

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 לֹמַר מִבְּלִתִּי יְכָלֶת 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 (מִשְׁלִי יב:יט) "יַעַד אֲרִגִּיעָה לְשׁוֹן שָׁקֵר",

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 כָּאֵלֶּה. 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 בְּקִדְשׁ וְאַפְלוּ הַגּוֹיִם
יִסְפִּימוּ עַל זֶה, כְּאָמֹר בְּדִבְרֵי הַנְּבִיא
(מֵלֶאכִי אֵיָּא) "כִּי גָדוֹל שְׁמִי בְּגוֹיִם",
וְכִשְׂרְאוּ מִפְּלֵת יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּדֶרֶךְ זֶה גַם הֵם
יִשְׁפְּטוּ כֵן,

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 דִּינִים,
כְּאָמְרוּ (שְׁמוֹת כ"א:כב) "וְנִתֵּן בְּפְלִילִים",
פְּרוּשׁ יִשְׁפְּטוּ גַם הֵם שֶׁלֹּא כְּצוּרֵנוּ צוּרֵם,
אֶלָּא כְּשְׂרֹאִים הַשְׁחָתַת יִשְׂרָאֵל יִנְכְּרוּ אֶת
הָאֱמֶת כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתוּב "פֶּן יִנְכְּרוּ וְגו' פֶּן
יֵאמְרוּ" וְגו'.

Original Ohr HaChaim Hebrew on Sefaria

AI-assisted study aids · Deuteronomy 32:31

בפשוט · 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.

למעשה · 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 וּמִשָּׂדֵם גִּפְנָם עֲנִי־רוּשׁ אֲשַׁכֵּל מִרְחֹת לָמוֹ:

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 לְמִכְרֵתָם וּלְהַקְוֶדָם לָהּ "אֲמַרְתִּי אֶפְאַיֵּהֶם".

וְאָמְרוּ "מִגֶּפֶן" – כִּכָּר הוֹדַעְתִּי כִּי דָבָר שֶׁבִקְדֻשָּׁה יֵשׁ כְּנִגְדּוֹ בִּפְסוּטָא אַחֲרָא, כְּאָמְרוּ (קוה לֵת זִיד) "גַּם אֵת זֶה לְעֻמַּת זֶה עָשָׂה" וְגו',

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

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

כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר אוֹמֵר "עֲנִי־רוּשׁ" וְגו',

וְלִפִּי שְׂאִינָם אֵלָא 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 סֵאתָם 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
נְקֵבָה 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 הַמִּשְׁאֵל אֲחִיזוֹת 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

בְּפִשְׁטוּת · 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 חֶתֶם 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 חֶתֶם בְּאוֹצְרוֹתַי לְיוֹם הַדִּין.

וְעַל זֶה אָמַר הַנָּבִיא (ישעיהו יג) "וְיָמָה תַעֲשׂוּ לְיוֹם פְּקֻדָּהּ", וְצֵא וּלְמַד מִה שֶׁחָרַד שְׁמוּאֵל מִפְּחַד יוֹם הַדִּין, כְּאֶמְרָם זְכוּרֵנָם לְבִרְכָּהּ (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"ד:) "נוֹשָׂא עֹון",
וְכִשְׁגִּיעַ לְגֵדֶר שְׂיֹאמֶר "נִלְאַתִּי נֶשׂוּא"
(יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ א':יד) יִחְתְּמֶהוּ בְּאוֹצְרוֹת וְיִנָּקֶם
הוּא מֵעוֹשֵׂי רָשָׁעָה בְּהוֹצָאת שֶׁמֶשׁ
מִנִּרְתִּיקָהּ (נִדְרִים ח:) וְלִהְיוֹת אוֹתָם יוֹם ה',
וְהוּא אֲמָרוֹ "לִי נָקָם" פֶּרוֹשׁ 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.

לְמַעַשֶׂה · 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 וְחַשׁ 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 יוֹצֵא ה' שֶׁמֶשׁ מִנִּרְתִּיקָהּ, הָרָשָׁעִים
נִדּוֹנִים 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 סוּד מֵאֲמָר (סוטה
מט.) "עֲקֻבוֹת מְשִׁיחָא", וְהוּא בְּרוּרֵי נִיצוּצֵי
רַגְלֵי ס"מ כְּשֶׁתַּמּוּט רַגְלָם שֶׁל עוֹשֵׂי
רָשָׁעָה, וְתִגְמַר מִמָּה שֶׁנִּגָּע בָּהּ מִדְּבַר
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 שֶׁנֶּמְרַע עֲנִין מְכַעֲסִי אֶל עַד סוֹפָם, חֹזֵר לְהַבְטִיחַ לְכָל־לֹוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁלֹא לְעוֹלָם יִרְיֵב אִתָּם.

"כִּי יִדִין ה' עַמּוֹ" – פְּרוּשׁ, יַעֲמִיד בְּמִשְׁפָּט כּוֹסוֹת הַתְּרַעֲלָה אֲשֶׁר עָבְרוּ, וְיִרְאֶה צָרוֹת שֶׁעָבְרוּ עַל הַצַּדִּיקִים, מִהֶם הֶרְגוּ, מִהֶם שָׂרְפוּ, מִהֶם הִפְשִׁיטוּם, וּבְשִׁבִיל הַצַּדִּיקִים אֲשֶׁר נִצְטָעְרוּ יִתְנַחֵם. וְהוּא אָמַר "וְעַל עַבְדָּיו יִתְנַחֵם" – פְּרוּשׁ, בְּשִׁבִיל שֶׁיִּתְנַחֵם לִזְמַן דִּי צָרוֹת הֵגְלוֹת.

וְעוֹד, כְּשֶׁיִּרְאֶה ה' שֶׁאֵין כֹּחַ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַצִּיל עַצְמָן מִהֵגְלוֹת, וְכֵן אֵין בְּצַדִּיקִים לִיֶּסֶר בְּשִׁבְט מוֹסֵר לְמַרְגִּיז אֵל, גַּם לֹא יִשְׁאַרוּ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אֲנָשִׁים גְּדוֹלִים וְנִבְיָאִים חוֹזִים בְּעֲלֵי 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 צֹר 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
צֹר, וְהוּא חֲסִיו בּוֹ.

כִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל, הֲגַם שִׁירְשֵׁיו וְיַעֲבְרוּ עַל חֶלֶק
מִמִּצְוֹת ה', אֲפַי כִּן כָּל מַחְסֵיהֶם בָּהּ,
וְעָלֵיו סוֹבֵלִים דְּלוֹת וְשִׁפְלוֹת, וְנִהְרָגִים עַל
קִדְשַׁת שְׁמוֹ, וְעוֹמְדִים וּמִצְפִּים לְצֹר
גּוֹאֲלָם, וְהוּא אָמְרוּ "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 יֵינָם נְסִיכָם יִקְוּמוּ וַיַּעֲזְרוּכֶם 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 מֵאֲמַר
ה' נֶגֶד דְּבָרֵיהֶם, וְהִרְדַּפְתָּ הַדְּבָרִים הוּא עַל
זֶה הַדֶּרֶךְ "כִּי יָדִין" וְגו' וַיִּתְּנָחֵם עַל מָה
שֶׁסָּבְלוּ עֲבָדָיו, וְעוֹד כִּי יֵרָאֶה כִּי אֲזַלְתָּ יָד
וְגו' וְאָמַר וְגו', וְהָשִׁיב ה' "אֲשֶׁר חָלַב זִבְחֵימוֹ
יִקְוּמוּ", וּמִיָּבֵן הַדָּבָר מֵעֲצָמוֹ הַכֶּרְתָּם שֶׁל
אוֹכְלֵי זִבְחֵימוֹ כִּי לֹא יוֹעִילוּ וְלֹא יַצִּילוּ,
וַיִּכְרֻּם כִּי ה' הוּא לְבַדּוֹ מוֹשִׁיעַ, וְהוּא מָה
שֶׁגָּמַר אוֹמֵר "רְאוּ עֲתָה 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' כָּמוֹ
שֶׁפָּרְשְׁנוּהוּ בְּמִקְוָמוֹ (שְׁמוֹת כ:ד). לָזֶה
אָמַר כְּנֻגַּד הָעוֹבֵד עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה לְאִמָּצָעִי
אָמַר "יָקוּמוּ וַיַּעֲזְרֶכֶם" – עֲזָר בְּעֶלְמָא, כִּי
לְסִבָּה זוֹ עָשְׂאוּהָ לְעֲזוּר לְהוֹעִיל בֵּינֵיהֶם
וּבֵין אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם, וּכְנֻגַּד הָעוֹבֵד 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).

לְמַעַשֶׂה · 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 וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי. כָּפַל לומר שְׁתֵּי פְעָמִים "אֲנִי אֲנִי" כְּנֶגֶד שְׁתֵּי טְעוֹת שֶׁל עֲבֻדָּה זָרָה שֶׁרְמְזוּ בַּפָּסוּק שֶׁלִּפְנֵי זֶה, לָזֶה אָמַר "אֲנִי" – פְּרוּשׁ וְלֹא אַחֵר שֶׁאַתֶּם חוֹשְׁבִים בּוֹ לְאַלּוֹהֵי גִמּוּר, וְכֶנֶגֶד עֲבֻדָּה זָרָה שֶׁעוֹשִׂים לְאַמְצָעִי אָמַר "אֲנִי הוּא" – פְּרוּשׁ לְבָדִי, וְגִמּוּר אָמַר "וְאֵין אֱלֹהִים עִמָּדִי" – אַמְצָעִי 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 זְכוּרֵנוֹם לְבָרְכָה דְּרָשׁוּ (פְּסָחִים 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 מִיָּדִי מַצִּיל. פְּרוּשׁ, שְׁכָל הַנְּבִרָאִים
זָמוּתוֹ, וְלִזְה דִּיִּק לֹאמַר "וְאֵין מִיָּדִי" 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.

לְמַעַשֶׁה · 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.

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.