wide pages and beneath it on smaller screens. Brief clarifications are marked within the English. In plain words and Lemaaseh are separate AI-assisted study aids.

פסוק ז

Deuteronomy 32:7

זְכוֹר יָמוֹת עוֹלָם בֵּינוֹ שָׁנוֹת דּוֹר-וָדוֹר שֶׁאֵל אָבִיךָ וַיִּגְדֶּךָ זְקֵנֶיךָ
וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָךְ:

Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations; Ask thy father, and he will declare unto thee,
Thine elders, and they will tell thee.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:7:1

Remember the days of old. Moshe presents four distinct directives here, corresponding to the four descriptions of Hashem's relationship with us that he mentioned in the previous verse (Deuteronomy 32:6). Corresponding to his statement there, "Is He not your Father?" which refers to Hashem as the Creator, Moshe says here, "Remember the days of old." This refers to the six days of Creation, where one will find that He is indeed the Maker and Creator of all.

And corresponding to his statement there, "Who acquired you?" which refers to the Exodus from Egypt and the other kindnesses through which He acquired us as His own, Moshe says here, "Consider the years of many generations." This means one should contemplate what Hashem did during the years of two specific generations: the generation that left Egypt, and the fourth generation that entered the Land of Israel. Through studying these, you will recognize His deeds for the Jewish people, through which He acquired you.

זְכוֹר יָמוֹת עוֹלָם. אָמַר אַרְבַּע חֲלוּקוֹת כְּנֻגָּד
אַרְבַּעַה דְּבָרִים שֶׁאָמַר בַּפֶּסוּק שֶׁלִּפְנֵי זֶה.
כְּנֻגָּד אָמְרוּ "הֲלֹא הוּא אָבִיךָ" שֶׁרָמַז בּוֹ
שֶׁהוּא הַבּוֹרָא, אָמַר "זְכוֹר יָמוֹת עוֹלָם"
שֶׁהֵם שֵׁשֶׁת יָמֵי בְרָאשִׁית, שֶׁם יִמָּצָא כִּי הוּא
הַיוֹצֵר הוּא הַבּוֹרָא.

וְכֻנָּגַד אָמְרוּ "קִנְיָה" שֶׁרָמַז לִיצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם
וּשְׂאָר הַטּוֹבוֹת שֶׁבָּהֶם קָנָה אוֹתָנּוּ, אָמַר
"בֵּינוֹ שָׁנוֹת דּוֹר וָדוֹר" שֶׁיִּתְבּוֹנֵן בְּמָה שֶׁפָּעַל
ה' בַּשָּׁנִים שֶׁל שְׁנֵי דוֹרוֹת, שֶׁהֵם דּוֹר הַיּוֹצֵא
מִמִּצְרַיִם וְדוֹר רַבִּיעִי הַנִּכְנָס לָאֶרֶץ, וּבָהֶם
יִכִּיר מַעֲשָׂיו יִתְבָּרַךְ לְעַם יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁבָּהֶם
קָנָה.

And corresponding to his statement there, "He made you," which refers to the lofty spiritual elevation we explained, that He placed His Divine Presence among us and granted us prophecy, Moshe says here, "Ask your father, and he will declare it to you." "Your father" in this context refers to the prophets, as Chazal have explained in the Sifrei.

וּכְנַגְדָּאֵמְרוּ "עָשָׂה" שֶׁהוּא תְּקוּן עָלֵינוּ
שֶׁפִּרְשָׁנוּ בּוֹ שְׁנָתָן שְׂכִינָתוֹ בְּתוֹכֵנוּ וְנָבִיא
אוֹתָנוּ, אָמַר "שֶׂאל אָבִיךָ וְיַגִּידָהּ" – אָבִיךָ
הֵם הַנְּבִיאִים, וְכֵן פִּרְשִׁיהֶם רַבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכוֹרֵיהֶם
לְבָרְכָהּ (ספרי).

And corresponding to "and established you," which we explained as referring to the preparations for the World to Come, Moshe says here, "your elders, and they will tell you." This refers to the Sages of Israel, who understand the preparation for and the attainment of the World to Come; they will tell you of these eternal matters.

וּכְנַגְדָּאֵמְרוּ "וַיִּכְנְנֶה" שֶׁפִּרְשָׁנוּהָ עַל הַכְּנוּת
עוֹלָם הַבָּא, אָמַר "וְזָקְנֶיךָ וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָךְ" –
פְּרוֹשׁ הֵם חֲכָמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַמְּפִירִים בְּהַכְנֵת
הַדָּבָר וְהַמוֹשָׁג לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא, הֵם יֹאמְרוּ לָךְ.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:7

בְּפִשְׁטוּת · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that the four directives in this verse, remembering the days of old, contemplating the generations, asking one's father, and consulting the elders, directly correspond to the four descriptions of Hashem's relationship with Israel in the preceding verse. "Remembering the days of old" points to Hashem as Creator ("your Father"); "contemplating the generations" points to the Exodus and conquest of the Land ("Who acquired you"); "asking your father" refers to consulting the prophets about our spiritual elevation ("He made you"); and "consulting the elders" refers to learning from the Sages about the ultimate purpose of the World to Come ("and established you").

לְמַעַשֶׂה · Lemaaseh

We can deepen our relationship with Hashem by actively engaging in the four areas of study outlined by the Ohr HaChaim: studying the wonders of Creation, reflecting on the historical miracles of our redemption, learning the words of the prophets, and absorbing the teachings of our Sages regarding the ultimate purpose of life in the World to Come.

בְּהִנָּחֵל עֲלֵיוֹן גּוֹיִם בְּהַפְרִידוֹ בְּנֵי אָדָם יַצֵּב גְּבֻלַּת עַמִּים לְמִסְפָּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the children of men, He set the borders of the peoples according to the number of the children of Israel.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:8:1

When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance: This means that when Hashem, blessed be He, distributed the nations as inheritances to the supernal guardian angels, it demonstrated that they are of lesser importance to Him. He did not wish for them to be associated directly with His own Name, and so He placed them under the authority of these supernal ministers.

בְּהִנָּחֵל עֲלֵיוֹן גּוֹיִם. פְּרוּשׁ, כְּשֶׁהִנָּחֵל ה' בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת הַגּוֹיִם לְשָׂרֵי מַעְלָה, זֶה יִגִּיד אֲשֶׁר הֵם פְּחוּתִים אֶצְלוֹ, אֲשֶׁר לֹא רָצָה שִׁיתְּכֻנּוּ לְשֵׁמוֹ, וְנִתְּנָם לְשָׂרֵי מַעְלָה:

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:8:2

When He separated the children of men: This means that Hashem did not hand over all the nations to a single guardian angel. Instead, He separated them and assigned a specific portion to each individual minister. The manner of this division, when He set the borders of the peoples, was according to the number of the children of Israel. To understand this, you must know that all of Hashem's creations are structured with one corresponding to another, representing good and evil. All the souls of created beings were planted by Hashem from two primary trees: one good tree and one evil tree.

בְּהַפְרִידוֹ בְּנֵי אָדָם. פְּרוּשׁ, שֶׁלֹּא מָסַר ה' כָּל הָאוֹמוֹת בְּיַד שָׂר אֶחָד, אֲלֵא הַפְרִידָם וְנָתַן חֶלֶק לְכָל שָׂר וְשָׂר. וְאוֹפֵן הַחַלּוּקָה שֶׁעָשָׂה בָּהֶם כְּשִׁיצַב גְּבוּלָם הִיָּתָה לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. פְּרוּשׁ, יֵשׁ לָהּ לְדַעַת כִּי כָל מַעֲשֵׂה ה' עָשָׂה זֶה לְעוֹמֶת זֶה וְטוֹב וְרָע, וְכָל נִפְשוֹת שֶׁבְּנִבְרָאִים נִטְעָם ה' מִשְׁנֵי אֵילָנוֹת: אֵילָן אֶחָד טוֹב וְאֶחָד רָע.

The good tree is Adam HaRishon, the first man, while the evil tree is Samael, the evil spiritual counterpart, called adam beliyaal, the corrupt man. When Adam HaRishon sinned and evil became mixed with good, the offspring of Adam HaRishon began to produce corrupt souls as well. This continued until a single pure soul emerged, which included within it all the holy souls, thereby separating out the good tree anew. This soul was our father Yaakov, peace be upon him.

This is why Chazal teach in Bava Metzia 84a and the Zohar, Volume 3, page 244a, that the beauty of our father Yaakov was a reflection of the beauty of Adam HaRishon. Understand these deep matters. This holy tree contains seventy branches, which correspond to the seventy souls of Yaakov's family who descended to Egypt. Therefore, when Hashem separated the nations, He set their borders according to the number of the children of Israel, establishing exactly seventy nations to correspond to the seventy branches of holiness.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:8:3

The purpose of this arrangement is so that each specific aspect of every holy branch should rule over its corresponding counterpart in the realm of evil. This is the inner meaning of the verse in Mishlei 5:5, Her feet go down to death, which teaches that the feet of holiness tread upon the heads of the impure forces. Consequently, the branches of Yaakov rule and reign over the nations.

אֵילָן הַטּוֹב הוּא אָדָם הָרִשּׁוֹן, אֵילָן הָרָע הוּא ס"מ אָדָם בְּלִיעַל. וְכִשְׁחָטָא אָדָם הָרִשּׁוֹן וְנִתְעַרְבַּ רַע בְּטוֹב, חֲזָרוּ לְהִיטּוֹת יוֹצְאִים מִהוֹלָדֵת אָדָם הָרִשּׁוֹן גַּם נַפְשׁוֹת רָעוֹת, עַד שֶׁיֵּצְאָה נַפֶּשׁ אַחַת טְהוֹרָה שְׁבָה כָּלִילוֹת כָּל הַנַּשְׁמוֹת הַקְּדוֹשׁוֹת, וְנִתְבָּרַר הָאֵילָן הַטּוֹב מִחֲדָשׁ, וְזֶה הוּא יַעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ עָלֵינוּ הַשְּׁלוֹם.

וְלָזֶה אָמְרוּ (בבא מציעא פד.; זוהר חלק ג רמד.) שׁוֹפְרִיָה דִּיעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ מַעֲיֵן שׁוֹפְרִיָה דְּאָדָם קִדְמָאָה, וְהָבִין הַדְּבָרִים. וְאֵילָן זֶה יֵשׁ בּוֹ שִׁבְעִים עֲנָפִים, וְהֵם שִׁבְעִים נַפְשׁוֹת שֶׁיֵּרְדּוּ לְמִצְרַיִם. וְאֲשֶׁר עַל כֵּן כָּאֲשֶׁר הִפְרִיד ה' הָאוֹמוֹת, הֵצִיב גְּבוּלָם לְמִסְפַּר בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, עֲשֶׂה מֵהֶם שִׁבְעִים כְּנָגֵד שִׁבְעִים עֲנָפֵי הַקְּדוּשָׁה.

וְהַכּוֹנֵן בָּזֶה, כִּדִּי שֶׁתְּהִיָּה כָּל בְּחִינָה וּבְחִינָה שֶׁל כָּל עֲנַף מֵעֲנָפֵי הַקְּדוּשָׁה מוֹשְׁלָת עַל שְׁכִנְגֻדָּה בְּחֵלֶק הָרָע, וְזֶה סוּד (משלי ה:ה) "רַגְלֶיהָ יוֹרְדוֹת מוֹת", שֶׁרַגְלִים שֶׁל הַקְּדוּשָׁה דוֹרְכִים עַל רָאשֵׁי הַקְּלָפָה, וְנִמְצְאִים עֲנָפֵי יַעֲקֹב שׁוֹלְטִים וּמוֹלְכִים עַל הָאֻמוֹת.

The next verse then states, For Hashem's portion is His people, which explains the reason for this setup. Since the nation Hashem chose to rule over directly is Israel, He designed this system to elevate and give the children of Israel dominion over all the nations. Through this, when He rules over Israel, He effectively rules over the entire world.

The phrase, Hashem's portion is His people, refers specifically to Israel after they received the Torah, as they were then fully designated as the people of Hashem. The expression, Yaakov is the lot of His inheritance, uses the word chevel, meaning a rope, to signify the primary cord of the inheritance. This relates directly to what I have already pointed out regarding the rabbinic teaching in Bava Metzia 84a that the beauty of Yaakov reflects the beauty of Adam HaRishon.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:8:4

He offers another explanation based on two levels of souls. Some come from a higher spiritual world, and these are described as "Hashem's portion," a portion from Hashem, so to speak. Others come from the place called nachalas Shaddai, "the inheritance of Shaddai," and these are described by "Yaakov, the cord of His inheritance." For clarity, the author is distinguishing spiritual sources; "so to speak" marks the limits of describing this relationship in human language.

The Torah is precise in using the word chevel, which means a rope, to hint at a profound concept revealed by the masters of Kabbalah. Every living soul in a person is connected by a spiritual cord to its source. This cord extends from the nostrils and remains bound to its supernal root above, and through this cord the soul draws its life force.

וְאָמַר "כִּי חֵלֶק ה' עָמוֹ" פָּרוּשׁ טַעַם לָזֶה, לְהִיּוֹת שְׁהָאֵמָה אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר לוֹ ה' שִׁיְהִיָּהּ הוּא הַמּוֹשֵׁל עָלֶיהָ הֵם יִשְׂרָאֵל, לָזֶה נִתְּכּוֹן ה' וְהַמְּלִיךְ וְנִשְׂא אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל כָּל הָאֻמוֹת, וּבָזָה כְּאֲשֶׁר הוּא מוֹלִיךְ עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל הֵנָּה הוּא מוֹלִיךְ עַל כָּל הָעוֹלָם כָּלּוּ.

וְאָמְרוּ "חֵלֶק ה' עָמוֹ" יָכוֹן אֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל אַחֵר שֶׁקִּבְּלוּ הַתּוֹרָה שְׂאֵז יִקְרְאוּ בְּשֵׁם עַם ה'. וְאָמְרוּ "עֵקֶב חֶבֶל" פָּרוּשׁ הַחֶבֶל שֶׁהוּא רֹאשׁ הַנֶּחֱלָה, וְהוּא מֵה שֶׁהָעִירוּתִיךְ אֱלֹהֵי בְרָמְזוֹ אֲמָרָם זְכוּרָנָם לְבִרְכָּהּ (בבא מציעא פד.) שׁוּפְרִיָּה דִּיעֶקֶב וְכוּ':

עוֹד יָכוֹן לוֹמַר, לְהִיּוֹת שְׂשִׁישׁ שְׁתֵּי בְּחִינּוֹת בְּנִשְׁמוֹת: יֵשׁ שְׁבָאָה מְעוֹלָם עָלְיוֹן, וְלָזֶה יֹאמַר "חֵלֶק ה'" – פָּרוּשׁ חֵלֶק מֵה' בְּרוּךְ הוּא כְּבִיכּוֹל, וְיֵשׁ נִפְשׁוֹת שְׁבָאוֹת מִמָּקוֹם הַנִּקְרָא נַחֲלַת שְׂדֵי, וְלָזֶה יִקְרָא יַעֲקֹב "חֶבֶל נַחֲלָתוֹ".

וְדִקְדַּק לוֹמַר "חֶבֶל" לְרָמֵז עֲנִיָּן גָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר גָּלוּ יוֹדְעֵי חוֹן, כִּי כָּל נִפְשׁ הַחַיּוּנִי שְׁבָאָדָם יֵשׁ לָהּ חוּט אֶחָד דְּבוּק עִם שְׂרָשָׁהּ, וְהוּא יוֹצֵא מֵהַנְּחִירִים וְדְבוּק בְּשִׁרְשׁוֹ לְמַעַלָּה, וּמִשָּׁם יוֹנֶקֶת הַנֶּפֶשׁ לְחַיּוּת.

Regarding the soul of a wicked person, the verse in Bamidbar 15:31 says, That soul shall utterly be cut off, meaning that Hashem cuts off this connecting cord that binds the soul to the place from which it was carved. Once cut, it can no longer draw spiritual sustenance, and this state is spiritual death, may Merciful Heaven save us. Conversely, regarding the righteous, the verse in Deuteronomy 4:4 states, But you who cling to Hashem your God are alive today. This is the meaning of, Yaakov is the lot of His inheritance, representing this unbroken spiritual cord. Understand this well.

וְעַל נַפְשׁ הָרָשָׁע אָמַר הַכָּתוּב (במדבר טו:לא): "הַכֶּרֶת תִּכְרֹת" וגו' – פָּרוּשׁ שְׂאוֹתוֹ הַשָּׂרֵשׁ הַדְּבִיק מֵהַנֶּפֶשׁ לַמָּקוֹם שֶׁמִּמֶּנּוּ חוֹצְקָה יִכְרֹתֶנּוּ ה', וְשׁוּב אֵין לָהּ בְּנִיקָה, וְזוֹ הִיא מִיתָה רַחֲמָנָא לִיזְלָן. וּבַצְדִּיקִים נֶאֱמָר (דברים ד:ד): "וְאַתֶּם הַדְּבִיקִים בְּה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם חַיִּים" וגו', וְהוּא אָמַר "חֶבֶל נִחַלְתּוּ", וְהִבֵּן:

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:8

בפשוט · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains the nations' division through heavenly ministers, in contrast with Hashem's direct rule over Yisrael. He describes seventy branches of holiness, rooted in Yaakov, corresponding to seventy nations and governing their opposing forces. He then offers another reading based on different spiritual sources of souls. The word chevel, a cord, expresses the soul's continuing dependence on its source for life; being cut off severs that connection, while cleaving to Hashem sustains it.

למעשה · Lemaaseh

The image of the cord asks us to value the connection that sustains spiritual life. In one choice today, take the mitzvah seriously as part of cleaving to Hashem. The reflection follows the Ohr HaChaim's contrast between maintaining that connection and becoming cut off from it.

פסוק ט

Deuteronomy 32:9

כִּי חֵלֶק יְהוָה עַמּוֹ יִעֲקֹב תְּכַל נַחֲלָתוֹ:

For the portion of the LORD is His people, Jacob the lot of His inheritance.

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

ימצאֵהוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִדְבָּר וּבְתֵהוּ יִלְל יִשְׁמֹן יִסְבְּכֶנָּהוּ יְבוֹנֶנָּהוּ יִצְרֶנָּהוּ כְּאִישׁוֹן עֵינָיו:

He found him in a desert land, and in the waste, a howling wilderness; He compassed him about, He cared for him, He kept him as the apple of His eye.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:10:1

He found him in a desert land, and in the waste, etc. It appears that the verse intends to follow the path of Chazal in Berachot 9b, who said that Israel did not leave Egypt until they had made it like a deep sea that has no fish in it, meaning they emptied it of all its spiritual sparks. Furthermore, they said in Likkutei Torah on Vayeira that if Israel had delayed any longer in Egypt, they would have been absorbed there forever, because they would have entered the fiftieth gate of impurity.

To describe this, the verse says, 'He found him in a land of desert', meaning a land that is desolate and has no spiritual substance left in it. For this reason, the text does not say 'He found him in the desert' (which would refer to the physical wilderness), but rather 'in a land of desert' (referring to Egypt which had become spiritually desolate). Understand this.

ימצאֵהוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מִדְבָּר וּבְתֵהוּ וְגו'. נראה כי יכוון הכתוב על דרך אֶמְרָם וְכֹרֶנָם לְבָרְכָה (ברכות ט:): לֹא יֵצְאוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם עַד שֶׁשָּׂאוֹהָ כְּמִצּוּלָה שְׂאִין בָּהּ דָּגִים וְכו', וְאָמְרוּ עוֹד (ליקוטי תורה וירא) שְׂאֵם הָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתְעַכְבִּין בְּמִצְרַיִם הָיוּ נִטְמָעִים שָׁם לְעַד לְעוֹלָם כִּי הָיוּ נִכְנָסִים בְּחִמְשֵׁי שְׁעָרֵי טְמָאָה,

לִזֶּה אָמַר יִמְצָאֵהוּ בְּאֶרֶץ שְׁהִיא מִדְבָּר, פְּרוֹשׁ חֲרָבָה וְאִין בָּהּ מִמֶּשׁ, וְלִזֶּה לֹא אָמַר יִמְצָאֵהוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר אֲלָא בְּאֶרֶץ מִדְבָּר, וְהִבּוּ:

The verse further explains that not only was the land a desert, completely devoid of any spark of holiness, but it was also 'a waste, a howling wilderness.' This means it was filled with filth and spiritual impurity. You will find that they said in the Zohar, Volume I, page 16a, that 'waste' (tohu) represents a specific force of impurity (kelipah), and similarly 'a howling wilderness' represents the forces of evil. Thus, the place was entirely stripped of good and completely filled with evil.

Because of this danger, Hashem 'compassed him about' (yesovevenhu), a term denoting protection. The Torah uses the future tense here to teach that this protection which He provided for them was not a temporary event; rather, it remains constant and will endure forever. The depth of this protection is that He extracted them from that place of evil so they would not be absorbed there.

Furthermore, in that very place, when Hashem brought the plagues upon Egypt, He protected them, just as the verses state: 'but of the livestock of the children of Israel...' (Exodus 9:6), 'in the land of Goshen...' (Exodus 9:26), 'but for all the children of Israel there was light...' (Exodus 10:23), and 'He will not allow the destroyer...' (Exodus 12:23). This is the meaning of 'He compassed him about.'

וְאָמַר עוֹד, שֶׁמֶלֶכְד שֶׁהָאָרֶץ מִדְבָּר מְבֹלֵי
נִצְוִץ קֹדֶשׁ, אֲלָא שֶׁהוּא תְהוֹ יִלְל יְשִׁימוֹן,
פְּרוֹשׁ מִלְּאֵה טְנוּפֹת וְטֻמְאָה. וְתִמְצָא
שֶׁאָמְרוּ בְּזֶהֶר (חֶלֶק א טז) כִּי תְהוֹ הוּא
בְּחִינַת קִלְפָּה אַחַת, וְכֵמו כֵּן יִלְל יְשִׁימוֹן
שֶׁהֵם בְּחִינַת הָרַע, שֶׁהַמָּקוֹם מְשַׁלֵּל מִהַטּוֹב
וּמִכָּל מַהֲרַע.

וְלֹזֶה ה' סָבְבוּ, פְּרוֹשׁ, לְשׁוֹן שְׁמִירָה, וְאָמַר
לְשׁוֹן עֲתִיד לומר שְׁאוֹתָהּ שְׁמִירָה שֶׁעָשָׂה
לוֹ לֹא נֶעְדְּרָה וְעוֹדֶנָּה תִּהְיֶה תָמִיד. וְהַכּוֹנֵה
בְּזֶה שֶׁהוּצִיאָם מִמָּקוֹם הָרַע הֵהוּא שְׁלֹא
נִטְמָעוּ שָׁם,

עוֹד שֶׁבָּאוֹתוֹ מָקוֹם עֲצָמוֹ כְּשֶׁהָיָה מְבִיא ה'
הַמַּכּוֹת עַל מִצְרַיִם הָיָה שׁוֹמֵר אוֹתָם, עַל
דֶּרֶךְ אֲמָרוֹ (שְׁמוֹת ט:ו) "וּמִמֶּקְנֶה יִשְׂרָאֵל"
וְגו', "בְּאֶרֶץ גִּזְשׁוֹ" וְגו' (שְׁמוֹת ט:כו),
"וּלְכָל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיָה אוֹר" וְגו' (שְׁמוֹת
י:כג), "וְלֹא יִתֵּן הַמַּשְׁחִית" וְגו' (שְׁמוֹת
יב:כג), וְהוּא אָמַר "סוֹבְבֶנָּהוּ".

Yevonenehu, "He gave him understanding," refers to Hashem's gift of Torah, the source of understanding. Through it He guards Yisrael "like the pupil of His eye," as in "Understanding will guard you" (Mishlei 2:11). The eye image also appears in Zechariah 2:12: "Whoever touches you touches the pupil of His eye."

וְאָמְרוּ יְבוֹנְנֶהוּ – פְּרוֹשׁ, עַל יַד שְׁנֵיתָן לָהֶם
תּוֹרָה שֶׁהִיא מְקוֹר הַבִּינָה, שֶׁכֵּזֶה "צִרְנֶהוּ
כְּאִישׁוֹן עֵינֹו", עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֲמָרוֹ (מִשְׁלֵי ב:יא)
"תְּבוֹנָה תִּנְצֹרֶכָה". וְאָמְרוּ "כְּאִישׁוֹן עֵינֹו" –
כְּמֹאֲמַר הַנְּבִיא (זְכַרְיָה ב:יב) "כִּי הַנוֹגֵעַ
בְּכֶם כְּנוֹגֵעַ בְּכַבֵּת עֵינֹו".

The Ohr HaChaim explains the image through the eye's delicacy. It cannot bear a finger touching it because the finger is coarse compared with the eye, which is refined. He uses this contrast to express how something spiritual cannot bear contact with what is coarse and physical.

He connects this to Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai's statement in the Zohar (volume 2, 211b): "Woe to the soul that bears a foreign fire." The fire in which the soul is punished is foreign to the soul's own fire. By contrast, the righteous soul immerses in the fire called Nehar Dinur while that fire has not become distant or material, and therefore does not suffer from it. For clarity, he is distinguishing a fire alien to the soul's refined nature from a spiritual fire compatible with it. That distinction helps explain why contact with coarseness can be painful to what is spiritually refined.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:10:4

This is what the verse means here by 'as the apple of His eye.' Because Israel became spiritual beings, everything outside of them is considered coarse and physical. Therefore, even the touch of something spiritually coarse harms and damages them, just as the touch of a hand harms the delicate apple of the eye.

This high spiritual status was achieved only after He gave them the inheritance of the Torah. For this reason, the verse first says 'He cared for him' (yevonenehu, instructing him in Torah) and only afterward says 'He kept him as the apple of His eye.' This concept also explains the underlying reason for the negative commandments, which protect this delicate spiritual state. Understand this.

והכֹּנֶה בָּהּ, כְּדֶרֶךְ שְׂאִין הָעֵין סוֹכֶלֶת
נְגִיעַת אֶצְבַּע הָאָדָם בָּהּ, וְהַטָּעַם לְצַד כִּי גוֹף
הָאֶצְבַּע עָכוּר וְהָעֵין זָכָה, וְאִין הָרוּחָנִי סוֹכֵל
הַגָּשְׁמִי.

וְהוּא סוֹד מֵאֲמַר הַרְשָׁבִי" (זוהר ח"ב ר"א):
שְׂאֵמֶר: וַיִּלֶּה לְנִשְׁמָתָא דְסִבְלָא אֶשָּׁא
נוֹכְרָאָה, פְּרוּשׁ, הָאֵשׁ שְׁבוּ נִכְנָסָת
לְהַעֲנִישָׁהּ הִיא אֵשׁ נִכְרִיָּה בְּעֶרְךָ אֵשׁ
הַנִּשְׁמָה, וְלִזְה תִּמְצָא שָׁם שְׁנֶפֶשׁ הַצַּדִּיק
תִּטְבֹּל בָּאֵשׁ הַנִּכְרָא נֶהַר דִּינֹור, פְּרוּשׁ,
בְּעוֹד שֶׁלֹּא נִתְרַחַק הָאֵשׁ וְלֹא נִגָּשׁ, שְׁבִיָּה
לֹא יִצְטָעְרוּ. וְהֵבֵן סוֹדוֹן שֶׁל דְּבָרִים:

וְהוּא אָמְרוּ כָּאֵן "כְּאִישׁוֹן עֵינוֹ", כִּי הֵם
רוּחָנִיִּים וְכָל חוּץ מֵהֶם גָּשְׁמִי, וְלִזְה יִרְעוּ
וְיִשְׁחִיתוּ בָּהֶם אֶפְלוּ נְגִיעַת הָעָכוּר, כְּמוֹ
שֶׁיִּרְעַ נְגִיעַת יָד בְּאִישׁוֹן עֵין. וְזֶה

הָיָה אַחֵר שֶׁהִנְחִילָם הַתּוֹרָה, וְלִזְה קִדְּם
לִזְמַר "יְבוֹנְנֵהוּ" וְאַחֵר כֵּן אָמַר "יִצְרָנְהוּ"
כְּאִישׁוֹן עֵינוֹ", וְהוּא טָעַם מִצְוֹת לֹא
תַעֲשֶׂה, וְהֵבֵן:

Alternatively, the words 'He cared for him, He kept him' (yevonenehu yitzrenhu) can be understood in light of what Chazal said in Tractate Berachot 54b: Three categories of people require special protection, and one of them is a Torah scholar (talmid chacham). The reason for this is that the damaging spiritual forces are envious of the high stature of a Torah scholar and provoke him.

To address this, the verse says 'yevonenehu', meaning He gives him the Torah, which is called understanding (tevunah) in Proverbs 2:11. Because He has elevated him to this level, He must then take responsibility to guard him, as it says, 'He kept him' (yitzrenhu), protecting him from those envious forces.

עוֹד יִרְצֶה אָמְרוּ "בּוֹנֵהוּ יִצְרֵנְהוּ" עַל דֶּרֶךְ
אֲמָרָם זְכוּרָנָם לְבִרְכָּה בְּמַסְכֶּת בְּרָכוֹת נד.;
שְׁלֹשָׁה צָרִיכִין שְׁמִירָה, וְאַחַד מֵהֶם הוּא
תַּלְמִיד חָכָם, וְהַטָּעַם לְפִי שְׁהַמְדִּיקִין
מִתְקַנְאִים מִמַּעַלְת בֶּן תּוֹרָה וּמִתְגָּרִים בּוֹ.

לָזֶה אָמַר "בּוֹנֵהוּ", פִּרוּשׁ יִתֵּן לוֹ הַתּוֹרָה
שֶׁנִּקְרָאת תְּבוּנָה (מִשְׁלֵי ב:יא), לָזֶה חָל
עָלָיו לְשָׁמְרוֹ כְּאָמְרוּ "יִצְרֵנְהוּ" וְגו':

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:10

בְּפִשְׁטוּת · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that Hashem found Israel in Egypt when it was spiritually desolate and filled with impurity. He protected them from being absorbed by the impurity and shielded them during the plagues. By giving them the Torah, He elevated them to a refined spiritual state, making them as sensitive to spiritual harm as the delicate apple of an eye is to physical touch. This high spiritual status requires the ongoing protection of the commandments and special divine guardianship.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה · Lemaaseh

The Ohr HaChaim connects the prohibitions of the Torah with guarding the spiritual sensitivity that Torah gives us. When a prohibition feels like a restriction, consider what it protects. Let that perspective help us take care with a particular boundary in our own avodas Hashem.

כַּנָּשֶׁר יַעִיר קִנּוּ עַל-גּוֹזְלָיו יִרְחֹף יִפְרֹשׁ בְּנָפְיוֹ יִקְחֵהוּ יִשְׁאַהוּ עַל- אַבְרָתּוֹ:

As an eagle that stirreth up her nest, Hovereth over her young, Spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, Beareth them on her pinions,

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:11:1

"Like an eagle that awakens its nest." The Ohr HaChaim notes Chazal's explanations in the Sifrei, as cited by Rashi, then offers another reading. Vayikra Rabbah 17:4 teaches that when Yisrael violates Hashem's will, judgment does not strike at their lives first. It begins by awakening a person through afflictions of the house, then of the clothing, before going further.

That is how he reads the eagle awakening its nest: Hashem awakens His children. The awakening is also measured to what they can bear. He cites Bereishis Rabbah 55:2, that Hashem tests a person only according to the measure he is capable of bearing.

כַּנָּשֶׁר יַעִיר קִנּוּ. רַ"ל (ספרי) דָּרָשׁוּ מֶה שֶׁדָּרָשׁוּ בּוֹ, (עֵינֵי רַשִׁי ז"ל) וְחוּץ מִדְּבָרֵיהֶם יִתְבָּאֵר עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֲמָרָם ז"ל (ויקרא רבה יז:ד) כִּי כָשִׁי שֶׁרָאֵל עוֹבְרִים רְצוֹנוֹ אֵין בַּעַל הַדִּין נוֹגֵעַ בְּנַפְשׁוֹת תַּחֲלָה אֶלָּא מִתְחִיל לְהַעִירוֹ בְּנִגְעֵי בָתִּים אַחֵר כֹּךְ בְּנִגְעֵי בְּגָדִים וְכוּ';

וְהוּא מֵאֲמַר "כַּנָּשֶׁר יַעִיר קִנּוּ" כִּמּוֹ כֵּן ה' מְעוֹרֵר בְּנָיו, גַּם מְעוֹרֵרָם כִּפִּי הִיכָלָת שְׁיוּכָלוֹ עֲמוּד בּוֹ, כְּאֲמָרָם ז"ל (בראשית רבה נח:ב) שֶׁאֵין ה' מְנַסֶּה הָאָדָם אֶלָּא בְּשִׁעוֹר שְׁיוּכָל לְסָבוֹל.

And the verse's statement, He spreads His wings, is understood in light of the Sages' teaching in the Sifrei on Devarim 3:29 that Hashem's right hand is constantly stretched out to receive those who return. If, through the awakening that Hashem stirs up within Israel, they are moved to return in repentance, His right hand is immediately stretched out to welcome them. The Torah uses the future tense to convey this sequence: the very reason He spreads His wings from the outset is in order to gather in the Jewish person who returns in repentance. Were it not for this goal of receiving the penitent, He would not have spread His wings at all.

וְאָמְרוּ "פֶּרֶשׁ כַּנְפָיו" וְגו', עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֲמָרָם
(ספרי דברים ג, כט) יָמִינוּ פְּשׁוּטָה לְקַבֵּל
שָׁבִים, שָׁאֵם עַל יַד הָעֶרְהָ שְׁיַעִיר ה'
לְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִתְעוֹרְרוּ לָשׁוּב בְּתִשְׁבּוּבָה, תִּכְרַךְ
יָמִינוּ פְּשׁוּטָה. וְאָמַר "פֶּרֶשׁ" לְעֵתִיד, זֶה
שְׁיַעֲרָה, טַעַם שְׁיַפְרֹשׁ כַּנְפָיו מֵעִיקְרָא הוּא
בְּשִׁבְלִי שְׁיִקְחֵהוּ לְאִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל הַחוּזָר
בְּתִשְׁבּוּבָה, שְׁוִילֵת זֶה לֹא הִיא פֶּרֶשׁ כַּנְפָיו.

And the verse's statement, He carries him on His wing, can be understood based on the Sages' teaching in Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 70, page 131a, on the verse in Kohelet 10:20, The winged one will tell the matter. They explain that there is a specific class of angels called possessors of wings. Their sacred service is to carry aloft on their wings every good word and blessing of Hashem that comes out of the mouth of a Jewish person. This is the meaning of, He carries him on His wing, meaning that He carries upward the spiritual goodness that comes from the person.

יִשְׂאֵהוּ עַל אֲבִרְתּוֹ – וְאָמְרוּ "יִשְׂאֵהוּ" וְגו',
עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֲמָרָם וְכַרְוָנָם לְבִרְכָּה (תיקוני
זוהר תיקון ע קלא). בְּפִסּוּק (קהלת י:כ)
"וַיַּבְעֵל כַּנְפִים יָגִיד דְּבָרִי", כִּי יֵשׁ כֶּת אַחַת
שֶׁל מַלְאָכִים שְׁנִקְרְאִים בְּעָלֵי כַנְפִים,
וְשֵׁרוֹתָם הִיא שְׁכָל דְּבוּר טוֹב וּבִרְכַּת ה'
הַיּוֹצֵאת מִפִּי אִישׁ יְהוּדִי יִשְׂאֵהוּ כַנְפֵיהֶם,
וְהוּא אָמְרוּ "יִשְׂאֵהוּ עַל אֲבִרְתּוֹ", פֶּרֶשׁ
יִשָּׂא הַבָּא מִמֶּנּוּ מֵהַטּוֹב.

בְּפִשְׁטוּת · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim reads the eagle's awakening of its nest as Hashem's measured call to teshuvah. Judgment begins with a person's surroundings, and the test is within his capacity. The spreading wings express Hashem's readiness to receive one who returns. The final image, carrying on a wing, refers to angels who carry upward a Jew's good words and blessings of Hashem.

Respond to an opportunity for teshuvah with the knowledge that Hashem is ready to receive you. The Ohr HaChaim explains that His outstretched hand is there to welcome the person who returns. Choose one thing to correct, and begin the return rather than letting discouragement delay it.

יְהוָה בָּדַד יְנַחֵנוּ וְאֵין עִמּוֹ אֵל נֹכַר:

The LORD alone did lead him, And there was no strange god with Him.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:12:1

"Hashem alone will lead him." The Ohr HaChaim explains this through Midrash Tanchuma, Tzav 7, on Hoshea 4:17: "Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone." Chazal read this as a teaching about unity. When Yisrael is united, even the presence of idolatry does not bring immediate punishment. Hanach lo, "leave him alone," expresses granting rest or relief, like the relief granted to the provinces in Esther. He therefore reads badad as the people being one unit: when they are united, Hashem leads them.

Source note: the Hebrew edition prints Esther 2:11 beside "he granted relief to the provinces." The quoted words are in Esther 2:18. The Hebrew is reproduced unchanged.

ה' בָּדַד יְנַחֵנוּ. יִתְפָּאֵר עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֲמָרָם
זְכוֹנָם לְבָרְכָהּ (תנחומא, צו ז) בַּפֶּסוּק
(הושע ד:יז) "חֲבוּר עֲצָבִים אֶפְרַיִם הֵנִיחַ לוֹ",
כְּשִׁישְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ בֵּינֵיהֶם אַחָדוּת אֲפִלּוּ עוֹבְדֵי
עֲבוּדָה זָרָה הֵנִיחַ לוֹ, פֶּרוּשׁ עַל דֶּרֶךְ (אסתר
ב:יא) "וַהֲנִיחָהּ לַמַּדִּינּוֹת עָשָׂה", וְהוּא אָמַר
"ה' בָּדַד" פֶּרוּשׁ כְּשֶׁהָעָם בָּדַד לְשׁוֹן בַּד – ה'
יְנַחֵנוּ.

He continues this reading with "and there is no foreign god with him." Although idolatry is present, Hashem does not count that sin against them by punishing them in this situation. The Ohr HaChaim compares the negative wording with Chazal's reading in Sukkah 41a of "No one seeks her" (Yirmiyahu 30:17). His text summarizes that inference as "this implies that she has [one who seeks her]." He uses the comparison here to read "there is none with him" as implying that a foreign god is in fact present, but Hashem is not punishing the people for it.

For clarity, the Gemara itself phrases its inference as "she requires seeking." The Ohr HaChaim's point here is that the negative wording carries an implication beyond its surface meaning; he is explaining the withholding of punishment, not permitting idolatry.

וְאֵין עִמּוֹ אֵל נֹכַר – פְּרוּשׁ, הַגֵּם שֶׁהֵם עוֹבְדֵי
עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה אֵין ה' מְחַשֵּׁב לוֹ עוֹן זֶה.
וּמֵאֲמַר "אֵין עִמּוֹ" תִּתְּפֹרֵשׁ עַל דֶּרֶךְ
שֶׁדִּרְשׁוּ זְכוּרֵנָם לְבָרָכָה (סוּכָה מֵא).
בְּפֶסוּק (יִרְמְיָה ל:יז) "דֹּרֵשׁ אֵין לָהּ",
מִכָּלֵל שֶׁיֵּשׁ לָהּ, כִּמּוֹ כֵּן בְּמָה שֶׁלִּפְנֵינוּ
אָמַר "אֵין עִמּוֹ" מִכָּלֵל שֶׁיֵּשׁ עִמּוֹ, אֶלָּא
שֶׁאֵין ה' מִסְּרוֹ עַל זֶה.

He then offers a different explanation. When will "Hashem alone lead him"? When the element of evil has come to an end within Yisrael. On this reading, "there is no foreign god with him" means that the evil attached to a person through Adam's sin has been removed. For clarity, this follows the earlier discussion of evil becoming mixed with good through Adam HaRishon's sin. The two readings are distinct: the first discusses unity despite sin, while this one describes guidance after that evil is gone.

עוֹד יִרְצֶה עַל זֶה הַדֶּרֶךְ: אֵימָתִי "ה' בִּדְדִּי
יִנְחֵנוּ"? כְּשֶׁנִּגְמַר חֶלֶק הָרַע מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל, וְהוּא
אָמַר "וְאֵין עִמּוֹ אֵל נֹכַר", שֶׁהוּא חֶלֶק
הָרַע הַדְּבִיק בְּאָדָם מִחֻטְא הָאָדָם, וְהַמְשָׁכִיל
דְּבִין:

בפשוט · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim offers two readings. The first emphasizes the protective force of unity: Hashem withholds punishment even while serious sin is present. The second describes a different condition, in which the evil that entered through Adam's sin has been removed and Hashem alone leads Yisrael.

למעשה · Lemaaseh

Make one effort toward peace with another Jew, such as speaking respectfully where a disagreement has become tense. The Ohr HaChaim draws attention to the value of unity even when people are far from perfect. We can work on that unity while still taking our own teshuvah seriously.

Torah Hebrew comes from Sefaria, Tanach with Ta'amei Hamikra. The Torah English is JPS 1917. Ohr HaChaim Hebrew comes from Sefaria, Vocalized Edition. These source editions are public domain. Hebrew wording and punctuation are preserved; web markup is removed and spacing is normalized.

The Ohr HaChaim English is an AI-assisted explanatory translation from the Hebrew. Summaries and practical reflections are editorial study aids. Published Eliyahu Munk English is retained in the source archive, separate from this edition.

אור החיים הקדוש • האזינו • שלישי

Explanatory English • Line-by-Line Edition

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The Hebrew is the original Ohr HaChaim. Each passage is paired with its AI-assisted explanatory English, beside it on wide pages and beneath it on smaller screens. Brief clarifications are marked within the English. In plain words and Lemaaseh are separate AI-assisted study aids.

פסוק יג

Deuteronomy 32:13

יִרְכְּבֵהוּ עַל-עֲלֵי-בָמוֹתַי [בְּמִתִּי] אֶרֶץ וַיֹּאכַל תְּנוּבֹת שָׂדֵי וַיִּנְקְהוּ דְבַשׁ
מִסֵּלַע וְשֶׁמֶן מִחֲלָמִישׁ צֹר:

He made him ride on the high places of the earth, And he did eat the fruitage of the field; And He made him to suck honey out of the crag, And oil out of the flinty rock;

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:13:1

He made him ride on the high places of the earth, and so on.
This statement is not a continuation of the theme discussed above. Rather, it is the beginning of a new subject that continues below, and the ultimate consequence of these events is described in the later verse, And Yeshurun grew fat and kicked (Deuteronomy 32:15).

יִרְכְּבֵהוּ עַל בְּמִתִּי וְגו'. אֵין זֶה נִמְשָׁךְ עִם
הָאָמֹר לְמַעַלָּה, אֶלָּא הִתְחַלֵּת עֲנִין וְנִמְשָׁךְ
לְמַטָּה, וְגִזְרַת הַדְּבָרִים הוּא "וַיִּשְׁמֵן יִשְׂרָאֵל"
וְגו'.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids • Deuteronomy 32:13

In plain words • בפשטות

The Ohr HaChaim explains that the description of Hashem raising Israel to ride on the high places of the earth and feeding them with abundance is not a continuation of the previous verses. Instead, it begins a new narrative sequence detailing the lavish goodness Hashem bestowed upon Israel, which ultimately led to the tragic consequence of them growing fat, becoming complacent, and rebelling against Him.

למאסה • Lemaaseh

When we experience periods of great success, comfort, and abundance, we must recognize that these blessings are a test of our spiritual focus. Instead of letting physical prosperity lead to complacency or rebellion, we should use our elevated state to deepen our gratitude and commitment to Hashem.

פסוק יד

Deuteronomy 32:14

חֶמְאָת בָּקָר וַחֲלֵב צֹאן עִם-חֶלֶב כְּאִים וַאֲיִלִּים בְּנֵי-בָשָׁן
וְעֵתוּדִים עִם-חֶלֶב כִּלְיֹת חֲטָה וְדָם-עֵגֶב תִּשְׁתֶּה-חֲמֶר:

Curd of kine, and milk of sheep, With fat of lambs, And rams of the breed of Bashan, and he-goats, With the kidney-fat of wheat; And of the blood of the grape thou drankest foaming wine.

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

פסוק טו

Deuteronomy 32:15

וַיִּשְׁמֶן יִשְׁרוּן וַיִּבְנֶט שָׁמֶנֶת עֲבִית כְּשִׁית וַיִּטֹּשׁ אֱלֹהֵי עֲשָׂהוּ
וַיִּנָּבֵל צוּר יִשְׁעָתוֹ:

But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked, Thou didst wax fat, thou didst grow thick, thou didst become gross, And he forsook God who made him, And contemned the Rock of his salvation.

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

פסוק טז

Deuteronomy 32:16

יִקְנֹא הוּא בְּזָרִים בְּתוֹעֵבֹת יַכְעִיֶּסְהוּ:

They roused Him to jealousy with strange gods, With abominations did they provoke Him.

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

יִזְבְּחוּ לַעֲשֵׂדִים לֹא אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים לֹא יָדְעוּם הַדְּשִׁים מִקֶּרֶב בָּאוּ לֹא שָׁעָרוּם אֲבֹתֵיכֶם:

They sacrificed unto demons, no-gods, Gods that they knew not, New gods that came up of late, Which your fathers dreaded not.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:17:1

The words "no-god" mean that they did not even sacrifice to these demons because they considered them to be a god, but rather only to have them fulfill their physical needs and desires. And regarding what they do for actual idol worship, the verse says, "gods that they knew not." This means that even though they do not know them, nor do they understand the true nature of these idols, they worship them anyway. Regarding the words, "new gods that came up of late," see what I have explained on the verse in Deuteronomy 13:7, "If your brother entices you."

לֹא אֱלֹהִים. פֶּרוּשׁ, גַּם הֵם אֵינָם זֹבְחִים לָהֶם
לְצַד הַיּוֹתֵם אֱלֹהִים, אֲלֵא לַעֲשׂוֹת לָהֶם
צָרֵכֵהֶם וּמִבְקָשָׁם. וּכְנֻגָּד מֵה שְׁעוֹשִׁים
לְעִבּוֹדַת אֱלֹהִים אָמַר "אֱלֹהִים לֹא
יָדְעוּם", פֶּרוּשׁ, הֵגַם שְׂאִינָם יוֹדְעִים אוֹתָם
מֵה טִיבָם שֶׁל הָאֱלֹהִים הֵם עוֹבְדִים אוֹתָם.
וְאָמְרוּ "הַדְּשִׁים מִקֶּרֶב בָּאוּ" וְגו', עֲיֵן מֵה
שֶׁפֶר שְׁתֵּי בְּפָסוּק (דְּבָרִים יג:ז) "כִּי יִסְתִּידֶךָ
אֲחִיךָ" וְגו'.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:17

בפשוט · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that the people did not sacrifice to demons out of a belief in their divinity, but merely to satisfy their own desires. Furthermore, they engaged in idol worship of forces they did not even comprehend, adopting newly invented deities that their ancestors never feared.

למעשה · Lemaaseh

A person should examine their motivations to ensure they are serving Hashem for His sake, rather than chasing after external, temporary influences just to satisfy immediate personal desires.

צור ילדה תשי ותשכח אל מחללה:

Of the Rock that begot thee thou wast unmindful, And didst forget God that bore thee..

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:18:1

Of the Rock that begot thee thou wast unmindful (Teshil). This can be explained based on the teaching of Chazal in the Zohar, volume 3, page 207a. At the time when the Holy One, blessed be He, wished to create man, He consulted with the angels. They said before Him, "What is man that You should remember him?" (Psalms 8:5). Hashem strongly asserted Himself against the words of the angels, created man, and punished those angels who opposed. Thus, when Israel transgresses His will, they weaken (matishim) the very reason and justification for man's creation. This is the meaning of "the Rock that begot thee, you have weakened" (teshi, which is read as weakening).

צור ילדה תשי. יתבאר על דרך אמרם זכרונם לברכה (זוהר חלק ג' ר:ו) בשעה שרצה הקדוש ברוך הוא לברא את האדם, נמלה במלאכים ואמרו לפניו "מה אנוש" וגו' (תהלים ח:ה), ונתעצם ה' נגד דברי המלאכים ובראו והעניש המנגדים, עד כאן, ולזה כשישראל עוברים רצונו מח' לשים טעם לידתו של אדם, והוא אמרו "ילדה תשי".

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:18:2

And didst forget God that bore thee (Mechol'lecha). The word mechol'lecha can be interpreted as an expression of adornment (chelyah), similar to the verse, "and she adorned herself (vata'ad) with her ear-rings and her jewels (vechelyatah)" (Hosea 2:15). The meaning is that He made you a crown and an adornment over all other created beings, even over the angels, as in the verse, "You have caused men to ride over our heads" (Psalms 66:12). Alternatively, it can be understood in the sense of the verse, "Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (Isaiah 49:3), meaning that He made you an adornment for Himself, blessed be He. Our Sages of blessed memory in the Sifrei have also offered many homiletical interpretations on this verse, like a hammer that shatters a rock into many sparks.

ותשכח אל מחללה. תתפרש לשון עדי, כדרך אמרו (הושע ב:טו) "ותעד נזמה וח' ליתה", והכונה שעשאך מחול, עדי על כל הנבראים, אפלו על המלאכים, כאמרו (תהלים סו:יב) "הרכבת אנוש לראשנו", או על דרך אמרו (ישעיה מט:ג) "ישראל אשר בך אתפאר", שעשאך עדי לו יתברך. ורז"ל אמרו (ספרי) דרשות וכפטיש וגו'.

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:18

בפשוט · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim offers two deep insights into this rebuke. First, he explains that when Israel sins, they weaken (teshi) the very justification for humanity's creation, which Hashem defended against the angels. Second, he interprets 'mechol'lecha' as an expression of adornment, reminding Israel that Hashem crowned them as the ultimate ornament of creation and a source of divine glory, a status they ungratefully forgot.

למעשה · Lemaaseh

When we choose to do a mitzvah, we are not just performing a personal act of obedience; we are actively justifying the creation of humanity. Remembering that Hashem created us to be the crown and adornment of His world can inspire us to carry ourselves with spiritual dignity and avoid actions that diminish this divine glory.

Torah Hebrew comes from Sefaria, Tanach with Ta'amei Hamikra. The Torah English is JPS 1917. Ohr HaChaim Hebrew comes from Sefaria, Vocalized Edition. These source editions are public domain. Hebrew wording and punctuation are preserved; web markup is removed and spacing is normalized.

The Ohr HaChaim English is an AI-assisted explanatory translation from the Hebrew. Summaries and practical reflections are editorial study aids. Published Eliyahu Munk English is retained in the source archive, separate from this edition.

אור החיים הקדוש • האזינו • רביעי

Explanatory English · Line-by-Line Edition

HA'AZINU · 4TH ALIYAH

The Hebrew is the original Ohr HaChaim. Each passage is paired with its AI-assisted explanatory English, beside it on wide pages and beneath it on smaller screens. Brief clarifications are marked within the English. In plain words and Lemaaseh are separate AI-assisted study aids.

פסוק יט

Deuteronomy 32:19

וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה וַיִּנָּאץ מִכַּעַס בָּנָיו וּבָנֹתָיו:

And the LORD saw, and spurned, Because of the provoking of His sons and His daughters.

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶסְתִּירָה פָּנַי מֵהֶם אֲרֹאֶה מָה אַחֲרֵיהֶם כִּי דֹר תַּהֲפֹכֹת הֵמָּה בָּנִים לֹא-אֱמֻן בָּם:

And He said: I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be; For they are a very froward generation, Children in whom is no faithfulness.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:20:1

For they are a froward generation, and so on. This is explained as follows: Since the verse just stated, 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be,' this implies that Hashem will not look upon them or see them even if they perform teshuvah and cry out in prayer. Now, it would seem improper for Hashem to act this way (by ignoring sincere repentance). To resolve this, the verse concludes by giving the reason: 'For they are a froward generation' (tahpuchot), meaning they constantly turn and flip-flop from good to evil. And when it says 'children' (banim), it means that even if they intend to improve and reach the level where they are considered children of Hashem, 'there is no faithfulness in them' (lo emun bam). This is because they will quickly return to their wicked ways, and their repentance is not complete or lasting. Therefore, it is entirely fitting for Hashem to hide His face from them.

כִּי דֹר תַּהֲפֹכֹת וְגו'. פְּרוּשׁ, לְפִי שֶׁאִמְרַת הַכָּתוּב בְּסִמּוּךְ "אֶסְתִּירָה פָּנַי" וְגו', וּבִזְכָּר לֹא יִשְׁקִיף וְיִרְאֶה הָגֵם שֶׁיַּעֲשֶׂה תְּשׁוּבָה וַיִּחַנְּנוּ קוֹלָם, וְאֵין זֶה מִן הַנִּכּוֹן לַעֲשׂוֹת כֵּן, לָזֶה גָּמַר אוֹמֵר הַטַּעַם "כִּי דֹר תַּהֲפֹכֹת", פְּרוּשׁ מִתַּהֲפֹכִים מְטוֹכָה לְרָעָה. וְאָמְרוּ "בָּנִים", פְּרוּשׁ אֶפְלוּ יִחַשְׁבוּ לְהִיטִיב לְבָא אֶל גִּדּוּר שִׁיחִיו נִחְשָׁבִים בָּנִים, "לֹא אֱמֻן בָּם" כִּי יִשׁוּבוּ לְהַרְשִׁיעַ וְאֵין חֲזָרְתָם שְׁלֵמָה, וְאֲשֶׁר עַל כֵּן רָאוי הוּא לְהִסְתִּיר וְגו'.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:20

בפשוט · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that Hashem's decision to hide His face and ignore the people's cries is justified because they are a flip-flopping generation. Even when they repent and elevate themselves to the status of children, their commitment lacks stability and faithfulness, as they inevitably slide back into wickedness.

למעשה · Lemaaseh

True repentance requires consistency and a lasting commitment. When we resolve to improve, we must build practical safeguards to ensure our spiritual growth is stable and enduring, rather than a fleeting reaction that quickly fades.

פסוק כא

Deuteronomy 32:21

הֵם קִנְאוּנִי בְּלֹא-אֱלֹהִים פָּעֲסוּנִי בְּהִבְלִיָּהֶם וְאֲנִי אֶקְנִיָּאֵם בְּלֹא-עָם
בְּגוֹי נָבֵל אֲכַעִיסֵם:

They have roused Me to jealousy with a no-god; They have provoked Me with their vanities; And I will rouse them to jealousy with a no-people; I will provoke them with a vile nation.

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

פסוק כב

Deuteronomy 32:22

כִּי-אֵשׁ קָדְתָּהּ בְּאַפִּי וַתִּיקַד עַד-שָׂאוֹל תַּהֲתִית וַתֹּאכַל אֶרֶץ
וַיִּבְלָה וַתִּלְהֶט מִסְגֵּי הָרִים:

For a fire is kindled in My nostril, And burneth unto the depths of the nether-world, And devoureth the earth with her produce, And setteth ablaze the foundations of the mountains.

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

פסוק כג

Deuteronomy 32:23

אֶסְפֶּה עָלֵימוֹ רָעוֹת חֲצֵי אֶכְלָה-בָּם:

I will heap evils upon them; I will spend Mine arrows upon them;

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

מִזֵּי רָעָב וּלְתֵמִי רָשָׁף וְקִטָּב מִרִיגֵי וְשׁוֹן-בְּהֵמוֹת אֲשַׁלַּח-בָּם עִם-
חֲמַת זֶחְלִי עֹפֵר:

The wasting of hunger, and the devouring of the fiery bolt, And bitter destruction; And the teeth of beasts will I send upon them, With the venom of crawling things of the dust.

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

מִחוּץ תִּשְׁפֹּל-חֶרֶב וּמִחֲדָרִים אֵימָה גַם-בָּחוּר גַּם-בְּתוּלָה יוֹנֵק
עִם-אִישׁ שִׁיבָה:

Without shall the sword bereave, And in the chambers terror; Slaying both young man and virgin, The suckling with the man of gray hairs.

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

אָמַרְתִּי אֶפְאִיֵּהֶם אֲשַׁבֵּיתָהּ מֵאֲנוּשׁ זְכָרָם:

I thought I would make an end of them, I would make their memory cease from among men;

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:26:1

I thought I would make an end of them (afeihem). The meaning of the word afeihem is: I will direct My anger (api) against them until they are completely destroyed from among mankind.

אָמַרְתִּי אֶפְאִיֵּהֶם. פֶּרוּשׁ "אֶפְאִיֵּהֶם" –
אֶסְמִיךְ אִפִּי עֲמָהֶם עַד שִׁיוֹשְׁבָתוֹ מֵאֲנוּשׁ.

בפשוט · In plain words

The author explains the word afeihem as a reference to Hashem directing His intense anger against Israel to bring about their complete destruction from among humanity.

למעשה · Lemaaseh

Pause over the severity of the warning before moving on. The Ohr HaChaim explains a threatened destruction here, so the language should not be softened into a mild expression of displeasure.

פסוק כז

Deuteronomy 32:27

**לוֹלִי כַעַס אוֹיֵב אֶגּוֹר פֶּן־יִנָּכְרוּ צָרֵימִי פֶּן־יֵאמְרוּ יְדֵינוּ רַמָּה וְלֹא
יִהְיֶה פִעֵל כָּל־זֹאת:**

*Were it not that I dreaded the enemy's provocation, Lest their adversaries should misdeem, Lest they should say:
Our hand is exalted, And not the LORD hath wrought all this.'*

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:27:1

Were it not that I dreaded the enemy's provocation, and so on. The meaning is that the enemies of Israel have provoked Me to anger many times. This is the meaning of the word "agur" (I dreaded), which is related to the expression "agrah vakatzir" (she gathers in the harvest) in Proverbs 6:8. It means: I have gathered and stored up the anger provoked by the enemy, and they are ripe for destruction. However, when they see that I have completely wiped out the name of Israel, Heaven forbid, "their adversaries would misunderstand." This means they would think that Israel's faith is foreign and not righteous, and the truth would thus be turned into a lie, Heaven forbid.

לוֹלִי כַעַס אוֹיֵב אֶגּוֹר. פָּרוּשׁ, שְׂכֻמָּה וְכֻמָּה
הַכְּעֻסוֹת הַכְּעִיסוֹנִי אוֹיְבֵיהֶם, וְהוּא אָמַר
"אֶגּוֹר" מִלְשׁוֹן (מִשְׁלֵי ו:ח) "אֶגְרָה
בְּקִצִּיר", שֶׁאֶגּוֹר הוּא כְּעֵסוֹ שֶׁל אוֹיֵב
וְעוֹמְדִים הֵם לְכַלּוֹן, וְכִשְׂרָאוֹ שֶׁהַשְׁבֵּתִי
שֵׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל חֵס וְשָׁלוֹם "יִנָּכְרוּ צָרֵימִי",
פָּרוּשׁ, יֵחַ שָׁבוּ כִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲמוֹנָתָם נִכְרְיָה
וְלֹא צָדִיק, וְיִתְחַזֵּק דְּבַר אֱמֶת לְשֹׁקֵר חֵס
וְשָׁלוֹם.

Furthermore, Hashem is concerned "lest they should say: Our hand is exalted." This means that in addition to denying Israel's faith and religion, they would sin further by claiming that their own faith is the correct one. This is what is meant by "lest they should say: Our hand is exalted," meaning that their goodness and tranquility do not come from Hashem, but rather from the idols they worship.

ועוד חושש "פֶּן יֹאמְרוּ יְדֵינוּ רָמָה", פֶּרוּשׁ,
מִלְכָּד שִׁיכְחִישׁוּ אֱמוּנַת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְדָתָם,
יוֹסִיפוּ לְחַטֹּא לִזְמַר שְׂאֵמוּנָתָם אֱמוּנָה
רְאוּיָה, וְהוּא אָמְרוּ "פֶּן יֹאמְרוּ יְדֵינוּ רָמָה",
וְטוֹבָתָם וְשִׁלּוֹתָם לֹא מֵה' הִיא אֲלֵא
מִעֲבֹדָה זָרָה אֲשֶׁר הֵם עוֹבְדִים.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:27:2

And this is the meaning of "and not Hashem has wrought all this." This refers to all of their own goodness and success. Their proof for this claim would be that Israel did not do any evil that they themselves do not do, and indeed they do even worse, yet they ruled over Israel and destroyed them.

וְהוּא אָמְרוּ וְלֹא ה' פָּעַל כָּל זֹאת, פֶּרוּשׁ,
כָּל טוֹבָתָם וְהַצְלָחָתָם. וְהָרְאָה שֶׁלֹּא עָשׂוּ
יִשְׂרָאֵל דְּבַר רַע מִה שֶׁהֵם אֵינָם עוֹשִׂים,
וְיֹתֵר מִהֶמָּה, וְהֵם מְשִׁלּוּ בָהֶם וַיִּאַבְדּוּם.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:27:3

Alternatively, the words refer to the great destruction the enemies brought upon Israel, wiping out their memory from mankind. The enemies would claim that Hashem did not do all this alone, but that the power and will of their idols joined in and gave them dominion over Israel.

אוּ יִרְצָה, שֶׁכָּל הַפְּעָלָה הַזֹּאת שְׁעָשׂוּ
הַשָּׂחָתָה גְּדוּלָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וְהַשְׁבִּיתוֹ מֵאַנּוּשׁ
זָכָרָם, יֹאמְרוּ שֶׁלֹּא עָשָׂה כָּל זֶה ה' אֲלֵא
בְּצִרוּף כֹּחַ וּרְצוֹן עֲבֹדַת עֲבֹדָה זָרָה שֶׁהִיא
הַשְׁלִיטָתָם עֲלֵיהֶם:

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:27

בפשוט · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that Hashem refrains from completely destroying Israel because the enemies would misinterpret it. They would reject Israel's true faith and credit their own idols with their prosperity and success. Alternatively, they would claim that their idols' power and will joined in bringing about Israel's destruction.

We see from here how deeply Hashem cares about the perception of His truth in the world, even withholding deserved punishment from Israel to prevent His Name from being desecrated. A practical reflection from this point is to be exceptionally mindful of how our actions reflect on the Torah and Hashem's Name, ensuring that our conduct always sanctifies His Name in the eyes of others.

כִּי־גוֹי אֲבָד עֲצוֹת הֵמָּה וְאֵין בָּהֶם תְּבוּנָה:

For they are a nation void of counsel, And there is no understanding in them.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:28:1

For they are a nation void of counsel. This means that there is no reason to hope that the gentile nation will observe what happens to Israel, take a moral lesson, and say to themselves: If these people, who only angered Hashem a little, suffered such a fate, we must improve our own ways.

This is the meaning of the words, "for they are a nation void of counsel." It means that such a logical process is simply not in their nature, and they are completely lost when it comes to such constructive advice.

And the verse continues, "and there is no understanding in them" to deduce one matter from another. This is just as the next verse says, "If they were wise, they would understand this," meaning they would understand the fierce anger that came upon Israel, and from this they would understand what their own end will be for their own transgressions.

כִּי גוֹי אֲבָד עֲצוֹת. פְּרוּשׁ, שְׁאֵין חֲשׁ שֶׁהַגּוֹי יִרְאֶה וְיִקַּח מוֹסֵר וְיֵאמֶר: וּמָה אֵלּוּ עָלַי שֶׁהִכְעִיסוּ מַעַט רָאָה מַה עָלְתָה בְיָדָם וְכוּ' וְיִטִּיב מַעֲשָׂיו,

וְהוּא אָמַר "כִּי גוֹי אֲבָד עֲצוֹת", פְּרוּשׁ אֵין בְּטִבְעוֹ דְּבָר זֶה וְאֲבוּד הוּא מֵעֲצוֹת כְּאֵלּוּ,

"וְאֵין בָּהֶם תְּבוּנָה" לְהַבִּין דְּבָר מִתּוֹךְ דְּבָר, כְּמוֹ שֶׁאָמְרָנוּ "לֹא חֲכָמוֹ יִשְׁכִּילוּ זֹאת", פְּרוּשׁ חֲרִי הָאֵף הִבָּא עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּמִזֶּה יִבְיִנוּ לְאַחֲרֵיתָם מַה תְּהִיָּה עַל מַעֲלָם.

בְּפִשְׁטוּת · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that the gentile nations lack the spiritual counsel and understanding to learn from Israel's punishment. They will not realize that if Hashem punishes His chosen people for their sins, He will surely punish the gentiles even more for theirs. Instead, they remain blind to this logical deduction.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה · Lemaaseh

We should train ourselves to look at the events around us and proactively learn moral lessons for our own spiritual growth, rather than remaining blind to the messages Hashem sends through the world.

Torah Hebrew comes from Sefaria, Tanach with Ta'amei Hamikra. The Torah English is JPS 1917. Ohr HaChaim Hebrew comes from Sefaria, Vocalized Edition. These source editions are public domain. Hebrew wording and punctuation are preserved; web markup is removed and spacing is normalized.

The Ohr HaChaim English is an AI-assisted explanatory translation from the Hebrew. Summaries and practical reflections are editorial study aids. Published Eliyahu Munk English is retained in the source archive, separate from this edition.

אור החיים הקדוש · האזינו · תמישי

Explanatory English · Line-by-Line Edition

HA'AZINU · 5TH ALIYAH

The Hebrew is the original Ohr HaChaim. Each passage is paired with its AI-assisted explanatory English, beside it on wide pages and beneath it on smaller screens. Brief clarifications are marked within the English. In plain words and Lemaaseh are separate AI-assisted study aids.

פסוק כט

Deuteronomy 32:29

לו חכמו ישכילו זאת יבינו לאחריהם:

If they were wise, they would understand this, They would discern their latter end.

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

פסוק ל

Deuteronomy 32:30

איכה ירדף אחד אלה ושנים יניסו רבבה אם לא פיצורם
מכרם ויהנה הסגירם:

How should one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Except their Rock had given them over And the LORD had delivered them up?

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:30:1

How should one chase... This is to be explained as a rebuke directed at the gentile nation, who fails to wake up and take notice even when confronted with a highly visible, shocking phenomenon, which is: "How could one chase a thousand," and so on. This means that one soldier from the gentile nations could pursue a thousand soldiers of Israel. For in all standard wars fought between the nations of the world, such a phenomenon is never found; no enemy ever attains such a degree of strength and dominance over other nations.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:30:2

How should one chase a thousand... This means that one particular soldier from the nations could chase a thousand of Israel, and so on. See what I have written in Parashat Bechukotai on the verse (Leviticus 26:8), "And five of you shall chase a hundred," and so on.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:30:3

Except their Rock had given them over... The word "Rock" (Tzuram) refers to the Attribute of Justice, just as I explained on the verse (Deuteronomy 32:4), "The Rock, His work is perfect." And the verse continues, "and Hashem delivered them up." This refers to the Attribute of Mercy joining together with the Attribute of Justice. For without this agreement of the Attribute of Mercy, Israel would never have suffered such a massive downfall as to have a thousand of them fall before a single enemy soldier.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:30

בפשוט · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim reads this as a warning to the enemy nation. One of its soldiers pursuing a thousand of Israel is not an ordinary military outcome. It points to Hashem giving Israel over, with both the Attribute of Justice and the Attribute of Mercy involved. The author also refers the reader to his explanation of the proportions in Bechukosai.

איכה ירדה. יש לפרשו הערה לגוי שאינו מתעורר בהערה נרגשת שהיא "איכה ירדה אחד וגו', פרוש, אחד מהאמות אלף מישראל, פרוש כי בכל מלחמות הרגילים בין האמות לא ימצא דבר כזה, שאין שווא משיג כח וגבורה כזו בין העמים.

איכה ירדה אחד אלף. פרוש, אחד המיוחד מהאמות אלף מישראל וכו'. ועין מה שפרשתי בפרשת בקקתי בפסוק (ויקרא כו:ח) "ורדפו מכם חמשה מאה" וגו'.

אם לא כי צורם. פרוש מדת הדין, וכמו שפרשתי בפסוק (דברים לב:ד) "הצור תמים" וגו'. ואמרו "וה' הסגירם" פרוש מדת רחמים עם מדת הדין, שזולת זה לא היה כל כך ירדה לישראל שיפלו אלף לפני אחד.

When learning this account of victory and defeat, do not measure everything by military strength alone. Attend to the explanation the pasuk gives for this extraordinary outcome, rather than treating the victor as independently powerful.

כִּי לֹא כְצוּרֵנוּ צוּרָם וְאֵיבֵינוּ פְּלִיָּלִים:

For their rock is not as our Rock, Even our enemies themselves being judges.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:31:1

For their rock is not as our Rock, and so on. This explains the reason why the nations will attribute the phenomenon of one of them chasing a thousand of Israel to the fact that their Rock sold them and Hashem delivered them. They will not attribute it to a lack of ability on Hashem's part, Heaven forbid.

This is similar to what Moshe said to Hashem during the incident of the spies, that the nations would misinterpret the event. For the strength of Israel is not like the strength of the nations. There is no idol that has ever endured for many days, based on the esoteric principle of the verse in Proverbs 12:19, But a lying tongue is but for a moment.

Go out and learn this from the idol Chemosh, after which most of the nations went astray, and which performed wonders, as written in the words of Rabbeinu Saadia Gaon. Yet, despite this, it became as if it had never existed, and many other idols met the same fate.

כִּי לֹא כְצוּרֵנוּ וְגו'. פְּרוּשׁ, הַטַּעַם שֶׁיִּתְּלוּ טַעַם אֶחָד אֵלֶּף כִּי צוּרָם מְכָרָם וְה' הַסִּגֵּרָם, וְלֹא יִתְּלוּ לִזְמַר מִבְּלִתִּי יְכַלֵּת ה' וְגו' חֵס וְשָׁלוֹם,

וּכְמֵאֲמַר מֹשֶׁה לַה' בְּמַעֲשֵׂה הַמְּרִגְלִים, כִּי הַתּוֹקֵף שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵינוֹ כְּתִקְפָּם שֶׁל הָאוֹמוֹת, שְׂאִין לָהּ עֲבוּדָה זָרָה שֶׁעֲמִידָה יָמִים רַבִּים, בְּסוּד (מִשְׁלֵי יב:יט) "וְיַעַד אֲרִגְיָעָה לְשׁוֹן שִׁקְר",

וְצֵא וְלָמַד מִעֲבוּדָה זָרָה שֶׁל כְּמוֹשׁ אֲשֶׁר תָּעוּ אַחֲרָיָה רֹב הָאוֹמוֹת וְכַמָּה הִפְלִיאָה עֲשׂוֹת כְּכַתּוּב בְּדִבְרֵי רַבֵּינוּ סַעֲדִיָּה גָאוֹן, וְאַף עַל פִּי כֵן וְהָיָה כִּלְאֵי הָיָה, וְרַבּוֹת כְּאֵלֶּה. אָבֵל

But our Rock is great in power, and we always rise in holiness.
Even the nations of the world agree to this, as stated in the words
of the prophet in Malachi 1:11, For My name is great among the
nations. Therefore, when they see the downfall of Israel in this
manner, they too will judge it so.

צוּרֵנוּ שְׂגִיָּא כַּח מַעְלִין בְּקִדְּשׁ וְאַפְלוּ הַגּוֹיִם
יִסְפִּימוּ עַל זֶה, כְּאָמֹר בְּדִבְרֵי הַנְּבִיא
(מֵלֶאכִי אֵיִיא) "כִּי גָדוֹל שְׁמִי בְּגוֹיִם",
וְכִשְׂרְאוֹ מִפְּלֵת יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּדֶרֶךְ זֶה גַם הֵם
יִשְׁפֹּטוּ כֵּן,

And this is the meaning of, Even our enemies themselves being
judges. The word pelilim means judges, as in Exodus 21:22, And
he shall pay as the judges determine. This means that they too will
judge that their rock is not like our Rock. However, when they
actually see the destruction of Israel, they will deny the truth, as it
is written earlier in verse 27, Lest their adversaries should
misinterpret... lest they should say, and so on.

וְהוּא אָמְרוּ "וְאֵיבֵינוּ פְּלִילִים" לְשׁוֹן דִּינָיִם,
כְּאָמְרוּ (שְׁמוֹת כ"א:כב) "וְנִתֵּן בְּפְלִילִים",
פְּרוֹשׁ יִשְׁפֹּטוּ גַם הֵם שֶׁלֹּא כְּצוּרֵנוּ צוּרֵם,
אֶלָּא כְּשְׂרֹאִים הַשְׁחָתַת יִשְׂרָאֵל יִנְכָּרוּ אֶת
הָאֱמֶת כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב "פֶּן יִנְכָּרוּ וְגו' פֶּן
יֵאמְרוּ" וְגו'.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:31

בְּפִשְׁטוֹת · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that the nations of the world fundamentally recognize that their idols have no lasting power, whereas Hashem is the supreme, eternal Power. Therefore, when they witness Israel's unnatural defeats, they logically understand that it must be because Hashem Himself delivered Israel into their hands. However, despite this inner intellectual realization, their arrogance and hatred lead them to outwardly deny the truth and falsely claim that their own power or idols brought them victory.

לְמַעַשֶׂה · Lemaaseh

We must realize that even those who oppose the Torah often possess an inner, intellectual awareness of Hashem's supreme truth, even if they outwardly deny it. When we face challenges or opposition, we should not be swayed by the external, false narratives of the world, but remain firmly anchored in our faith, knowing that the truth of Hashem's sovereignty is absolute and ultimately recognized by all.

כִּי־מִגֶּפֶן סֹדֶם גִּפְנָם וּמִשְׂדֵּם גִּמְרָה עֲנִבְמוּ עֲנִבֵי־רוֹשׁ אֲשַׁכֵּלָת מִרְחֹת לָמוּ:

For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, And of the fields of Gomorrah; Their grapes are grapes of gall, Their clusters are bitter;

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:32:1

For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and so on. This verse explains the reason for their being sold into exile, as well as the reason for the earlier decree of "I said I would scatter them into corners" (Deuteronomy 32:26).

Regarding the expression "from the vine," I have already made known that for every holy concept, there is a corresponding counterpart in the impure side, the sitra achra. This is in keeping with the verse, "G-d has made even the one corresponding to the other" (Ecclesiastes 7:14).

Israel is compared to a holy vine, as the Sages taught in Bereishit Rabbah 99:8, based on the verse, "You plucked up a vine out of Egypt" (Psalms 80:9).

Correspondingly, when Israel acted wickedly, the Torah says of them, "their vine is of the vine of Sodom." This vine represents the evil tree of spiritual attachment that nurtures the wicked.

This is why the verse concludes, "their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter."

Since they only attach themselves to this evil source but their entire branch does not originate from it, the verse says "from the vine of Sodom" rather than saying "for their vine is the vine of Sodom."

כִּי מִגֶּפֶן וְגו'. פֶּרוּשׁ, נוֹתֵן טַעַם לְמִכִּירָתָם וּלְהַקְוֹדָם לָהּ "אֲמַרְתִּי אֶפְאַיָּהֶם".

וְאָמְרוּ "מִגֶּפֶן" – כִּכָּר הוֹדַעְתִּי כִּי דָבָר שֶׁבִקְדֻשָּׁה יֵשׁ כְּנִגְדּוֹ בְּסִטְרָא אַחְרָא, כְּאָמְרוּ (קוה לֹת זִיד) "גַּם אֶת זֶה לְעֻמַּת זֶה עָשָׂה" וְגו',

וְיִשְׂרָאֵל נִמְשָׁלוּ לְגֶפֶן (בְּרֵאשִׁית רַבָּה צ"ח, דְּכֻתִּיב (תה לים פ:ט) "גֶּפֶן מִמִּצְרַיִם תִּסִּיעַ",

וּכְנִגְדָּם כְּשֶׁהִרְשִׁיעוּ אָמַר "מִגֶּפֶן סֹדֶם", וְגֶפֶן הִיא אֵילָן הָרַע שֶׁל אַחֲזִיזַת הָרָשָׁעִים,

כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר אוֹמֵר "עֲנִבְמוּ עֲנִבֵי רוֹשׁ" וְגו',

וְלִפִּי שְׂאִינָם אֵלָּא אוֹחֲזִים בָּהּ וְאֵין כָּל עֲנָפָם מִמֶּנָּה, לָזֶה אָמַר "מִגֶּפֶן" וְלֹא אָמַר "כִּי גֶפֶן סֹדֶם גִּפְנָם",

The Torah chose Sodom out of all possible evil comparisons because the measure of Israel's sins had become full, just like Sodom.

וּבַחֵר מִכָּל דּוֹמָה הָרַע סֹדֶם, לְפִי
שְׁנֵיתֶימָלְאָה סְאָתָם כְּסֹדֶם.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:32:2

The verse continues, "and of the fields of Gomorrah." Just as within the branches of the holy tree there are distinct spiritual levels, one above the other, where the higher level is described with a masculine term because it acts as a giver of influence, and the lower level is described with a feminine term because it receives that influence,

וְאָמְרוּ "וּמַשְׁדָּמוֹת עֲמוֹרָה", כִּי כִּמוֹ
שֶׁבַעֲנָפֵי אֵילָן הַקֹּדֶשׁ יֵשׁ גֹּדֵר לְמַעַלָּה
מִגֹּדֵר, וְהָעֵלִיוֹן יִתֵּחַס אֵלָיו שֵׁם זָכָר
לְהִיטוֹ מִשְׁפִּיעַ, וְהַתַּחְתּוֹן יִתֵּחַס אֵלָיו שֵׁם
נִקְבָּה לְהִיטוֹ נִשְׁפָּע,

so too does the Torah compare their attachment to their evil root using two distinct levels. The first level is called a "vine," and the second level is called a "field." The wise student will understand the corresponding pattern in holiness, and his eyes will be enlightened.

כִּמוֹ כֵּן הַמִּשְׁלַל אַחֲזוֹת בְּשָׂרָשׁוֹ הָרַע לְשָׁנֵי
גֹּדְרִים: גֹּדֵר הָרָאשׁוֹן יִקְרָא גֶפֶן, וְגֹדֵר שְׁנֵי
נִקְרָא שָׂדֶה, וְהַמִּשְׁכִּיל יֵבִין בְּדוּגְמָתָם
בְּקִדּוּשָׁה וְיֵאָדְרוּ עֵינָיו:

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:32

בְּפִשְׁטוֹת · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that the comparison to the vine of Sodom and the fields of Gomorrah justifies the harsh decrees of exile. Just as Israel is compared to a holy vine when they do good, they attach themselves to the impure spiritual counterpart of Sodom when they sin. The distinction between the "vine" of Sodom and the "fields" of Gomorrah represents two distinct levels of spiritual attachment to evil, corresponding to the giving and receiving dimensions found in holiness.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה · Lemaaseh

We must realize that our spiritual attachments are dynamic; when we turn away from holiness, we risk connecting ourselves to negative spiritual influences. To prevent this, we should actively cultivate our connection to the "holy vine" by engaging in Torah study and performing mitzvos daily, ensuring our spiritual roots remain firmly planted in holiness.

חַמַּת תַּנִּינִם יֵינָם וְרֹאשׁ פְּתָנִים אֲכֹזֵר:

Their wine is the venom of serpents, And the cruel poison of asps.

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

הֲלֹא־הוּא כְּמוֹס עִמָּדִי חֲתֹם בְּאוֹצְרוֹתַי:

'Is not this laid up in store with Me, Sealed up in My treasuries?

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:34:1

Is not this laid up in store with Me, and so on. The meaning is: even though, because of the anger of the enemy, I refrained from executing upon Israel the judgment they deserved for their actions, they will not because of this be exempt from the punishment coming to them. Is it not laid up in store with Me, sealed up in My treasuries for the Day of Judgment?

And regarding this, the prophet said in Yeshayahu 10:3, And what will you do on the day of visitation? Go and learn how much Shmuel trembled from the fear of the Day of Judgment, as Chazal said in Chagigah 4b regarding the incident of the woman who conjured the dead.

הֲלֹא הוּא כְּמוֹס עִמָּדִי וְגו'. פֶּרוּשׁ, הַגֵּם שֶׁבְּשָׂבִיל כַּעַס אוֹיֵב נִמְנָעַתִּי מֵעֲשׂוֹת בָּהֶם מִשְׁפָּט הַמִּתְחַיֵּב לָהֶם עַל מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם, לֹא מִפְּנֵי זֶה יִפְטְרוּ מֵעֲנֹשׁ הַמִּגִּיעַ לָהֶם, הֲלֹא הוּא כְּמוֹס עִמָּדִי חֲתֹם בְּאוֹצְרוֹתַי לְיוֹם הַדִּין.

וְעַל זֶה אָמַר הַנָּבִיא (ישעיהו יג) "וְיָמָה תַעֲשׂוּ לְיוֹם פְּקֻדָּהּ", וְצֵא וּלְמַד מִה שֶׁחָרַד שְׁמוּאֵל מִפְּחַד יוֹם הַדִּין, כְּאֶמְרָם זְכוּרֵנָם לְבִרְכָּה (חגיגה ד:) בְּמַעֲשֵׂה בַעַל תּוֹב.

Hashem repeated the idea by saying both laid up in store with Me and sealed up in My treasuries. This follows the path of what is written in Shemos 34:7, He bears iniquity, meaning He carries and delays the sin. But when it reaches the point where He says, as in Yeschayahu 1:14, I am weary of bearing them, He seals the sin in the treasuries. He Himself will then take vengeance on the evildoers by bringing out the sun from its sheath, as Chazal taught in Nedarim 8b, and the day of Hashem will burn them up. This is the meaning of the next verse, Vengeance is Mine, meaning that He Himself, as it were, will take vengeance.

וְכָפַל לֵאמֹר "כְּמוֹס עֲמָדֵי חֶתּוֹם" וְגו', עַל
דֶּרֶךְ אֲמָרוֹ (שְׁמוֹת ל"ז) "נוֹשָׂא עֹון",
וְכִשְׁגִּיעַ לְגֵדֶר שְׂיֹאמֶר "נִלְאַתִּי נֶשׂוּא"
(יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ א':יד) יִחְתְּמֶהוּ בְּאוֹצְרוֹת וְיִנָּקֶם
הוּא מֵעוֹשֵׂי רָשָׁעָה בְּהוֹצָאת שֶׁמֶשׁ
מִנִּרְתִּיקָהּ (נִדְרִים ח:): וְלֵהֵט אוֹתָם יוֹם ה',
וְהוּא אֲמָרוֹ "לִי נָקָם" פֶּרוּשׁ שְׂיִנָּקֶם הוּא
בְּעֶצְמוֹ כְּבִכּוֹל:

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:34

בְּפִשְׁטוֹת · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that although Hashem delayed punishing Israel to prevent the enemy from claiming credit or denying Hashem's power, the sins are not forgotten. They are stored and sealed in Hashem's treasuries until the Day of Judgment, when He will personally execute justice.

לְמַעֲשֶׂה · Lemaaseh

When we see justice delayed in the world, we must not think that wrongdoing is overlooked. We should strengthen our awe of Heaven, remembering that every action is recorded and sealed, which encourages us to repent sincerely before the day of reckoning.

לִי נָקָם וְשָׁלֹם לְעֵת תַּמּוּט רַגְלָם כִּי קָרֹב יוֹם אִיָּדָם וְחֵשׁ עֲתִידָתָם לָמוּ:

Vengeance is Mine, and recompense, Against the time when their foot shall slip; For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things that are to come upon them shall make haste.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:35:1

Vengeance is Mine, and recompense. This will be explained in light of what Chazal said in Avodah Zarah 3b, that in the future to come, Hashem will bring out the sun from its sheath. The wicked will be judged by it, and it will burn them, while the righteous will be healed by it. This is the meaning of His statement, "Vengeance is Mine, and recompense", meaning, vengeance for the wicked, and recompense of a good reward for the righteous.

לִי נָקָם וְשָׁלֹם. יִתְבָּאֵר עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֲמָרָם
וְכִרְוֹנָם לְבִרְכָּה (עבודה זרה ג:) שֶׁלְעֵתִיד
לְבֹא יוֹצִיא ה' שֶׁמֶשׁ מִנִּרְתִּיקָהּ, הָרָשָׁעִים
נִדְוָנִים בָּהּ וְלִהְיוֹת אוֹתָם, וְהַצְדִּיקִים
מִתְרַפְּאִין בָּהּ. וְהוּא אָמַר "לִי נָקָם וְשָׁלֹם",
פְּרוּשׁ, נָקָם לְרָשָׁעִים, וְשָׁלֹם שְׂכָר טוֹב
לְצַדִּיקִים.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:35:2

Against the time when their foot shall slip. This refers to the secret of the teaching in Sotah 49b regarding the footsteps of the Mashiach. It refers to the clarification and extraction of the sparks of holiness from the feet of Samael, which occurs when the foot of the doers of wickedness slips and falters, and when the life-force that sustains them is completely finished, as is known to those who study the hidden wisdom of Kabbalah. (The supplied Hebrew citation has a page discrepancy; the phrase footsteps of Mashiach appears in Sotah 49b.)

לְעֵת תַּמּוּט רַגְלָם. הוּא סוֹד מֵאֲמָר (סוטה
מט.) "עֲקֻבוֹת מְשִׁיחָא", וְהוּא בְּרוּרֵי נִיצוּצֵי
רַגְלֵי ס"מ כְּשֶׁתַּמּוּט רַגְלָם שֶׁל עוֹשֵׂי
רָשָׁעָה, וְתִגְמַר מִמֶּה שֶׁנִּגָּע בָּהּ מְדַבֵּר
הַמַּעֲמִיד, כִּידוּעַ לְיֻדְעֵי חוֹן.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:35:3

For the day of their calamity is at hand, and so on. This corresponds to the statement of the prophet in Zephaniah 1:7, "For the day of Hashem is at hand."

כִּי קָרוֹב יוֹם אֲדָם, וְגו'. הוּא מֵאֲמַר הַנְּבִיא (צִפְנִיָּה א:ז) "כִּי קָרוֹב יוֹם ה' וְגו'.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:35:4

And the things that are to come upon them shall make haste. These are the future consolations. Once the doers of wickedness receive their full retribution, Hashem will immediately hasten to fulfill the promises of the future destined for the righteous.

וְחַשׁ עֲתִידוֹת לָמוֹ. הֵם הַנְּחָמוֹת הָעֲתִידוֹת, כְּשִׁישְׁתְּ לָמוֹ עוֹשֵׂי רָשָׁע תִּכְרֶה יְמֵהֶם לְקִיָּם הַבְּטָחוֹת הָעֲתִידוֹת לְצַדִּיקִים.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:35

בפשוט · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that the single event of the future redemption will bring two opposite outcomes: devastating vengeance for the wicked and healing recompense for the righteous, compared to the sun being unsheathed. This transition occurs when the spiritual support of the forces of evil is completely depleted at the footsteps of the Messiah, allowing Hashem to immediately hasten the promised consolations for the righteous.

למעשה · Lemaaseh

Keep both sides of the passage in view when learning about future judgment: the same sun judges the wicked and heals the righteous. The commentary concludes by turning toward the promised consolations for the righteous, giving the learner a reason to hold on to that hope.

כִּי־יִדִין יְהוָה עַמּוֹ וְעַל־עַבְדָּיו יִתְנַחֵם כִּי יֵרָאֶה כִּי־אֵזְלָת יָד וְאָפֶס עָצוּר וְעָזוּב:

For the LORD will judge His people, And repent Himself for His servants; When He seeth that their stay is gone, And there is none remaining, shut up or left at large.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:36:1

For Hashem will judge His people, and so on. After the Torah finished describing the matter of those who anger Hashem, tracing their path all the way to their ultimate end, it returns to offer a comforting promise to the collective whole of Israel, assuring them that He will not contend with them forever.

The meaning of "For Hashem will judge His people" is that He will bring to trial and weigh the cups of poison and suffering that they have already passed through. He will look upon the troubles that have passed over the righteous, some of whom were killed, some burned, and some flayed. For the sake of these righteous ones who suffered so deeply, He will relent. This is what is meant by "And relent for His servants", meaning, for their sake He will relent and say, "The troubles of the exile are already enough."

Furthermore, He will relent when Hashem sees that Israel has no strength left to rescue themselves from the exile, and the righteous no longer have the power to chastise those who anger Hashem with a rod of moral instruction. Additionally, there will no longer remain among Israel great men, prophets, seers, or possessors of the divine inspiration, such that "there is no cluster of grapes to eat," as in Micah 7:1. This is the meaning of "When He sees that their strength is gone" (literally, "the hand is gone").

כִּי יִדִין ה' עַמּוֹ וְגו'. אַחֲרֵי שֶׁנִּמְרַע עֲנִין מִכַּעֲסֵי אֶל עַד סוֹפָם, חֹזֵר לְהַבְטִיחַ לְכָל־לוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁלֹּא לָעוֹלָם יִרְיב אִתָּם.

"כִּי יִדִין ה' עַמּוֹ" – פֶּרוּשׁ, יַעֲמִיד בְּמִשְׁפָּט כּוֹסוֹת הַתְּרַעָלָה אֲשֶׁר עָבְרוּ, וְיִרְאֶה צָרוֹת שֶׁעָבְרוּ עַל הַצַּדִּיקִים, מִהֶם הִרְגוּ, מִהֶם שָׂרְפוּ, מִהֶם הִפְשִׁיטוּם, וּבִשְׁבִיל הַצַּדִּיקִים אֲשֶׁר נִצְטָעְרוּ יִתְנַחֵם. וְהוּא אָמַר "וְעַל עַבְדָּיו יִתְנַחֵם" – פֶּרוּשׁ, בְּשִׁבְלֵם יִתְנַחֵם לומר דִּי צָרוֹת הַגָּלוּת.

וְעוֹד, כְּשֶׁיִּרְאֶה ה' שֶׁאֵין כֹּחַ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַצִּיל עַצְמָן מִהַגָּלוּת, וְכֵן אֵין בְּצַדִּיקִים לִיֶּסֶר בְּשִׁבְט מוֹסֵר לְמַרְגִּיז אֵל, גַּם לֹא יִשְׁאַרוּ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנָשִׁים גְּדוֹלִים וְנִבְיָאִים חוֹזִים בְּעַלִּי רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְ"אֵין אֲשָׁכּוֹל" וְגו' (מִכָּה ז:א), וְהוּא אָמַר "כִּי אֵזְלָת יָד",

And because of this, "there is no one to restrain them" (atzur). This is explained in the sense of First Samuel 9:17, "this one shall rule (ya'atzor) over My people", meaning, there is no power left in the leaders who guide the people in the ways of Hashem to direct them. And "abandoned" (v'azuv), meaning, because of this lack of leadership, the common people are left abandoned to their own devices.

וְבָזָה "אֶפֶס עֲצוּר" – פָּרוּשׁ, עַל דֶּרֶךְ
(שְׁמוּאֵל א' ט:יז) "עֲצַר בְּעַמִּי" – פָּרוּשׁ,
שֶׁאֵין כֹּחַ לַמְדִּירִים בְּדִרְכֵי ה' לְהַדְרִיכָם,
"וְעֲזוּב" – פָּרוּשׁ, וּמֵצֵד זֶה נִשְׁאַר הָעָם
עֲזוּב.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:36

בְּפִשְׁטוּת · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that after describing the punishment of the wicked, the Torah promises that Hashem will ultimately relent from the exile. He will do this by weighing the immense suffering already endured by the righteous. Furthermore, redemption will come when Hashem sees that Israel is completely powerless to save themselves, and they lack spiritual leaders or prophets to guide them, leaving the generation spiritually abandoned.

לְמַעַשֶׂה · Lemaaseh

When we feel spiritually weak or notice a lack of inspiring leadership in our communities, we should not despair. The Ohr HaChaim teaches that our very helplessness and lack of guidance are themselves factors that arouse Hashem's mercy to bring the ultimate redemption. We can channel this understanding into sincere prayer, calling out to Hashem from our state of vulnerability.

וַאֲמַר אֵי אֱלֹהֵימוּ צוּר חֲסִיו בּוֹ:

And it is said: Where are their gods, The rock in whom they trusted;

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:37:1

Where is their God? In the Ohr HaChaim's reading, Israel will say this. Although their conduct is not fitting, they will still bring their plea before Hashem, referred to here as the Rock, in Whom they have taken refuge.

Even when Israel acts wickedly and transgresses some of Hashem's mitzvos, all their refuge remains in Hashem. For His sake they endure poverty and humiliation, and they are killed for the sanctification of His Name. They remain waiting for the Rock Who will redeem them. This is what the words in Whom they took refuge express.

אי אֱלֹהֵימוּ. יִשְׂרָאֵל יֹאמַר: "אֵי אֱלֹהֵימוּ?"
הֲגַם שְׂאִין מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם מְהֻנָּה, אֲפַי כִּן
זָבַא בְּטַעֲנָה לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים הָרְמוּז בְּתִיבַת
צוּר, וְהוּא חֲסִיו בּוֹ.

כִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל, הֲגַם שִׁירְשֵׁיו וְיַעֲבְרוּ עַל חֶלֶק
מִמִּצְוֹת ה', אֲפַי כִּן כָּל מַחְסֵיהֶם בָּהּ,
וְעָלִיו סוּבֵלִים דְּלוֹת וְשִׁפְלוֹת, וְנִהְרָגִים עַל
קִדְשַׁת שְׁמוֹ, וְעוֹמְדִים וּמִצְפִּים לְצוּר
גּוֹאֲלָם, וְהוּא אָמַר "חֲסִיו בּוֹ".

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:37

בפשוט · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim reads these words as Israel's plea to Hashem. Despite their sins, they continue to take refuge in Him, suffer for His sake and await His redemption.

למעשה · Lemaaseh

Acknowledge spiritual shortcomings while continuing to turn to Hashem. The commentary holds these together: Israel's conduct is flawed, yet their refuge and hope remain in Him.

אֲשֶׁר חָלַב זִבְחֵימוֹ יֹאכְלוּ יִשְׁתּוּ יֵין נְסִיכָם יִקְוּמוּ וַיַּעֲזְרָכֶם יְהִי עֲלֵיכֶם סִתְרָה:

*Who did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink-offering? Let him rise up and help you,
Let him be your protection.*

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:38:1

The words who ate the fat of their sacrifices are Hashem's response to Israel's plea. The sequence runs as follows: Hashem will judge His people and relent over what His servants suffered. He will also see that their strength is gone. Israel then makes the plea described in the preceding pasuk, and Hashem responds concerning those who ate the fat of their sacrifices: let them arise. The people will recognize that these supposed recipients of their offerings cannot help or save. They will recognize that Hashem alone saves, leading to the concluding declaration, See now that I, I am He.

וְאָמְרוּ אֲשֶׁר חָלַב זִבְחֵימוֹ וְגו' – הוּא מֵאֵמֵר
ה' נֶגֶד דְּבָרֵיהֶם, וְהִרְדַּפְתָּ הַדְּבָרִים הוּא עַל
זֶה הַדֶּרֶךְ "כִּי יָדִין" וְגו' וַיִּתְּנָחֵם עַל מָה
שֶׁסָּבְלוּ עֲבָדָיו, וְעוֹד כִּי יֵרָאֶה כִּי אֵזְלַת יָד
וְגו' וְאָמַר וְגו', וְהָשִׁיב ה' "אֲשֶׁר חָלַב זִבְחֵימוֹ
יִקְוּמוּ", וּמִיָּבֵן הַדָּבָר מֵעֲצָמוֹ הַכֶּרְתָּם שֶׁל
אוֹכְלֵי זִבְחֵימוֹ כִּי לֹא יוֹעִילוּ וְלֹא יַצִּילוּ,
וַיִּכְרֻּהוּ כִּי ה' הוּא לְבַדּוֹ מוֹשִׁיעַ, וְהוּא מָה
שֶׁגָּמַר אוֹמֵר "רְאוּ עַתָּה כִּי אֲנִי" וְגו'.

Regarding the words, "Let them rise up and help you, let him be your protection": This addresses two types of idolaters. There is one who worships an idol as an absolute god, and there is another who worships an idol merely as an intermediary. Hashem forbade both types of worship, as we explained in its place on the verse, "You shall not make for yourself a carved image..." (Exodus 20:4). Therefore, corresponding to the one who worships an idol as an intermediary, the verse says, "Let them rise up and help you", meaning a simple assist, since they made the idol for this purpose, to help mediate between themselves and the Hashem, Master of the world. Corresponding to the one who worships an idol as an absolute god, the verse says, "Let him be your protection," as they look to it for ultimate shelter.

יָקוּמוּ וַיַּעֲזְרֶכֶם וְגו'. לְפִי שֵׁשׁ שְׁנֵי מִינֵי
עֹבְדֵי עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה: יֵשׁ שְׁעוֹבֵד עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה
לְאֱלֹהֵי גָמוּר, וְיֵשׁ שְׁעוֹבֵד עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה
לְאִמָּצָעִי, וְעַל שְׁנֵיהֶם צִוָּה ה' כְּמוֹ
שֶׁפָּרְשְׁנוּהוּ בְּמִקְוָמוֹ (שְׁמוֹת כ:ד). לָזֶה
אָמַר כְּנִגְדַּת הָעֹבֵד עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה לְאִמָּצָעִי
אָמַר "יָקוּמוּ וַיַּעֲזְרֶכֶם" – עֶזֶר בְּעֶלְמָא, כִּי
לְסִבָּה זוֹ עָשְׂאוּהָ לְעֶזֶר לְהוֹעִיל בֵּינֵיהֶם
וּבֵין אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם, וּכְנִגְדַּת הָעֹבֵד עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה
לְאֱלֹהֵי גָמוּר אָמַר "יְהִי עֲלֵיכֶם סִתְרָה".

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:38

בְּפִשְׁטוּת · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that this verse is Hashem's rhetorical response to Israel's desperate cry in exile. By challenging the false gods to rise up and help, Hashem prompts a realization that these idols are completely powerless. This sets the stage for Israel to recognize Hashem as the sole Savior. The two phrases of assistance in the verse correspond to two types of idolatry: those who view idols as mere intermediaries (who seek a helping hand) and those who view them as absolute deities (who seek ultimate shelter).

לְמַעֲשֶׂה · Lemaaseh

Distinguish the two errors the commentary identifies. Worship of an idol is not made acceptable by calling it an intermediary rather than an independent deity. Keep this distinction clear when learning the two phrases let them help you and let it be your shelter.

רְאוּ עַתָּה כִּי אֲנִי הוּא וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי אֲנִי אֶמֶת וְאֶחָדָה מִחַצְתִּי וְאֲנִי אֶרְפָּא וְאֵין מִדִּי מַצִּיל:

*See now that I, even I, am He, And there is no god with Me; I kill, and I make alive; I have wounded, and I heal;
And there is none that can deliver out of My hand.*

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:39:1

The Torah repeats the word "I" twice, saying "I, even I, am He." This corresponds to the two errors of idolatry that we alluded to in the previous verse. To address the first error, He says "I", meaning, and not any other being whom you mistakenly think is a complete god. To address the second error, where people make an idol to serve as an intermediary, He says "I am He", meaning, I alone. He then concludes by saying, "and there is no god with Me," meaning there is no intermediary between Me and the created beings.

רְאוּ עַתָּה כִּי אֲנִי הוּא וְגו'. כָּפַל לומר שְׁתֵּי פְעָמִים "אֲנִי אֲנִי" כְּנֶגֶד שְׁתֵּי טְעוֹת שֶׁל עֲבֻדָּה זָרָה שֶׁרְמְזוּנוּ בַּפָּסוּק שֶׁלִּפְנֵי זֶה, לָזֶה אָמַר "אֲנִי" – פְּרוּשׁ וְלֹא אַחֵר שֶׁאַתֶּם חוֹשְׁבִים בּוֹ לְאַלוֹהַּ גָּמוּר, וְכֶנֶגֶד עֲבֻדָּה זָרָה שֶׁעוֹשִׂים לְאַמְצָעִי אָמַר "אֲנִי הוּא" – פְּרוּשׁ לְבָדִי, וְגָמַר אוֹמֵר "וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי" – אֲמָצָעִי בֵּינִי לְבֵין הַנִּבְרָאִים.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:39:2

The verse continues, "I kill, and I make alive." This addresses the sect of those who say that the force behind bad occurrences is not the same force behind good occurrences, claiming instead that there are two distinct powers. To counter this, He says, "I kill, and I make alive." He adds that this is not only true regarding these major matters of life and death, but even regarding the specific details of painful events: "I have wounded, and I heal." Our Sages of blessed memory also expounded on this verse in tractate Pesachim 68a; one may look up their words there.

אֲנִי אֶמֶת וְאֶחָדָה. זֶה כְּנֶגֶד כַּת הָאוֹמְרִים שֶׁפּוֹעֵל הָרַע אֵינוֹ פּוֹעֵל הַטּוֹב וְשֶׁתִּי יְכוּלֹת יֵשׁ, לָזֶה אָמַר "אֲנִי אֶמֶת וְאֶחָדָה", וְלֹא בִּפְרָט זֶה בְּלִבָּד אֶלָּא אֶפְלוּ בִּפְרָטִי פָּעַלִי הָרַע "אֲנִי מִחַצְתִּי וְאֲנִי אֶרְפָּא". וְרַבּוֹתֵינוּ זְכוֹרֵנוֹם לְבִרְכָּה דְּרָשׁוּ (פִּסְחִים סח.) יֵצֵן שֵׁם דְּבָרֵיהֶם.

The verse concludes, "And there is none that can deliver out of My hand." This means that ultimately, all created beings will die. For this reason, the verse is precise in its phrasing, saying "and there is none out of My hand" rather than saying "and there is no savior from My hand."

וְאֵין מַצִּיל מִיָּדִי. פְּרוּשׁ, שְׁכָל הַנְּבִרָאִים
זָמוּתוֹ, וְלִזְה דְּיִיק לֹאמַר "וְאֵין מַצִּיל" וְלֹא
אָמַר "וְאֵין מַצִּיל מִיָּדִי".

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:39

בְּפִשְׁטוּת · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that the double expression "I, even I" refutes two forms of idolatry: serving another entity as a primary god, and serving an intermediary. The statement "I kill, and I make alive; I have wounded, and I heal" refutes dualism by establishing that Hashem is the sole source of both good and bad, from life and death down to the details of illness and healing. Finally, "there is none that can deliver out of My hand" emphasizes the absolute mortality of all created beings under Hashem's ultimate authority.

לְמַעַשֶׂה · Lemaaseh

Notice how the same speaker says both I kill and I give life, and both I wound and I heal. The commentary asks us to recognize one Hashem behind these opposite experiences, rather than imagining separate divine powers for good and bad.

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אור החיים הקדוש • האזינו • שְׁשִׁי

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פסוק מ

Deuteronomy 32:40

כִּי־אֶשָּׂא אֶל־שָׁמַיִם יָדִי וְאָמַרְתִּי חַי אֲנֹכִי לְעֹלָם:

For I lift up My hand to heaven, And say: As I live for ever,

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:40:1

For I lift up My hand to heaven, and so on. This is an expression of an oath, meaning that Hashem swore by the lifting of His hands to sharpen His sword to take vengeance on His adversaries. This is what is meant by the next verse, If I whet My glittering sword, and so on. And the words, and My hand take hold on judgment, mean that He will strengthen and assert the attribute of strict justice.

כִּי אֶשָּׂא אֶל שָׁמַיִם וְגו'. פֶּרוּשׁ לְשׁוֹן שְׁבוּעָה, שֶׁנֶּשְׁבַּע בְּנִשְׁבָּאוֹת יָדָיו לְשַׁנֵּן חֶרְבוֹ לְנֶקֶם מִצָּרָיו, וְהוּא אָמַר "אִם שְׁנוֹתַי בִּרְקָה וְגו', וְאָמַר "וְתִאָּחַז בְּמִשְׁפָּט" פֶּרוּשׁ יִתְקַף בְּמִדַּת הַדִּין.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:40:2

Alternatively, it means that even the attribute of mercy will agree and join in strengthening the judgment, to return vengeance to Hashem's adversaries, who are the enemies of Israel. For they do not hate us except because of our cleaving to Hashem. And when the verse says, and I will requite them that hate Me, it refers to the group of nations that actively try to force Israel to transgress their religion.

או יִרְצָה, שֶׁתִּסָּכִים גַּם מִדַּת הַרַחֲמִים וְתִתְחַזֵּק בְּמִשְׁפָּט לְהַשִּׁיב נֶקֶם לְצָרֵי ה' שֶׁהֵם אוֹיְבֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, שְׂאִינֶם שׁוֹנְאִים אוֹתָנוּ אֲלָא עַל דְּבִקּוּתָנוּ בָּהּ, וְאָמַר "וְלִמְשָׁנָא" – הֵם כֵּת הַמַּעֲבֵרֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל דָּת.

בְּפִשְׁטוּת · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that Hashem's lifting of His hand to heaven is a solemn oath to execute strict justice and take vengeance on His adversaries. He offers two interpretations of how this judgment is held: first, as a direct assertion of the attribute of strict justice; second, as a unified judgment where even the attribute of mercy agrees to punish the enemies of Israel, since their hatred of Israel stems solely from Israel's devotion to Hashem.

לְמַעַשֶׁה · Lemaaseh

When we face challenges or hostility from those who oppose our devotion to Torah, we can find comfort in knowing that our connection to Hashem is the very reason we are targeted. Hashem views animosity toward His nation as animosity toward Himself, and He ultimately acts to defend His people and uphold justice.

פְּסוּק מֵא

Deuteronomy 32:41

**אִם־שִׁנּוֹתַי בְּרֶקַח חֲרָבִי וְתִאֲחֹז בְּמִשְׁפָּט יָדִי אֲשַׁיֵּב נָקָם לְצָרָי
וְלִמְשִׁנָּאִי אֲשַׁלֵּם:**

If I whet My glittering sword, And My hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to Mine adversaries, And will recompense them that hate Me.

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

פְּסוּק מֵב

Deuteronomy 32:42

**אֲשַׁכִּיר חֲצִי מִדָּם וְחֲרָבִי תֹאכַל בָּשָׂר מִדָּם חָלָל וְשִׁבְיָה מִרְאֵשׁ
פְּרָעוֹת אוֹיֵב:**

I will make Mine arrows drunk with blood, And My sword shall devour flesh; With the blood of the slain and the captives, From the long-haired heads of the enemy.'

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

הִרְנִינוּ גוֹיִם עִמּוֹ כִּי דַם-עֲבָדָיו יִקּוּם וְנָקָם יֵשִׁיב לְצָרָיו וְכַפֵּר אֲדָמָתוֹ עִמּוֹ: (פ)

Sing aloud, O ye nations, of His people; For He doth avenge the blood of His servants, And doth render vengeance to His adversaries, And doth make expiation for the land of His people.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:43:1

Sing aloud, O nations, of His people. The meaning is that when Hashem executes vengeance upon the enemies of Israel and elevates the spiritual and physical stature of Israel, the nations of the world will sing praises concerning His people, Israel, to laud them and exalt them. This is in line with the verse in Psalms 144:15, Praiseworthy is the people for whom it is so.

הִרְנִינוּ גוֹיִם וְגו'. פִּירוּשׁ, כִּי בַעֲשׂוֹת ה' נִקְמָה בְּאֹיְבֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וִירוּמָם מִדְּרַגַּת יִשְׂרָאֵל, יִרְנְנוּ הַגּוֹיִם עַל עֲמֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְשִׁבְחָם וְלִירוּמָמָם, כְּאָמְרוֹ (תהלים קמד:טו) "אֲשֶׁר הָעָם" וְגו'.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:43:2

For He avenges the blood of His servants. When the verse says, For He avenges the blood... and He will render vengeance to His adversaries, it means that Hashem will not only avenge the actual spilled blood, but He will also return upon His adversaries the very vengeance and harm they plotted to do to Israel. This is in line with the verse in Psalms 7:17, His mischief shall return upon his own head.

כִּי דַם עֲבָדָיו יִקּוּם. וְאָמְרוּ "כִּי דַם וְגו' וְנָקָם" וְגו' - פִּירוּשׁ, שֶׁלֹּא דַם לְבַד, אֲלָא גַם צָרָיו אֲשֶׁר חָרְשׁוּ אָנֹן לוֹ יֵשִׁיב ה' לָהֶם נָקָם שֶׁחָשְׁבוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת, עַל דֶּרֶךְ אָמְרוֹ (תהלים ז:יז) "יָשׁוּב עִמָּלוֹ בְּרָאשׁוֹ".

And He makes expiation for the land of His people. This statement, And He makes expiation for the land of His people, is the ultimate conclusion of the theme that began earlier in verse 36, For Hashem will judge His people. The Torah concludes here by declaring that whatever sins might still remain upon Israel will be fully atoned for by the very land of Israel itself, which suffered by being desolate and a disgrace for so many years. The suffering of the land will serve as the expiation for the iniquity of Hashem's people.

וְכַפֵּר אֲדָמָתוֹ עִמּוֹ. וְאָמְרוּ "וְכַפֵּר אֲדָמָתוֹ
עִמּוֹ" הוּא גִמְרַה הַדְּבָרִים שֶׁהִתְחִיל לֹאמַר "כִּי
יִדִין ה' עִמּוֹ" וְגו', וְגִמְרַה אֲמַר כִּי הִנֵּמְצָא
עֲדֵין מִהַחֲטָאִים עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל תְּכַפֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם
הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר הָיְתָה לְשִׁמָּה וּלְחֶרֶף שָׁנִים
רַבּוֹת, זֶה יִהְיֶה לְכַפֵּר עִוֹן עַם ה'.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:43

בְּפִשְׁטוּת · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that when Hashem ultimately redeems Israel and punishes their enemies, the nations of the world will sing the praises of the Jewish people. Hashem will avenge not only the physical blood spilled by the nations, but also the evil plots they devised. Finally, the long, painful desolation of the Land of Israel during the exile will itself serve as a complete atonement for any remaining sins of the nation.

לְמַעַשֶׂה · Lemaaseh

The Ohr HaChaim finds hope even in the Land of Israel remaining desolate during exile: that desolation itself has an atoning role. When learning this passage, hold its account of suffering together with its promise of eventual redemption.

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פסוק מד

Deuteronomy 32:44

וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר אֶת-כָּל-דִּבְרֵי הַשִּׁירָה-הַזֹּאת בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם הוּא
וְהוֹשִׁיעַ בֶּן-נֹון:

And Moses came and spoke all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he, and Hoshea the son of Nun.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:44:1

He, and Hoshea the son of Nun: This means that Yehoshua was standing there with Moshe, but the actual speaking was done by Moshe alone, as the verse says, "And he spoke" in the singular. Similarly, Hashem had said to Moshe in the singular, "And teach it to the children of Israel, put it in their mouth" (Deuteronomy 31:19), referring to Moshe alone.

Regarding the text writing "and Hoshea" rather than "and Yehoshua" as Moshe had renamed him, this is because the addition of the letter yud was for honor and greatness, as hinted in the verse, "And Moshe called Hoshea the son of Nun, Yehoshua" (Numbers 13:16). However, here, when the verse placed them together and said, "he and Hoshea the son of Nun," the Torah removed the yud to show humility in the presence of his master Moshe, in the spirit of the verse, "Should the axe boast itself against him that hews therewith?" (Isaiah 10:15).

הוא והושע בן נון. פרוש, היה עומד עמו, אבל הדבור לא דבר אלא משה כְּאִמְרוּ "וַיְדַבֵּר", וכן אמר ה' "וְלַמָּדָה אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שִׁמָּה בְּפִיהֶם" לְשׁוֹן יָחִיד אֶל מֹשֶׁה.

ואמרו "וְהוֹשִׁיעַ" ולא אמר "וְהוֹשִׁיעַ" כמו שקרא לו משה, לפי שתוספת ה"ד היא ליקר וגדולה כְּרִמּוֹז בְּמִאֲמַר (במדבר יג:טז) "וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְהוֹשִׁיעַ" וגו', וכשהשם הכתוב ואמר "הוא והושע בן נון" הסיר ה"ד, על דרך אמרו (ישעיהו י:טו) "הִיתָפָאָר הַגִּזְזִין" וגו'.

בפישטות · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that although Yehoshua stood beside Moshe as the song was taught, only Moshe did the actual speaking. The Torah refers to Yehoshua by his original name, Hoshea, omitting the honorific letter yud to preserve proper deference and humility while standing next to his master, Moshe.

למעשה · Lemaaseh

When standing in the presence of our teachers or mentors, we should conduct ourselves with utmost humility, stepping back to let their light shine rather than seeking personal honor or prominence.

פסוק מה

Deuteronomy 32:45

וַיֵּכַל מֹשֶׁה לְדַבֵּר אֶת-כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֶל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל:

And when Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel,

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

פסוק מו

Deuteronomy 32:46

**וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים שְׁמִי לְבַבְכֶּם לְכָל-הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מַעֲיִד
בְּכֶם הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר תִּצְוּם אֶת-בְּנֵיכֶם לִשְׁמֹר לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי
הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת:**

he said unto them: 'Set your heart unto all the words wherewith I testify against you this day; that ye may charge your children therewith to observe to do all the words of this law.

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

כִּי לֹא-דָבָר רֶק הוּא מִכֶּם כִּי-הוּא חַיֵּיכֶם וּבְדָבָר הַזֶּה תֵּאָרִיכוּ
יָמֵיכֶם עַל-הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת-הַיַּרְדֵּן לְשָׂמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ:
(פ)

For it is no vain thing for you; because it is your life, and through this thing ye shall prolong your days upon the land, whither ye go over the Jordan to possess it.'

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לֵאמֹר:

And the LORD spoke unto Moses that selfsame day, saying:

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:48:1

On that very day, saying. The word saying means that Moshe should tell the people of Israel that he was going up the mountain to die. The Ohr HaChaim notes that this fits Chazal's explanation in the Sifrei of the words on that very day, in connection with what Israel was saying. He directs the reader there for the full discussion.

בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה לֵאמֹר. אָמְרוּ "לֵאמֹר",
שֵׁי אָמַר לָהֶם לְיִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁהוּא עוֹלָה לְמוֹת.
וְזֶה מִכּוֹן לְדַבְרֵיהֶם זְכוּרָנָם לְבִרְכָּה שֶׁדִּרְשׁוּ
(ספרי) בְּאָמְרוּ "בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה" לָפִי
שֶׁהָיוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל אוֹמְרִים וְכוּ' יַעֲזִין שָׁם דְּבָרָיו:

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:48

בפשוט · In plain words

The word leimor means that Moshe was to tell Israel that he was ascending the mountain to die. The Ohr HaChaim connects this with the Sifrei's explanation of the phrase on that very day.

למעשה · Lemaaseh

Notice how the small word leimor tells us that this instruction was to be communicated to Israel. In learning, pause over whom a command is addressed to and whom it is meant to reach.

פסוק מט

Deuteronomy 32:49

עֲלֵה אֶל-הַר הָעֵבְרִים הַזֶּה הַר-נֹבֹ אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב אֲשֶׁר עַל-
פְּנֵי יְרֵחוֹ וּרְאֵה אֶת-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
לְאֻחֲזָה:

'Get thee up into this mountain of Abarim, unto mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, that is over against Jericho; and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession;

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

וּמָת בְּהָרִי אֲשֶׁר אָתָּה עֹלָה שָׁמָּה וְהֶאֱסַף אֶל-עַמִּיךָ כְּאֲשֶׁר-לֹא אֶהְרֹן אָחִיךָ בְּהָרִי הַהוּא וַיֵּאֱסַף אֶל-עַמּוּיוֹ:

and die in the mount whither thou goest up, and be gathered unto thy people; as Aaron thy brother died in mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:50:1

And die on the mount: This means, willingly accept and consent to die. For Hashem does not take the souls of His pious ones except with their own consent. And when He says, and be gathered unto your people, this is in line with what Chazal say in Ketubot 104a, that the righteous go out to welcome a newly arriving righteous soul. For this reason, Hashem said to him that he would be gathered to his people who are coming out to meet him.

ומת בהר. פרוש, התרצה למוות, שאין הקדוש ברוך הוא לוקח נפשות חסידיו אלא לרצונם. ואמרו "והאסף אל עמך" על דרך אמרם (כתובות קד.) שיוצאים הצדיקים להקביל פני צדיק, ולזה אמר ה' אליו ש"אסף אל עמיו הפאים לקראתו.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:50:2

Alternatively, the verse can be explained in this way: it comes to provide three reasons for the death of the man of Hashem. This is the structure of the verse: And die, and the reason it must be on the mount is in line with what Chazal say in Sotah 14a. Why was Moshe buried on Mount Nebo? It was because of the sin of Peor. For whenever Peor attempts to raise its head to accuse, it finds Moshe opposite it and is subdued. This is as the verse says in Deuteronomy 34:6, And He buried him in the valley... over against Beth-peor.

עוד יתבאר על זה הדרך, כי בא לתת שלשה טעמים למיתת איש האלהים. וזה שעור הכתוב "ומת", והטעם "בהר" – פרוש על דרך אמרם זכרונם לברכה (סוטה יד.) למה נקבר משה בהר נבו, בשביל עון פעור, כי בכל זמן שיזקף ראשו פעור ימצא כנגדו משה ונכנע, וכאמרו (דברים לד, ו) "ויקבר אתו בגיא מול בית פעור".

The second reason is: where you are ascending. This means, so that he can attain the sublime spiritual bliss that he earned through his awesome good deeds. He cannot attain this level while still joined with the physical body, which is unable to experience that high spiritual state. This is what is meant by where you are ascending, referring to the upper world.

The third reason is: and be gathered unto your people. This is in line with what Chazal say in Bemidbar Rabbah 19 on the verse in Deuteronomy 33:21, And he came with the heads of the people... This teaches that through the merit of Moshe, the generation of the wilderness will merit the World to Come. They are associated with him, as Hashem said to him in Exodus 32:7, Go down; for your people... have dealt corruptly. Thus, the verse says, and be gathered unto, meaning for the sake of your people, to bring them into the World to Come. And even yough we find that the Torah says the same regarding Aaron in Numbers 20:24, and was gathered unto his people, wherever the text leaves room for an interpretation, we expound it. (The printed reference in the supplied Hebrew is inconsistent; the corresponding phrase about Aharon appears in Numbers 20:24.)

טעם שני – "אשר אתה עלה שמה", פרוש כדי שיוכל להשיג האשר שהשיג באמצעות מעשים טובים הנוראים, מה שאין יכול להשיג בעודו משתף עם הגוף שאינו יכול להשיג המעלה ההיא, והוא אמרו "אשר אתה עלה שמה" – פרוש בעולם העליון.

שלישי – "והאסף אל עמיו" על דרך אמרם זכרונם לברכה (במדבר רבה יט), בפסוק (דברים לג, כא) "וַיָּתֵאֵר אֲשִׁי עָם וְגו', שְׂבָאֲמָצְעוֹת מִשָּׁה יִזְכּוּ דוֹר הַמִּדְבָּר, וְהֵם מִתְיַחֲסִים אֵלָיו כְּאָמְרוּ (שמות לב, ז) "רַד כִּי שָׁחַת עַמֶּךָ", והוא אמרו "והאסף אל" – פרוש לסבת עמידה להביאם לעולם הבא. והגם שבאחרון מציינו שאמר כן גם כן (דברים לה, כט) "וַיֵּאָסֶף אֶל עַמּוֹ", במקום שיש לדרש דורשין.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:50

בפשטות · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim first reads the command as Moshe consenting to his passing, with righteous souls coming to welcome him. He then offers another interpretation with three reasons: his burial counters Peor, departure from the body allows him to attain the spiritual height earned by his deeds, and his passing serves his people by bringing the generation of the wilderness into the World to Come.

למעשה · Lemaaseh

Reflect on the responsibility for others shown in the third explanation: Moshe remains connected to the generation entrusted to him. Think of one person whose spiritual growth you can support with care and patience.

פסוק נא

Deuteronomy 32:51

עַל־אֲשֶׁר מַעֲלֵתֶם בִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִי-מְרִיבַת קִדְשׁ מִדְבָּר-
צִן עַל־אֲשֶׁר לֹא־קִדְשֵׁתֶם אוֹתִי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

Because ye trespassed against Me in the midst of the children of Israel at the waters of Meribath-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified Me not in the midst of the children of Israel.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:51:1

AI-assisted explanatory translation: (Because you trespassed against Me... because you did not sanctify Me...) Please refer to my commentary on Parashat Chukat (Numbers 20:12), where I have explained this entire subject at length.

עַל־אֲשֶׁר מַעֲלֵתֶם וגו' עַל־אֲשֶׁר לֹא
קִדְשֵׁתֶם וגו'. עֵינֵינוּ מֵהַ שְׁפָרְשֵׁתִי בְּפָרֶשֶׁת
חֻקַּת (במדבר כ"ב) בְּעֵנֵינוּ זֶה בְּאוֹרָה.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:51

בפשוט · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim directs the reader to his extensive commentary in Parashat Chukat regarding the sin of Moshe and Aaron at the waters of Merivah, where the nature of their trespass and the failure to sanctify Hashem's name are analyzed in detail.

למעשה · Lemaaseh

When studying complex or sensitive Torah topics, we should look back at foundational explanations we have already learned to gain a deeper, more consistent understanding of the text.

כִּי מֵנִגֵּד תִּרְאֶה אֶת-הָאָרֶץ וְשָׁמָּה לֹא תָבוֹא אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר- אֲנִי נֹתֵן לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: (פ)

For thou shalt see the land afar off; but thou shalt not go thither into the land which I give the children of Israel.'

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:52:1

For you shall see the land from afar, etc. This is explained in the manner of the verse (Deuteronomy 34:1), "And Hashem showed him all the land." See what I have written there.

כִּי מֵנִגֵּד תִּרְאֶה וְגו'. פֶּרוּשׁ עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֶמְרוּ
(דברים ל"ד:א) "וַיִּרְאֶה ה' אֶת כָּל
הָאָרֶץ", וְעַיִן מַה שֶּׁפִּירְשְׁתִּי שָׁם.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:52:2

But you shall not go there into the land, etc. This presents a difficulty: after the verse already stated, "but you shall not go there," what room is there to repeat and say, "into the land, etc."? This seems redundant.

וְשָׁמָּה לֹא תָבוֹא אֶל הָאָרֶץ וְגו'. קִשָּׁה, אַחֵר
שָׁאֵמַר "וְשָׁמָּה לֹא תָבוֹא", מַה מְקוֹם
לְחִזּוֹר וְלִזְמַר "אֶל הָאָרֶץ" וְגו'?

The explanation is in light of what Chazal have said (Deuteronomy Rabbah 2:9) that Moshe is destined to enter the Land of Israel with the Patriarchs in the future to come. Furthermore, it is stated in the Zohar (Part 2, 120a) that he will lead the Jewish people into the Land when their final redemption arrives.

וַיִּתְּבָאֵר עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֶמְרוּם וְכִרּוֹנָם לְבִרְכָּה
(דברים רבה ב, ט) שְׁעֵתִיד מִשָּׁה לְכַנֵּס
לְאָרֶץ עִם הָאֲבוֹת לְעֵתִיד לְבָא, וְאֶמְרוּ
בְּיָהֳרָ (חלק ב קכ.) כִּי הוּא יָבִיא אֶת
יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל הָאָרֶץ בְּבֹא גָאֻלָּתָם.

Therefore, when Hashem said, "but you shall not go there," He was concerned that the words might be understood as an absolute, permanent decree preventing him from entering the Land for all eternity. To clarify this, Hashem added, "into the land which I give (to the children of Israel)" meaning: you shall not enter it now, during this current giving, but this does not exclude the entry that will take place in the future. See also what I have written on the verse (Deuteronomy 3:25), "Let me go over, I pray You."

וְלֹא כִשְׁאָמַר ה' "וְשָׁמָּה לֹא תָבוֹא" חָשׂ
שִׂיחֵיו הַדְּבָרִים נִשְׁמָעִים שְׁמַח לִיט לֹא בִיאת
הָאָרֶץ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, לֹא אָמַר "אֶל הָאָרֶץ
אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי נֹתֵן" וְגו' פָּרוּשׁ, עֲתָה, וְלֹא אֶל
אֲשֶׁר יִתֵּן לְעֵתִיד. וְעֵין מַה שֶּׁפָּרְשְׁתִּי בַּפָּסוּק
(דְּבָרִים ג', כה) "אֶעֱבְרָה נָא".

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 32:52:3

This concludes Parashat Haazinu.

חסלת פרשת האזינו

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:52

בפשוט · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that the seemingly redundant phrasing "but you shall not go there into the land which I give" is actually a precise limitation. It clarifies that Moshe's ban from entering the Land of Israel applies only to the immediate conquest and distribution of his generation. It does not represent an eternal ban, leaving open the fulfillment of the prophetic tradition that Moshe will ultimately enter the Land with the Jewish people at the time of the future redemption.

למעשה · Lemaaseh

Read the limits of a difficult statement carefully. Here the words which I give distinguish Moshe's present restriction from the future entry described by Chazal, so the restriction should not be read more broadly than the commentary explains.

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