שלא יפסיק בין פסוקים אלו לבין 'תהלה לדוד ארוממך' בשום פסוק אחר כלל. [באו"ח פ' ויגש הי"א]. ואם נזדמן לו קדיש וקדושה, בין הפסוקים הללו, באופן שהיה מוכרח לענות, אין צריך לחזור ולומר הפסוקים. אלא ימשיך משם והלאה כדרכו. [הליכו"ע ח"א עמ' פ]

נז. במסכת ברכות (ד ע"ב) אמרו: כל האומר תהלה לדוד בכל יום שלש פעמים, מובטח לו שהוא בן העולם הבא. משום שיש בו שתי מעלות: שנסדר באותיות אל"ף בי"ת, ויש בו פסוק "פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדֶךָ וּמַשְׂבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רָצוֹן" (תהלים קמה, טז).

of *yehi khevod* and these verses, or between these verses and *Tehilla leDavid*. If someone realizes that the congregation is about to recite kaddish or *Kedusha* and he will have to interrupt and respond, he should either pause in the middle of *Yehi khevod*, or hurry to recite all these verses before he will need to interrupt them and respond. Nonetheless, if someone does interrupt these verses to respond to kaddish or *Kedusha*, he does not have to repeat them. He may simply continue from the point he had reached when he interrupted.[197]

Importance of *Ashre*

57) The Talmud (*Berakhot* 4b) teaches: "Anyone who recites *Tehilla leDavid* (*Tehillim* 145) three times every day is ensured residency in the World to Come." This is because this *mizmor* has a combination of two advantages: The initial letters of each of its verses follow the Hebrew alphabet, and it contains the verse of פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדֶךָ וּמַשְׂבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רָצוֹן – You open Your Hand and willingly satisfy all living creatures.[198]

Day 46

197. The *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Vayigash* halakha 11) explained that by interrupting between these verses, one creates a flaw in the crown formed in Heaven through reciting them. The *Ben Ish Hai* therefore ruled that if someone realizes that the congregation is about to recite kaddish or *Kedusha*, he should pause in the middle of *Yehi khevod* to respond. He added that he had already ruled in his *Mikabtze'el* that if someone is caught unawares and must interrupt these verses to respond, he should repeat the last three verses of *Yehi khevod* and the beginning verses of *Ashre* so that he recites them without an interruption. In the *Od Yosef Hai* (*parashat Vayigash* halakha 8) he added that it is best in such a case to repeat the entire passage of *Yehi khevod*.

Maran the Rishon Letzion (*Halikhot Olam* Vol. I, page 80) disagreed with these rulings, and asserted that even when someone is forced to interrupt these verses, he does not have any obligation to repeat them. He argued that this cannot be more stringent than interrupting in the middle of *Shema* to respond to kaddish, when there is no obligation to repeat anything.

198. The Talmud asks: If the advantage of *Tehilla leDavid* is that its verses follow the order of the *alef-bet*, then *mizmor* 119, which contains eight verses for each letter of the *alef-bet*, is better. And if the advantage of *Tehilla leDavid* is that it includes the verse of *Pote'ah et Yadekha*, praising Hashem for providing sustenance to all living creatures, then *mizmor* 136 is better since it includes the verse of נוֹתֵן לֶחֶם לְכָל בָּשָׂר כִּי לְעוֹלָם חַסְדּוֹ – He gives food to all living flesh, for His kindness is eternal. The Talmud resolves this, explaining that *Tehilla leDavid* contains both these advantages.

Harav Eliyahu of Vilna pointed out that *mizmor* 111 likewise follows the letters of the *alef-bet*, and it includes a praise to Hashem for providing sustenance to those who fear Him. Nevertheless, he agreed that the praise of *Pote'ah et Yadekha* is greater, since it declares that Hashem provides for all creatures, not only for those who fear Him. Rashi alluded to this in his comment on that passage in the Talmud.

Why follow the *alef-bet*?

The *Ya'arot Devash* (Vol. I, *darush* 14) explained that our praises to Hashem are magnified when they follow the letters of the *alef-bet*. It alludes to our acknowledgement that every letter, every word, and every statement uttered in this world is ultimately a praise for Him. For the same

נח. צריך לכוין בפסוק 'פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדֶךָ וּמַשְׂבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רָצוֹן' [ש"ע סי' נא ס"ז], שהקדוש ברוך הוא משגיח על בריותיו וזן ומפרנס לכל. [משנ"ב ס"ק טו, באה"ח ויגש הי"ב]. והוא מודיע גבורותיו של הקב"ה שהוא זן מקרני ראמים ועד ביצי כנים. [ר' יונה ברכות כג ע"א]

וכי יתן האיש את רוחו במזמור הזה להבין כל תיבה שבו בעומק, ימצא תועלת ופלא ליראה ולאהבה את ה' הנכבד והנורא. ומה גם בפסוק זה של 'פותח את ידך', אם יכוין בו ותהיינה אזניו קשובות את אשר מוציא מפיו, כי השי"ת הוא הזן ומפרנס לכל, מחשבה זו מועלת הרבה לשלא יבטל עבודת קונו מפני פרנסתו. [חסד לאלפים סי' נא אות ו]

Meaning of *Pote'aḥ et Yadekha*

58) When reciting the verse of "פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדֶךָ וּמַשְׂבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רָצוֹן[199] – You open Your Hand and satisfy the desires of all living things," one must think of the concept that the Blessed Holy One takes care of all His creatures and supplies them with their needs for survival. By reciting this verse, a person advertises his belief in the Blessed Holy One's power, specifically that He provides sustenance for everything, from the largest, most powerful beasts to the tiniest mites incubating in their eggs.

If someone pays close attention to the meaning of every word in this verse, he will glean enormous benefit, for it inspires the reader to have love and fear for the Almighty. This applies especially to the verse of פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדֶךָ. If one will only pay attention to the words that he is uttering, he will realize that it is senseless to disobey Hashem's commandments for the sake of earning his livelihood.

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reason, we recite the daily confession of our sins following the *alef-bet*, admitting that we are guilty of any sin that can be expressed in words.

The missing letter *nun*

The Talmud asks why the *mizmor* of *Tehilla leDavid* does not include a verse that begins with the letter *nun*. It explains that King David did not include this letter since it has a negative connotation for the nation of Yisrael. The letter *nun* begins the verse (*Amos* 5:2): "נָפְלָה לֹא תוֹסִיף קוּם בְּתוּלַת יִשְׂרָאֵל – the maidenhood of Yisrael has fallen; she will not rise again." The Talmud concludes: Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak commented that King David used his divine spirit to give the nation support through the following verse, "סוֹמֵךְ ה' לְכָל הַנֹּפְלִים וגו' – Hashem supports all those who have fallen."

Rashb"a (responsa Vol. I, #49) pointed out that the book of *Ekha* contains numerous tragic verses that begin with each letter of the *alef-bet*. That being the case, he asked, why did King David choose to omit the letter *nun* in particular? He answered that the verse in *Amos* states not only that Yisrael has fallen, but also that she will never rise again. King David would not accept that.

Residence in the World to Come

The *Ohel Mo'ed*, cited in the *Bet Yosef*, explained that the Talmud does not suggest that anyone who recites this *mizmor* three times a day will be guaranteed a share in the World to Come without regard to his other deeds. The Talmud means that if someone is equally balanced on the scales of justice, this mitzvah will push down the scale on the side of righteousness.

Rav Natronai Ga'on (#38) and other *Rishonim* explained that our Sages instituted the formula to recite *Tehilla leDavid* three times a day so that each person will recite it at least one time properly each day. In fact, Rabbenu Asher's version of this passage reads, "Anyone who recites *Tehilla leDavid* daily is ensured...." His text makes no mention of "three times."

199. There are several ways to interpret the word רָצוֹן in this verse. One interpretation is that Hashem fulfills His own desire by giving sustenance to His creatures. Another is that Hashem satisfies the desires of living things by giving them sustenance. A third interpretation is that Hashem instilled the emotion of satisfaction in people, so that they are pleased with the amount that they receive. See responsa *Tif'eret Yisrael* (Unit Miscellaneous, #3).

נט. מי שלא כיון בפסוק ׳פותח את ידך׳ להבין משמעות הפסוק כפשוטו, צריך לחזור ולאומרו. [ראה בא״ח שם, ילקו״י מהדו״ק עמ׳ עה]. וכך סדר חזרתו:

אם לא נזכר עד שאמר כמה פסוקים לאחר מכן, אם נזכר עד שלא התחיל במזמור שלאחריו, חוזר לפסוק ׳פותח את ידך׳ לאומרו בכוונה, וימשיך הלאה. ואם התחיל במזמור שלאחריו, יאמר הפסוק בכוונה בין מזמור למזמור. ואם לא עשה כן, יכוין בפסוק ׳פותח את ידך׳ של אשרי יושבי ביתך שלאחר

If someone failed to think of the verse's meaning

59) If someone recites the verse of פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדֶךָ וּמַשְׂבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רָצוֹן without thinking about the meaning of the words at all,[200] he must recite it again.[201] If he realizes his error only after continuing further in the *mizmor*, he must repeat all the

200. The basic obligation is to think of the simple meaning of the verse, as presented in halakha 58. Besides that, the Arizal instructed us to think of the fact that the initial letters of the first three words form the sacred combination of פ'א'י', and that the final letters of these three words form the sacred combination of ח'ת'ך'. The combination of פ'א'י' has the numerical value of 91, which equals that of the two sacred Names: *Havaya* and *Adnut*. The combination of ח'ת'ך' forms the name of the angel assigned to providing people their livelihood. See more about this in *Od Yosef Ḥai* (*parashat Vayigash* halakha 8). The halakha does not require people to think about these kabbalistic hints when reciting the verse.

The *Kaf Haḥayim* Palachi (12:21) added that the initial letters of the words לְכָל חַי רָצוֹן spell the name Raḥel, signifying that our livelihood comes to us from Heaven via the channel known in Kabbalah by the name Raḥel. See more about this in the *Petaḥ Hadevir* (51:7).

The *Kaf Haḥayim* Sofer (51:34) asserted that wherever the Kabbalah teaches that particular words in our prayers have such special meanings, our basic obligation is only to think of the simple meaning of the words. We cannot even conceive the meaning of the sacred combinations of letters that are alluded to in the initial letters or the final letters or through the numerical value of the letters. Even those who have studied Kabbalah and the works of the Arizal should refrain from thinking of those concepts while praying, since they might misunderstand the concepts and cause great spiritual damage to themselves. Even so, he concluded, it is commendable to think of the sacred combinations of פ'א'י' and of ח'ת'ך' while reciting the verse of פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדֶךָ.

Moreover, the *Kaf Haḥayim* added, anyone who wishes to concentrate on the concepts that the Arizal taught for the words of the prayers while he prays must first make sure that he knows how to concentrate on the simple meanings of the words, and he must make sure to pronounce each letter of each word correctly. Once he has mastered those things and he is practiced in praying without his mind wandering away from his prayers, he can begin concentrating additionally on the Arizal's concepts found in the prayer book authored by Harav Shalom Mizraḥi Sharabi. If someone prays while thinking of the Arizal's concepts while ignoring the simple meaning of the prayers, the angels will rip his prayers into shreds.

201. This is the ruling of the *Shulḥan Arukh* (51:7) based on Rabbenu Yona's comment to *Berakhot* 23a. This is because the Talmud teaches that the major facet of this *mizmor*'s importance is that it includes this verse. Therefore, as long as a person thinks of the meaning of this verse while reciting it, he fulfills his obligation even if he fails to think of the meaning of the other verses that he recites.

Regarding the *Amida*, the halakha technically is that someone fails to think of the meaning of the words forming the first blessing, he must repeat the *Amida*. In practice, however, we do not repeat it since anyone who fails to think of the meaning when reciting it the first time will probably fail to think of the meaning when he repeats it as well. The *Magen Avraham* (51:6) asked why the halakha demands that we repeat the verse of פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדֶךָ and we do not assume that we will fail the second time as well. He answered that we need not be afraid of failing to concentrate on one short verse. The first blessing of the *Amida*, however, is quite lengthy, and therefore one is apt to lose concentration while reciting it.

The *Yeshu'ot Yaakov* offered a simpler answer: If someone fails to concentrate on the meaning of the words when he repeats the first blessing of the *Amida*, he is guilty of reciting a blessing in vain. If someone fails to concentrate when reciting the verse of פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדֶךָ, he is not guilty of such a terrible sin.

Concentrate on the meaning of all *Pesuke dezimra*

The *Levush* (51:8) wrote: "One must concentrate intensely on the entire *mizmor*, but especially on the verse of פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדֶךָ. If someone fails to concentrate on the meaning of this verse, he must repeat it. The truth is that one must concentrate on the meaning of every passage in

תפלת העמידה, או שלפני תפלת מנחה, שלכן תיקנו חז"ל לומר ג' פעמים מזמור זה בכל יום, כדי שאם ישכח ולא יכוין בפסוק 'פותח את ידך' בפעם הראשונה, יכוין בפעם השניה והשלישית, שכל האומרו בכוונה מובטח לו שהוא בן העולם הבא. [יבי"א ח"ו סי' ה אות ו, ילקו"י מהדו"ק עמ' עה]

verses from פּוֹתֵחַ to the end of the *mizmor*. If he realized it only after he began the next *mizmor*, he should repeat this verse between two passages. If he did not realize it until after he completed *Pesuke dezimra*, he should make an extra effort to think of the pertinent concepts when reciting *Ashre* again at the end of the *shaḥarit* prayers, or when reciting it at the beginning of *minḥa*. This, in fact, is the reason why we recite *Ashre* three times a day – so that each person has three opportunities each day to recite it while concentrating properly on the *mizmor*, and thus guarantee for himself a place in the World to Come.[202]

Pesuke dezimra, since each passage contains wonderful praises of Hashem."

Harav HIDA (*Tzipporen Shamir* #20, cited in the *Yafe Lalev* 51:10) wrote: "One must pay attention and understand the words [of *Pesuke dezimra*] at least on a simple level and give praise to Hashem. If someone recites them without thought, or if he races through them without pronouncing the words correctly, he will be guilty of insulting Hashem instead of praising Him, and he is liable to be punished severely.

202. According to the *Kaf Haḥayim* Sofer (51:33), it is not necessary to repeat the verse if the person has already reached a point several verses ahead. He may rely on the fact that he will recite *Ashre* again at the end of *shaḥarit*, and therefore there is no good excuse to interrupt *Pesuke dezimra* to repeat this verse out of order. If someone fails to concentrate on the meaning of this verse during *Ashre* at the end of *shaḥarit*, however, he should repeat the verse later when he realizes his mistake, since at that point in the prayers it is not a sin to interrupt.

In contrast, the *Ben Ish Ḥai* (*parashat Vayigash* halakha 12) and Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. VI, #5:6) ruled that it is best to repeat the verse during *Pesuke dezimra* between two passages and fulfill the mitzvah of reciting it correctly as part of *Pesuke dezimra*.

Together with the previous verses

The *Ḥesed La'alafim* (51:6) ruled that if someone realizes somewhere in the middle of *Pesuke dezimra* that he had not concentrated on the meaning of the verse of פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדֶךָ when he recited it, he should stop where he is and repeat this verse. If he is past *Pesuke dezimra*, then after the *Amida* he should go back to the verse of סוֹמֵךְ ה' לְכָל הַנּוֹפְלִים and repeat from there with the proper concentration. The *Ben Ish Ḥai* concurred with this ruling. The words of the *Shulḥan Arukh*, however, imply that it is necessary only to repeat the verse of פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדֶךָ and no more. This is clearly the way that the *Birke Yosef* (51:5) understood the halakha, ruling that one need repeat the one verse only. This appears to be the ruling of the *Mishna Berura* (51:16) as well. This is the basis of the ruling of the *Yalkut Yosef* and the *Halakha Berura*. If time allows, however, it is commendable to begin from the verse of סוֹמֵךְ ה' לְכָל הַנּוֹפְלִים.

Reciting the verse after *shaḥarit*

The *Poskim* cited above ruled that if someone failed to recite the verse of פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדֶךָ correctly during *Pesuke dezimra*, he should repeat the verse after *shaḥarit*. Apparently, they did not want to rely on the *Ashre* that we recite together with *Uva letziyon*, because they understood that it is necessary to recite the verse with the proper concentration all three times each day.

The *Yalkut Yosef* and the *Halakha Berura*, however, ruled that if the person is already past *Pesuke dezimra* when he realizes his error, he can rely on the fact that he will repeat the verse during *Ashre-Uva letziyon* or at the beginning of the *minḥa* prayer. This ruling is based on the *Rishonim* (Rav Natrunai Ga'on and *Orḥot Ḥayim*, cited in responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. VI, #5:6) who wrote that the reason we recite *Ashre* three times each day is to make sure that we concentrate on the meaning of this verse at least once.

Since we follow the ruling that one should interrupt *Pesuke dezimra* between passages in order to repeat the verse of פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדֶךָ, it appears that we follow the opinion that it must be recited correctly three times a day. To be consistent with this ruling, it seems that when someone fails to recite it with the proper concentration during *Pesuke dezimra*, he should likewise repeat the verse after *shaḥarit* besides reciting *Ashre-Uva letziyon*.

ס. המנהג שכאשר אומרים פסוק 'פותח את ידך', פורשים כפיהם לעיני השמים, והוא מנהג יפה לעשות בזה פועל דמיוני לקבלת מזלם את השפע מלמעלה. אולם אין להרים ולהגביה ידיו למעלה. [ראה באו"ח ויגש הי"ב, ילקו"י שם בהערה]

סא. בסוף מזמור תהלה לדוד מוסיפים פסוק (תהלים קטו, יח): "וַאֲנַחְנוּ נְבָרֵךְ יָהּ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם הַלְלוּיָהּ". [רמ"א סי' נא ס"ז]

Holding one's palms open

60) The custom is to hold one's hands open with the palms up while reciting the verse of פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדֶךָ. In this way, we empower our words with a physical gesture that demonstrates our reception of Heaven's bounty. When doing this, the correct practice is to open one's palms without raising one's arms toward Heaven.[203]

Extra verse at the end of *Ashre*

61) After we complete the *mizmor* of *Tehilla leDavid*, we add the verse (*Tehillim* 115:18).[204]

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203. The responsa *Torah Lishmah* (attributed to Harav Yosef Hayim, #31) approved of the custom to open the hands, thus adding a physical gesture to one's prayers. He pointed out that our prophets often employed this method to express their predictions for the future. Although this verse refers to the Hand of Heaven and not our hands, this gesture still expresses our faith that our sustenance comes from the Hand of Heaven. Moreover, by reciting this verse we bring Heaven's bounty to us, and we open our hands to symbolize our soul's readiness to receive it. When King Shelomo prayed on behalf of the nation during the inauguration of the *Bet Hamikdash*, he held his hands open in this manner as well, as the verse states (*Melakhim I* 8:54).

The *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Vayigash* halakha 12) cited the second explanation, and he added that it is incorrect to raise one's arms to the sky when making this gesture. One should open the palms while holding the arms in a horizontal position.

The *Mekor Hayim* Bachrach (51:7) stated that the custom is to stand up when reciting this verse in order to renew one's efforts to concentrate on the words' meaning. This custom does not seem to be in practice anymore.

The *Sefer Haredim*, cited by the *Yafe Lalev* (51:9), instructs us to gaze up heavenward when reciting the verses of עֵינֵי כֹל אֵלֶיךָ יְשַׂבֵּרוּ and פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדֶךָ.

204. Rav Amram Ga'on said that we add this verse to the *mizmor* so that it ends with the word *Halleluyah*, thus connecting it to the *mizmorim* that follow and that begin with the word *Halleluyah*. The *Sefer Ha'eshkol* cited Rabbenu Yitzhak ibn Merwan Halevi offering a second reason: Since the Talmud asserts that by reciting *Tehilla leDavid* three times a day a person is ensured entry to the World to Come, we conclude the *mizmor* by proclaiming that we will continue to praise Hashem forever in that exalted location.

The *Bet Yosef* challenged the reason given by Rav Amram Ga'on. If the entire reason for adding this verse is in order to connect it to the following *mizmor*, which begins with the word *Halleluyah*, it should be necessary to add this verse in *Pesuke dezimra* only. There should be no reason to add it to *Ashre-Uva letziyon* or to *Ashre* recited at *minha*.

The *Bet Yosef* then reconciled this, answering that once we connect this verse to this *mizmor* in *Pesuke dezimra*, we add the verse every time we recite this *mizmor*. It should not be necessary to calculate whether or not to add the verse each time we recite the *mizmor*.

Despite this, Harav Shelomo Luria (responsa #64) ruled that we should omit this verse when reciting *Ashre* at *minha*.