

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 הָאֲזָנָה 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" (וְשָׁמְעֵי הָאָרֶץ)?

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

Fifth, why did he use the term "and I will speak" (וְאֶדְבָּרָה) for the heavens, which denotes harsh speech (דְּבֹר 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" דְּבֹר 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 וְכוּנָם 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 כָּלֶם.

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 מִדֶּרֶךְם נִרְאָה לומר, וְקוֹדֵם נִשְׁכַּל עַל דְּבַר מִשְׁמַעוֹת תִּיבַת "הֶאֱזִינוּ", וְהֵנָּה הִיא סוֹכֶלֶת 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 כְּדִי שִׁיּוּכַל 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 סוֹכֶלֶת גַּם כֵּן דֶּרֶךְ הָרֵאשׁוֹן, וְאִין הֶכְרַע, אֵינוֹ נִלְךָ בּוֹ, וּבָזָה יִתְּשָׁבוּ כָּל הַדְּקְדוּקִים עַל נִכוּן.

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 שֶׁקְדָּמוּנֵינוּ בְּחֵרוֹ דֶּרֶךְ אַחֵר, כְּבָר
אָמְרָנוּ שֶׁשְּׂבָעִים פָּנִים לַתּוֹרָה (במדבר רבה
יג, טז), וּבְעֵינֵינוּ הָאֲגָדָה יְכוּלִים לְפָרֵשׁ הָגַם
שִׁיחָהּ הַפְּרוּשׁ מִנֶּגֶד לְדִבְרֵיהֶם כָּל שֶׁאֵין
הַנִּגּוּד בְּדִבְרֵי הַלְכָּהּ, 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 מִשָּׁה
שִׁישׁ אֲזָנָם, וְאָמַר לָהֶם "הִאֲזִינוּ", פְּרוּשׁ
הָטוּ אֲזָנְכֶם לִשְׁמַע דִּבְרִי,

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 לִפְנֵיו הִיא עוֹמֶדֶת,
וְיִכּוּלָה לִשְׁמַע חֲתוּךְ הַמֶּאֱמָר הַיּוֹצֵא מִפִּיו,
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 הִרְוַחְנוּ יִשּׁוּב כָּל הַדְּקָדוּקִים, כִּי
לְפִי שֶׁאֶחָד רָחוּק וְאֶחָד קְרוֹב, לָזֶה חָלַק
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 הָגֵם שֶׁלֹא יִקְרָא בְּקוֹל גָּדוֹל,
אֲלֵא בְּחִתּוּף אוֹתִיּוֹת מִפִּי תִשְׁמַע בּוֹ.

וּלְדַרְךָ זֶה יִתְּשִׁבוּ דְבַר יִשְׁעִיהָ שְׁאָמַר
(יִשְׁעִיהָ א:ב) "שִׁמְעוּ שָׁמַיִם וְהֶאֱזִינוּ אֶרֶץ",
שֶׁנִּתְּנוּ שְׁמִיעָה לְשָׁמַיִם הָגֵם שֶׁהֵם רְחוּקִים
מִמֶּנּוּ, וְהֶאֱזִינָה לְאֶרֶץ הָגֵם שֶׁהִיא קְרוֹבָה.

הַטַּעַם הוּא, כְּמוֹ שְׁגָמַר אוֹמֵר יִשְׁעִיהָ 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 (יִשְׁעִיהָ סו:א) "הַשָּׁמַיִם
כְּסֵאִי וְהָאֶרֶץ הָדוֹם רַגְלִי", וְלָזֶה אָמַר
"שִׁמְעוּ 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 הַמַּחֲתִיף הָאוֹתִיּוֹת תִּהְיֶה הַכּוֹנֶנָה
בְּדַבְּרִינוּ,

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
הַפִּנּוּקָה כְּדִבְרֵי רַבּוֹתֵינוּ וְכָרוֹנָם לְבָרְכָה,
וְהַדְּבָרִים מוֹכִיחִים כֵּן, שֶׁעַל נִשְׁמָתוֹ שֶׁל
מֹשֶׁה הוּא שָׁאֲמְרוּ חֲכָמֵינוּ וְכָרוֹנָם לְבָרְכָה
(ספרי האזינו א) לְפִי שֶׁהָיָה קָרוֹב לַשָּׁמַיִם,
כִּי עֲצָמוֹתָיו 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
לְבָרְכָה (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 קִשָּׁה), 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 קִשָּׁה, כִּי
הַנֶּפֶשׁ תִּסְבּוֹל מְרוֹת בְּעִנְיֵי הַבּוֹרָא, כִּי
תִּכְפֹּר חַיּוּבָה.

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, "אֲמִירָה פִי", 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 הַצֹּרֶה תִּתְיַחַס בְּשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם,
וְהַחוּמָּר יִתְיַחַס בְּשֵׁם אֶרֶץ. וְאָמְרוּ
"וְאָדַבְרָה", פְּרוּשׁ, לֹא בְשָׁעַת הַטּוֹבָה לְבַד
תֵּאָזִינוּ, אֲלָא אֶפְלוּ בְשָׁעָה שֶׁיִּדְבֵּר קִשּׁוֹת
בְּתוֹכָחֹת עַל עֶזְרֵן צָרִיכִין לְהֵאָזִין.

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 הָאָרֶץ
הָאָרֶץ לְבִדְדָהּ, 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 וְרֵאֲיָנָה" וגו',
עֲתִידָה בֵּת קוֹל לְאַתְעָרָא בְּכָל צִיּוֹנָא
וְצִיּוֹנָא גְבִתִּי קִבְרֵי וְאוֹמְרֵת "צִיּוֹנָה
וְרֵאֲיָנָה", פּוֹקוּ מִתְּחוֹת בְּלִיאוֹתָא דְעַפְרָא
וְאַתְעָרוּ מִשְׁנַתְכוֹן בְּנוֹת צִיּוֹן, כְּמָה דְאַתְ
אִמְר "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 הַמְאָמֵר שֶׁמִּבְטִיחַ ה' לַצְדִּיקִים שֶׁיִּשְׁמַע
גּוֹפֶם אַחֲרֵי שִׁיחָהּ בָּאָרֶץ, וְהוּא אָמְרוּ
"וְתִשְׁמַע הָאָרֶץ אִמְרֵי פִי". וּמִמוֹצֵא דְבָר
אַתָּה לְמַד שֶׁמִּי שֶׁלֹּא יֵאָזֵן דְּבַר ה' לֹא
יִשְׁמַע גּוֹפּוֹ הַשּׁוֹכֵן בָּאָרֶץ אֶת קוֹל הַפְּרוֹז
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

**יֵעָרַף כַּמָּטָר לִקְחֵי תִנּוֹל כִּטְל אִמְרָתִי כִשְׁעִינָם עַל־יְדֵשָׁא
וְכַרְבִּיבִים עַל־יַעֲשֹׁב:**

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.

יֵעָרַף כַּמָּטָר לִקְחֵי. פְּרוּשׁ, עַל דֶּרֶךְ אִמְרָם
וְכַרְבִּיבִים לְבִרְכָּה (אבות ג, יז) "אִם אֵין קֶמַח
אֵין תּוֹרָה" וְכוּ',

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 וּלְפָנֶיךָ, כְּמוֹ כֵּן צָרִיכִין הֵם
לְלַמּוֹד תּוֹרָה, וְזֶה שִׁיעוֹר הַכְּתוּב: יִטֵּיף כְּמוֹ
שֶׁאֲנִי מִטֵּיף הַמָּטָר לְקַחִי, וּכְאֵלּוֹ אָמַר
יִצְרָר 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 שֶׁפָּרְשְׁנוּ בְּמֵאמָר הַתְּנָא (אבות
ג'יז) "אִם אֵין קָמַח אֵין תּוֹרָה" פְּרוּשׁ, אִם
רְאִיתָ שֶׁאֵין קָמַח דַּע שֶׁאֵין תּוֹרָה.

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

עוֹד יִרְמֹז כִּי כְדָרָךְ שֶׁהַמָּטָר מְנִיעֵתוֹ תְּסוּכֵב
מֵיתָה לְהָאָדָם, כְּמוֹ כֵּן מְנִיעֵת הַתּוֹרָה
תַּעֲרִפְנוּ, עַל דְּרָךְ אָמְרוּ (ישעיה א:יט-כ)
"אִם תֵּאָבֹוּ וְגו' וְאִם תִּמָּאֲנוּ וְגו' חֲרַב" וְגו'.

וְכַפֵּל לּוֹמַר בְּמִלּוֹת שׁוֹנוֹת "לְקַחִי
אִמְרָתִי", כְּנֶגֶד שְׁנֵי תוֹרוֹת – תּוֹרָה שְׂבִכְתָּב
וְתוֹרָה שְׂבִעַל 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 כָּלֹוִלִים כָּל מֵה שֶׁכְּתוּב
בְּסֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה כְּמֵאמָרם זְכוּרָנָם 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 טַל, לְפִי שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכֶתֶב הִיא הָעֵקֶר
וְיִסּוֹד כָּל דָּבָר, וְתוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל פֶּה הִיא
תְּקוּנִים וְדִקְדּוּקִים שֶׁאֵינָם מִפְּרָשִׁים בָּה
אֶלָּא נִרְמָזִים, וְהוּא עֲנִיָּן שֶׁלֹּקַח הַכְּתוּב
בְּדִמְיוֹנָה שֶׁדִּמָּה תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּכֶתֶב לְמֵטֶר
שֶׁהוּא יִסּוֹד וְעֵקֶר הַכֹּל, וְתוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל פֶּה
לְטַל שֶׁהוּא תְּקוּנָה וְהַעֲמָדָה מֵה שֶׁעָשָׂה
הַמֵּטֶר כְּמוֹ שֶׁהִיא תּוֹרָה שֶׁבְּעַל פֶּה לְתוֹרָה
שֶׁבְּכֶתֶב.

עוֹד יִרְצֶה עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֲמָרם אֲנִשִּׁי 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 בְּבִרְיָתָא (מדרש שוחר טוב יט, ז)
שְׁמִשָּׁה בְּאוֹתָן אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם שֶׁהָיָה אֶצֶל ה' הָיָה מִכִּיר בֵּין הַיּוֹם לַלַּיְלָה מִהֶלְמוֹד שֶׁהָיָה ה' מְלַמְדוֹ, כְּשֶׁהָיָה מְלַמְדוֹ מִשְׁנָה הָיָה יוֹדֵעַ שֶׁהוּא לַיְלָה, וְיֵשׁ טַעַם בְּדִבְכָּר שְׂאִין לְמוֹד מִקְרָא בַּלַּיְלָה.

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

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

וְדָמָה תּוֹרָה שֶׁבַעַל פֶּה לְטַל, כְּמוֹ שֶׁהָטַל לֹא מִפְּסִיק קוֹץ וְחֶרֶף יוֹמָם וְלַיְלָה, כְּמוֹ כֵּן תּוֹרָה שֶׁבַעַל פֶּה אֵין לָהּ זְמַן שְׂאִינוּ זְמָנָה,

וְאֵל תִּקְשֶׁה שֶׁהָטַל יִפְרִיחוּנוּ הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ כִּי אֵין הַמְּנִיעָה מִצַּד הַטַּל:

כְּשֶׁעִירָם וְגו'. יִתְבָּאֵר עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֲמָרָם בְּבִרְיָתָא (מדרש משלי י'): אָמַר רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעֲאֵל, כְּשֶׁמַּעֲמִידִין אֶת הָאָדָם בְּדִין, אִם יֵשׁ בְּיָדוֹ מִקְרָא שׁוֹאֲלִין מִמֶּנּוּ לָמָּה לֹא שָׁנָה, וְאִם יֵשׁ בְּיָדוֹ מִשְׁנָה שׁוֹאֲלִין מִמֶּנּוּ תִּלְמוֹד, 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 בְּמֵאמָרוֹ הוּא שֵׁם ה', עַל דֶּרֶךְ
אֲמָרָם זְכוּרָתָם לְבָרָכָה (זוהר ח"ג צח:): כָּל
הַתּוֹרָה כְּלָה שְׁמוֹתָיו שֶׁל הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ
הוּא, וְעַלֶּיהָ הוּא אוֹמֵר "עֲרַף כַּמָּטָר לִקְחֵי"
שֶׁהִיא הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁהִיא שְׁמוֹ יִתְבָּרַךְ, וּפְרוּשׁ
"אֶקְרָא" מִלְּשׁוֹן יִקָּר.

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, שֶׁהֵגַם 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 כִּדְּ שִׁיתָן גִּדּוּל לֵאלֹהֵינוּ, וְזוֹ תִקְרָא
תּוֹרָה לְשִׁמְחָה 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 מֵה שִׁיעֲשֶׂה כָּל אֶחָד
מֵהֶם, אוּ עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֲמָרָם זְכוּרָנָם לְבִרְכָּה
(תִּיקוּנֵי זוֹהַר תִּיקוּן סט דף קיב). שְׁנֵפְשׁוֹת
כָּל עוֹסְקֵי תוֹרָה הֵם נִיצוּצֵי מֹשֶׁה, וְלֹא דוֹר
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 אַחֲרַי כִּי שֶׁהוּא "הָבו גִּדְּל
לֵאלֹהֵינוּ", וְהוּא עַל דֶּרֶךְ מֵה שֶׁאָמְרוּ
זְכוּרָנָם לְבִרְכָּה (שׁוֹחַר 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 נַחַת רוּחַ כְּשֶׁאָמְרוּ
לוֹ אֱלֹהֵי שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ וְאֱלֹהֵי הַמַּלְאָכִים.

וְלֹזֶה בָּא דְּבָרוֹ הַטּוֹב כָּאֵן וְאָמַר הָבו גִּדְּל
וּמַעַלָּה לְדַבֵּר זֶה שֶׁאֵינּוּ חִפְץ לְקַרֵּא אֲלָא
לֵאלֹהֵינוּ, וְהוּא אָמְרוּ "לֵאלֹהֵינוּ", כִּי
בְּאִמְצָעוֹת שְׁקוּרָאִים בַּתּוֹרָה שֶׁהוּא שֵׁם ה',
וְהוּא אָמְרוּ "כִּי שֵׁם ה' אֶקְרָא", בְּזֶה
כְּשֶׁמְשַׁבְּחִין הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים וְאֲמָרִים "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.

מה שאין כן כשאין ישראל עוסקים בתורה
ואומרים המלאכים "ברוך ה' אלהי
ישראל" שבח זה גרוע מאד מטה מטה
וישתקע הדבר, שהרי הם מכחישים חס
ושלום כשאין עוסקין בתורתו
שבאמצעותה יחס אלהותו עלינו.
ורבותינו זכרונם לברכה דרשו הרבה
דרשות (ספרי) וכפטיש וגו'.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:3

בפשטות · 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 אֵל אֱמוּנָה וְאֵין נֹזֵל 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 שְׁדִּרְכּוֹ 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'ei avel). 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 דֶּרֶכְיוֹ מִשְׁפָּט" – כָּלֵל
בְּזֶה גַם אֶת שְׁדֵרְכּוֹ לְמִדַּד טוֹבָה בְּדִקְהָ
וּמִדְדוֹ לוֹ בְּגִסָּה, "כִּי כָל דֶּרֶכְיוֹ 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 הָעוֹלָם.

וְהַכּוֹנֵה בְּמֵאֶרֶז זֶה עַל פִּי דְבָרֵיהֶם שְׁאָמְרוּ
(שׁוֹחֵר טוֹב ד) בְּפֶסֶק "נִתְּנָה שְׂמִיחָה בְּלִבִּי
מֵעַתָּה וְדָגְנִים וְתִירוֹשׁ רַבּוֹ" (תהלים ד:ח),
שְׁאָמַר דָּוִד כִּי מֵעַתָּה שָׂרָאָה שְׁלֹת הָרָשָׁעִים
נִשְׂאָ קַל וְחוֹמֶר בְּעֶצְמוֹ: וְמָה לְאֵלוֹ שֶׁהֵם
עוֹבְרֵי רְצוֹנוֹ כִּךְ וְכוּ'. וְהוּא אָמַר "אֵל
אֱמוּנָה", פֶּרוּשׁ, יִצְדִּיק הַצַּדִּיק אֱמוּנָת שְׂכָרוֹ
בִּה' כְּשִׁירָאָה מִדַּת "וְאִין עוֹל", שֶׁהוּא שְׂכָר
הָרָשָׁעִים שֶׁבְּעוֹלָם הָעוֹלָם 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)
שֶׁנֶּשְׁבַּע ה' שְׁיַעֲמֹד הָעוֹלָם עַל הַמִּשְׁפָּט,
אֲבָל מֵצִינוּ לוֹ שֶׁלֹּשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה מִדּוֹת שְׂכוּלָם
רַחֲמִים, וְאִם נֶשְׁבַּע 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, כְּשֶׁהוּא
בָּא לְהַדְרִיךְ דָּבָר הוּא מְדַרְיָכוֹ 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 Metzia 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 שֶׁאָמַר
בְּגִמְרָא (עבודה זרה ו.) "וְדִלְמָא נַח טְרִפָּה
הָוָה", וּמִתְרַץ "תָּמִים כְּתִיב בֵּיהּ", וּמִקְשׁוֹ
"וְדִלְמָא צַדִּיק בְּדַרְכֵּי תָמִים בְּמַעֲשָׁיו",
וּפִירָשׁ (רַשִׁי) "צַדִּיק בְּדַרְכֵּי עַל פִּי הַדִּין"
וְכוּי, וְזֶה בְּתַח לָהּ, אֲבָל אַחֵר כֵּךְ "וְיָשָׁר",
פְּרוּשׁ יָשָׁר לְפָנִים מִשּׁוֹרֵת הַדִּין, כְּאָמְרָם
זְכוֹנָם לְבִרְכָּהּ (בבא מציעא קח:) בְּפָרוֹשׁ
פְּסוּק "וְעֲשִׂיתָ הַיָּשָׁר 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. פְּרוּשׁ, כְּשֶׁמִּשְׁחִיתִים דִּרְכָם גּוֹרְמִים רָעָה לְעַצְמָם, וּמָה רָעָה גּוֹרְמִים – לֹא בָּנָיו, פְּרוּשׁ שְׂאִינָם נִקְרָאִים בְּנֵי אֵל חַי, כְּאֶמְרָם זְכוֹרָנָם לְבִרְכָּה (בבא בתרא י'). כְּשֶׁיִּשְׂרָאֵל הוֹלְכִים בְּדִרְכּוֹ שֶׁל מָקוֹם נִקְרָאִים בָּנִים וְכִשְׂאִין הוֹלְכִים וְכוּ' נִקְרָאִים עֲבָדִים, וְהוּא אָמְרוּ "שחת לו" שֶׁלֹּא יִקְרָאוּ בָּנָיו שֶׁל הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

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

וּפְרוֹשׁ מוֹם עַל דֶּרֶךְ אֲמָרָם וְכְרוֹנָם לְכַרְכָּה
(סוטה ג.) אֵין אָדָם עוֹבֵר עֲבִירָה אֲלָא אִם
כֵּן נִכְנָסָה בּוֹ רוּחַ שְׁטוּת, שֶׁהוּא רוּחַ רָעָה
וְהִיא תִקְרָא מוֹם, בְּסוּד אֲמָרוֹ (דברים
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 עָקֹשׁ וּפְתִילֵל וְגו'. שָׂאֵם יְהִיָּה עָקֹשׁ
לְבַד, וְדַבְּרֵי הַתּוֹרָה תְּשִׁים הַמַּעֲקָשִׁים
לְמִישׁוֹר, וּמִי גָרַם לָזֶה שְׁנִשְׁחָת - הֵיּוֹתוּ
עָקֹשׁ וּפְתִילֵל, פְּרוֹשׁ מִתַּחֲזִיק בְּעִקְשׁוֹתוֹ,
כְּאֲשֶׁר עֲיִינֵנוּ רֹאוֹת בְּדוֹרוֹת הַלָּלוּ מִיַּי
אֲפִיקוֹרְסוֹת דֶּרֶךְ עָקֹשׁ, וּכְשֶׁאָדָם מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל
עָקֹשׁוֹתֵיהֶם הֵם מִתַּחֲזִיקִים בְּאַרְחוֹת עָקֹשִׁים
קָשִׁים, וְזֶה אֲבָדֵן 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 וַיְכַנְנֶךָ:

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 גְּמוּל לְהַעֲרִיר שְׂבִמְקוֹם שִׁיגְמְלוֹהוּ 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 הָיוּ חָכְמִים לֹא הָיוּ נָבִלִים עִם ה', כִּי הַנָּבֵל יִכִּיר שְׁחוּשָׁה 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, וּכְנֻגָּד זֶה אָמַר "הוּא אָבִיךָ". שְׁנִית, שֶׁקִּנְיָה אוֹתָנוּ לְעֶבְדִּים בְּמַה שֶׁהוֹצִיאָנוּ מִיַּד פַּרְעֹה וְהַחֲיָה אוֹתָנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר וְהָבִיא אוֹתָנוּ לָאָרֶץ מְלֵאָה כָּל טוֹב, וּכְנֻגָּד 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' שְׁתַּכֵּן אוֹתָנוּ תְּקוּן מְעֻלָּה וְרֵם בְּתֵת
שְׂכִינָתוֹ בְּתוֹכֵנוּ וְנִבֵּא אוֹתָנוּ, וְזֶה תְּקוּן
גָּדוֹל שֶׁעָשָׂה אוֹתָנוּ כְּלִי רָאוּי לְקַבֵּל
הַנְּבוּאָה, וְכִנְגֵּד זֶה אָמַר "עָשָׂךְ", פֶּרוּשׁ
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' שְׁתַּכֵּן אוֹתָנוּ הַתְּכוּנָנוּת הַנִּצְחִי לְזִכּוֹת בּוֹ
חַי עוֹלָם הֵבֵא שְׂהוּא הָעֶקֶר. וְהַכְנָה בְּכֶל
זֶה הוּא שָׂאִין הַנֶּבֶל עוֹשֶׂה נִבְלָה עִם גֶּדֶר זֶה
אִם לֹא לְצַד הַיּוֹתוֹ סָכָל, 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.

לְמַעַשֶׂה · 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.