

# Afterthoughts

- Yocheved Bienenfeld

## A Hidden Message in ASHREI

According to the Otzar HaTefilot, there is a "hidden" message in the words of the verse POTEI'ACH ET YADECHA UMASBI'A L'CHOL CHAI RATZON - You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing (Tehillim 145:16). The Shulchan Aruch tells us to concentrate particularly on these words to the extent that if we don't, we need to return to them and repeat them with the final verses (51:7). As the Mishna Berura explains (s"k 15), this is because the whole purpose of Chazal in including this Psalm in our prayers was that this verse emphasizes the praise of HKB"H, Who oversees and sustains all of His creatures.

The Otzar HaTefilot informs us that this message is also hidden in some of the letters of these words. The last letters of the first three words (POTEI'ACH ET YADECHA) spells out CHATACH, who is the angelic Minister of parnasa, of sustenance. The last letters of the remaining four words (UMASBI'A L'CHOL CHAI RATZON) spell out LE'ANI (for the poor). This understanding of the phrase clearly points to the physical sustenance Gd gives us.

I'd like to suggest that it's also possible to see this as applying to the spiritual needs of a person as well. LE'ANI could refer to the form of ONI as in Tehilim 102: T'FILA LE'ANI KI YA'ATOF V'LIFNEI HASHEM YISHPOCH SICHU - A prayer of the afflicted man who is overwhelmed and pours out his speech before the Lord. Here, ONI refers to one with many troubles. And he turns to HaShem who is HACHOTEICH CHAYIM L'CHOL CHAI - Who apportions life for all the living (Musaf repetition of the Amida - Yamim Nora'im), to better his lot in life. ✨