

אור החיים הקדוש • וזאת הברכה • שני

Explanatory English • Line-by-Line Edition

V'ZOT HABERACHAH • 2ND 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 ח

Deuteronomy 33:8

וּלְלֵוִי אָמַר תְּמִידָה וְאוּרִיָּה לְאַיֵּשׁ חֲסִידָה אֲשֶׁר נִסִּיתוֹ בְּמַסָּה
תְּרִיבָהוּ עַל־יְמֵי מְרִיבָה:

And of Levi he said: Thy Thummim and Thy Urim be with Thy holy one, Whom Thou didst prove at Massah,
With whom Thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah;

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 33:8:1

And of Levi he said: Thy Thummim etc. This means that this matter [of the High Priest's breastplate] shall remain established in his hand, and for his descendants after him as an everlasting priesthood.

וּלְלֵוִי אָמַר תְּמִידָה וְאוּרִיָּה לְאַיֵּשׁ חֲסִידָה אֲשֶׁר נִסִּיתוֹ בְּמַסָּה.
דָּבָר זֶה וְלִזְרָעוֹ אַחֲרָיו כְּהוֹנֵת עוֹלָם.

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 33:8:2

Whom Thou didst prove at Massah. The explanation is: Since Yaakov had said concerning Levi, in partnership with Shimon, "weapons of violence etc. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce" (Genesis 49:5,7),

אֲשֶׁר נִסִּיתוֹ בְּמַסָּה. פְּרוּשׁ, לְכִי שִׁיעֲקֹב
אָמַר עַל לֵוִי בְּשִׁתּוּף עִם שִׁמְעוֹן "כָּלִי חֲמָס
וְגו' אָרוּר אַפָּם כִּי עָז" וְגו' (בראשית
מט:ה,ז),

therefore Moshe said here that Levi was tested and shown not to be a master of anger and wrath. This was tested at Massah. This does not mean that Hashem actively tested him, but rather that He saw a proof in him, because all the other tribes of Israel tested Hashem, as it is written, "and because they tried Hashem" (Exodus 17:7), but Levi did not do so. From this you learn that their anger had subsided.

לְזֶה אָמַר כִּי לִי נִתְּנָה שְׂאִינוּ בַּעַל אֶף
וְעָבְרָה שְׁנִתְּנָה בְּמַסָּה, פְּרוֹשׁ לֹא שְׁנִתְּנָהוּ
ה'; אֲלֵא שֶׁרָאָה בּוֹ נִסְיוֹן, שֶׁכָּל שְׁבִטֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל נִסּוּ ה' דְּכָתִיב (שְׁמוֹת יז:) "וְעַל
נִסּוֹתֵם אֶת ה'", וְלֹא כֵן לִי, הֵא לְמַדָּת
שֶׁשָּׂכַר רוּגָזִים.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 33:8

בְּפִשְׁטוּת · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains that Moshe's blessing to Levi confirms the everlasting priesthood through the Urim and Thummim. He addresses the harsh words Yaakov previously spoke to Levi regarding his fierce anger. Moshe clarifies that Levi's character had refined; this was proven at Massah, where the rest of the nation complained and tested Hashem, while the tribe of Levi remained faithful and did not join in the anger and rebellion.

לְמַעַשֶׂה · Lemaaseh

We learn from the tribe of Levi that past tendencies toward anger or impulsiveness do not define a person's spiritual future. Through conscious refinement, a trait that was once criticized can be completely transformed into a vehicle for holiness and divine service. When faced with a challenging situation where others are complaining or losing their composure, choosing to remain calm and faithful is the ultimate proof of our inner growth.

הָאֵמֹר לְאָבִיו וּלְאִמּוֹ לֹא רָאִיתִיו וְאֶת-אָחִיו לֹא הִכִּיר וְאֶת-בָּנוֹ [בָּנָיו] לֹא יָדַע כִּי שָׁמְרוּ אִמְרָתְךָ וּבְרִיתְךָ יִנְצְרוּ:

Who said of his father, and of his mother: 'I have not seen him'; Neither did he acknowledge his brethren, Nor knew he his own children; For they have observed Thy word, And keep Thy covenant.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 33:9:1

AI-assisted explanatory translation: [The verses] "Who said [of his father and of his mother: 'I have not seen him']" and "They shall teach Your ordinances [to Yaakov]" (Deuteronomy 33:10) can be explained in light of what Chazal said in Bava Batra 60a. They relate an incident where people came to a judge to litigate concerning a tree that was causing damage to a public pathway. The judge told them, "Wait until tomorrow." That night, he sent messengers and cut down his own tree first [so that he would be free of the same fault before ruling on theirs]. This is the meaning of "Who said of his father...": a person who acts with such integrity is fit to teach judgment to others, because there is no room for anyone to say to him, "Remove the beam from between your own eyes" (Bava Batra 15b). The proof of this absolute integrity is that he is "the one who says to his father and mother, 'I have not seen him'" [meaning he applies the law strictly to himself and his closest relatives first].

(ט~י) האמר וגוי' יורו משפט' וגוי'. יתבאר על דרך אמרם וכוונם לברכה (בבא בתרא ס.). במעשה שפאו לדון על אילן שהיה מזיק לדרך הרבים וכו', ואמר להם עד למחר וכו', ושלח וקץ וכו', עד כאן. והוא אמרו "האומר" וגוי', אדם כזה ראוי להורות משפט וכו', כי אין מקום לומר לו "טול קורה" וכו' (בבא בתרא טו:), וזה לך האות "האמר לאביו ולאמו".

AI-assisted explanatory translation: Another explanation: Since Hashem commanded, "You shall appoint judges... for your tribes" (Deuteronomy 16:18), and Chazal explained in the Sifrei that this requires appointing judges from within each specific tribe for that tribe, Moshe therefore declared here that the tribe of Levi is uniquely suited to be appointed over all the tribes of Israel. This is because they proved they do not show favoritism to a father, a brother, or a child. This is the meaning of "They shall teach Your ordinances to Yaakov" as a general rule for all of Israel, because we do not need to worry that a Levite judge will show favoritism to his own tribe over any other tribe.

עוד ירצה, לפי שצוה "שופטים וגו'
לשכטיך" (דברים טז:יח), ואמרו רבותינו
זכרונם לברכה (ספרי) שצריך שימנה
דינים לכל שבט, לזה אמר כי שבט לוי
ליצד מה שהוכחנו שלא נשאו פנים לאב
ולאח ולבן ואימם הם להתמנות על כל
שבטי ישראל, והוא אמרו "ורו משפטיך
ליעקב" בדרך כלל, כי אין לחוש שישאו
פנים לשבטם יותר משבט זולתם.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 33:9

בפשוט · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim offers two explanations for why the Levites' refusal to show favoritism to their closest relatives makes them uniquely fit to teach Torah and judge Israel. First, drawing on the Talmudic principle that a judge must correct his own faults before correcting others, he explains that the Levites' willingness to apply the law strictly to themselves and their families ensures that no one can challenge their moral authority. Second, while judges are normally appointed from within each tribe to serve that specific tribe, the Levites proved during the incident of the Golden Calf that they are entirely free of tribal bias. Because they did not spare even their own kin, they are uniquely qualified to act as impartial judges for all of Israel.

למעשה · Lemaaseh

The Levites earned the right to teach and judge Israel because they demanded more from themselves and their own families than from anyone else. A powerful practical reflection from this is that our moral influence on others depends entirely on our personal integrity. If we wish to guide our children, students, or peers, we must first hold ourselves to the very standards we preach. We can practice this by identifying one area of self-discipline we expect from others and quietly mastering it ourselves first, thereby ensuring our words are spoken with sincere, lived authority.

יִוְרוּ מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ לְיַעֲקֹב וְתוֹרָתְךָ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׁיִמוּ קְטֹרֶת בְּאַפֶּךָ וּכְלִיל עַל-מִזְבְּחֶךָ:

They shall teach Jacob Thine ordinances, And Israel Thy law; They shall put incense before Thee, And whole burnt-offering upon Thine altar. .

No Ohr HaChaim comment on this pasuk in this edition.

בָּרַךְ יְהוָה חֵילוֹ וּפְעָל יָדָיו תִּרְצֶה מִחַץ מְתִנִּים קָמְיוֹ וּמִשְׁנֹאֵיו מִן-יְקוֹמוֹן: (ס)

Bless, LORD, his substance, And accept the work of his hands; Smite through the loins of them that rise up against him, And of them that hate him, that they rise not again.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 33:11:1

Regarding the words "and of them that hate him, that they rise not again" (literally, "from rising"), this is understood in light of the words of Chazal in Bereishit Rabbah 99:2, who explain that Moshe was prophesying about the Greek empire, which was destined to fall by the hand of the Hasmoneans [who were Kohanim from the tribe of Levi]. Therefore, he said "and of them that hate him, from rising," meaning that even from the very time when those enemies would experience a rise to power and Israel would be brought low, at that very moment, "smite through the loins of them that rise up against him." And so it was, and this matter was a triumph achieved through a wondrous miracle.

וּמִשְׁנֹאֵיו מִן יְקוֹמוֹן. אָמְרוּ "מִן יְקוֹמוֹן",
לְדַבְרֵיהֶם זְכוּנוֹם לְבָרָכָה (בראשית רבה
צ"ב:ב) שֶׁנִּתְּבֵא עַל מַלְכוּת יוֹן שְׁעִתִּידָה
לְפֹל בְּיַד בְּנֵי חֲשְׁמוֹנָא. לָזֶה אָמַר
וּמִשְׁנֹאֵיו מִן יְקוֹמוֹן, פָּרוּשׁ אֲפֹלוּ מִן
הַזְּמַן עֲצָמוּ שֶׁתִּהְיֶה לָהֶם לְשׁוֹנָאִים קִימָה,
וְיִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁפָלִים, בְּזִמְנָן עֲצָמוּ "מִחַץ מְתִנִּים
קָמְיוֹ" וְגו', וְכֵן הָיָה, וְדָבָר זֶה הָיָה הַצֵּלָחָה
בְּנֶס וּפֶלֶא.

בפשוט · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim explains the phrase "and of them that hate him, that they rise not again" (literally, "from rising") as a prophecy regarding the Hasmonean victory over the Greek empire. Even at the very historical moment when the Greek oppressors had risen to the height of their power and Israel was brought low, Hashem would smite the loins of Levi's enemies, bringing about a wondrous and miraculous salvation through the Hasmonean Kohanim.

למעשה · Lemaaseh

The Ohr HaChaim teaches that even when the enemies of Israel seem to be at the very peak of their rise and success, Hashem can instantly bring about a miraculous salvation through those who dedicate themselves to His service. We can apply this by strengthening our trust in Hashem's salvation during challenging times, recognizing that redemption can spring forth in a moment, even from a state of great lowliness.

פסוק יב

Deuteronomy 33:12

לְבִנְיָמִן אָמַר יְדִיד יְהוָה יִשְׁכֹּן לְבֵטַח עָלָיו חִפָּף עָלָיו כָּל-הַיּוֹם וּבֵין כַּתְּפָיו שָׁכֵן: (ס)

Of Benjamin he said: The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him; He covereth him all the day, And He dwelleth between his shoulders.

אור החיים הקדוש

AI-assisted explanatory translation

Or HaChaim on Deuteronomy 33:12:1

Regarding the words, Of Benjamin he said: The word "Of Benjamin" is the speech of Moshe, whereas the word "he said" is the narrative voice of the Scripture. For if this were not so, how would it be understood that he is speaking about Benjamin? The same structure applies to the subsequent blessings, such as "And of Joseph he said" and "And of Zebulun he said."

לְבִנְיָמִן אָמַר. פֶּרוּשׁ תַּבַּת "לְבִנְיָמִן" הוּא דְבַר מֹשֶׁה, וְתַבַּת "אָמַר" הוּא דְבַר הַכְּתוּב, שָׁאֵם לֹא כֵן בְּמַה יוֹבֵן הַדָּבָר שֶׁעַל בְּנִימִין הוּא אוֹמֵר, וְכֵן "לְיוֹסֵף" וְ"לְזִבְּלוֹן" וְגו'.

Regarding the phrase, "shall dwell in safety by Him": This means, what is the reason that Benjamin will dwell in safety? It is "by Him" [literally, upon Him], meaning because he is the immediate neighbor of the One Who dwells in the Temple. For who would dare come to attack someone who is protected right next to the King?

וְאָמְרוּ "יִשְׁכֹּן לְבֵטַח עָלָיו". פְּרוּשׁ, מֶה טַעַם יִשְׁכֹּן לְבֵטַח? "עָלָיו", פְּרוּשׁ עַל הַיּוֹתוֹ שֶׁכֵּנוּ שָׁל שׂוֹכֵן הַבֵּיָרָה, כִּי מִי יָבֹא אַחֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ:

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 33:12

בְּפִשְׁטוּת · In plain words

The Ohr HaChaim clarifies the narrative structure of the verse, explaining that the Torah inserts the word "said" to transition between Moshe's direct blessings to each tribe. He then explains that Benjamin's unique safety and security stem directly from his physical and spiritual proximity to the Divine Presence, as the Holy Temple was destined to be built within his tribal territory, placing him under the immediate protection of the King.

לְמַעַשֶׂה · Lemaaseh

When we choose to place ourselves close to Hashem by dedicating our daily environment to Torah and prayer, we merit a unique form of spiritual security. Just as Benjamin dwelt in safety because he was the neighbor of the Temple, we can cultivate our own sense of inner peace and protection by ensuring our homes and daily schedules are built around the Divine Presence. A modest way to practice this is to designate a specific, permanent area in one's home solely for Torah study and prayer, establishing a personal sanctuary that invites Hashem's presence into our everyday lives.

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.

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