

## Psalm 119:73-104

Scholars note that although almost every verse in Psalm 119 is about the value of the study of the Law, it is all directed toward the Author - God. It depicts a love of God not desiccated or dried out by study but instead refreshed, informed and nourished by it.

## YOD

[https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/137068/jewish/Letters-of-Light.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/137068/jewish/Letters-of-Light.htm)

Also spelled Yud, the tenth letter and also the smallest - a dot or a single point. Every letter of the Hebrew alphabet begins with a single point.

This is the "jot" that Jesus was talking about concerning the Law:

- **Matthew 5:18** - "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

The "tittle" was the apex of a Hebrew letter, possibly the zayin or "crowns."

Ten is the number of the Ten Commandments and also the number of a minyan required for Torah study. There were 10 generations from Adam to Noah, and 10 more from Noah to Abraham. But there were also 10 plagues on Egypt, 10 spies who gave an evil report, and 10 incidents of murmuring by the children of Israel in the desert.

The shape is a dot, but with a tiny flame-like twirl at the top and bottom.

Spelled Yad, it can represent a hand (or rather the hand of God). God took Israel out of Egypt "with a mighty hand."

## A Jew

Spelled Yid it can represent a single Jew - Yehudi. In Hebrew, the names Israel and Jacob both begin with a Yod. (Yisreal and Yaakov).

The first time this term Yehudi is used in is Esther when Mordechai is described: "A man, a Jew (Yehudi) was in Shushan the capital..." (**Esther 2:5**).

But Mordechai was not from the tribe of Judah (Yehudah), but from Benjamin. For this reason the Talmud says anyone who denies idolatry and thereby acknowledges God is called a Yehudi or a Jew.

## God

But the Yod also represents God Himself - the Hebrew terms Yahweh (YHWH) and Adonay are written with two facing Yods between them. YHWH represents God in eternity and transcendent - "I am what I am." Adonai represents God as creator and Lord of nature, infusing and maintaining his creation. The two adjacent Yods connect these two views.

## Constancy

The letter Yod, when placed at the beginning of a word, represents constancy. This concept is illustrated in **Job 1:5**: "So did Job do (*yaaseh*) all of his days." The verb *asah* (עשה), "to do," would typically refer to a one-time accomplishment. Here, however, a yud precedes it, and empowers *asah* with continuity.

This is seen in its use in both the words for a Jew and for God as YHWH.

The name of God is spelled Yud-Hei-Vav-Hei. The last three letters form the word *hoveh* (hei, vav, hei) meaning "the present." God is present right now. The Yud in front of *hoveh* reminds us that God is present continuously, creating and maintaining the world.

Within the word Jew - *Yehudah* - is the word *hod*, "to praise." The Yod at the beginning signifies that for a true Jew, praise is not a one time event or even regular acts, but a continuous lifestyle.

This section starts off with a Yod representing God's hand:

**Psalm 119:73** - "Thy hands have made me and fashioned me: give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments."

Adam was fashioned from the clay by God, and in one sense this is true for all of us - we are God's creation.

- **Deuteronomy 32:6** - "Do you thus deal with the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is He not your Father, who bought you? Has He not made you and established you?"

- **Job 10:8** - "Your hands shaped me and altogether formed me. Will You now turn and destroy me?"

- **Psalm 139:13** - "For You formed my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb."

But especially so for Jesus, born miraculously of a virgin ( we have just celebrated Hanukkah and Christmas).

- **Luke 1:35** - "...The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God"

Spiritual birth is also solely by God alone:

- **John 1:13** - "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

- **1 Peter 1:3** - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"

- **1 Peter 1:23** - "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

- **James 1:18** - "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

Since you have formed me with a desire to know you, then give me understanding of your Law.

**Psalm 119:74** - "They that fear thee will be glad when they see me; because I have hoped in thy word."

- **Psalm 69:32** - "The humble shall see this, and be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God."

The evidence that You have delivered me will encourage others who hope in You as I did.

This is especially true if we hear a resurrected Christ speaking this, as we see the stone rolled away from the tomb.

### **More on Affliction**

**Psalm 119:75** - "I know, O LORD, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."

"afflicted" = *`anah* - afflicted but also means humbled and, depending on the context, submitted to God. The word includes to be depressed, to feel sorrow or grief, to be generally brought low.

Rashi sees it as meaning as "With justice, You afflicted me." i.e. the affliction was deserved, thinking of Israel's exile. But there's more going on here.

That Christ could say this after persecution, crucifixion and his descent into hell, then we can also agree that God is faithful - to His plan of salvation and sanctification - to bring us into affliction, if it results in our submission and humility before God.

We're again faced with the mysterious passage in **Hebrews 5:8** - "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered"

This is the polar opposite of Israel's murmurings in the Wilderness.

- **Isaiah 50:5-7** - "The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord GOD will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed."

- **2 Corinthians 4:16-17** - "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory"

- **1 Peter 5:10** (NET) - "And, after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace who called you to his eternal glory in Christ will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."

### Prayer for Mercy

**Psalm 119:76-77** - "Let, I pray thee, thy merciful kindness (cheched) be for my comfort, according to thy word unto thy servant. Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live: for thy law is my delight."

Facing God's strict justice, no one can stand. Therefore we implore God to bestow mercy, represented by forgiveness in Christ.

"for my comfort" = *nacham* - comfort, consolation. The Messiah was "the consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25).

"tender mercies" = *racham* - mercy and compassion, with reference to the womb as nourishing and protecting the fetus; one's inner feelings of pity. Sometimes referring to a girl or a woman.

**Psalm 119:78** - "Let the proud be ashamed; for they dealt perversely with me without a cause: but I will meditate in thy precepts."

or, "with lies they subvert me"

From the patriarchs to Christ to the apostles to today, believers have been slandered and persecuted. But it did not move them from "meditating in thy precepts."

Jesus quotes this (and also **Psalm 69:4**, **Psalm 109:3**):

- **John 15:24-25** - "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause."

**Psalm 119:79** - "Let those that fear thee turn unto me, and those that have known thy testimonies."

"turn" = *shuwb* - turn, return, repentance

Targum: "turn to my doctrine"

David is voicing the words of Messiah here:

- **Zechariah 1:3** - "Therefore say thou unto them, Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Turn ye unto me, saith the LORD of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the LORD of hosts."

- **Isaiah 44:22** - "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee."

**Psalm 119:80** - "Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed."

"sound" = *tamiym* - without blemish, perfect, upright, without spot. Also, completed, finished, whole, totally consumed, and therefore upright, clean, simple as opposed to a heart full of schemes and mischief.

A word used of the Passover lamb: **Exodus 12:5** - "Your lamb shall be without blemish..."

## KAPH

Kaph or Kaf is the eleventh letter of the Hebrew alphabet, with a numerical value of 20. Its design is of a palm, a spoon, or a crown. It means to bend oneself - to submit to the crown of the King/God.

Specifically, the rabbis saw the Kaf as the representation of *Kesser*, the crown of the King, pointing to submission to God's will. The gematria of the Hebrew word "twenty" is 620, the same as the word *Kesser*, crown. The Ten Commandments also contain 620 words.

The 613 commandments plus the additional 7 rabbinical laws total 620.

One meaning of Kaph is spoon. The root of the word "spoon" is *kafaf* — to bend - and points to submission and humility before God.

A transformed self: The words *anochi* and *ani* both mean "I." When the "I" of *ani* adds a Kaph, it transforms into *anochi*, a self that bends to the submission to God.

Interestingly, when the letter Kaph is added as a suffix to a word, it adds the word "you" to the root. The Kaph there is also written differently - it literally unfurls from a bent position to straight one. The self unfolds to include the person you are speaking to. Moreover, in the same way God as the King has appeared to us, and unfurled to include

us.

### More About Affliction

**Psalm 119:81-83** - "My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word. Mine eyes fail for thy word, saying, When wilt thou comfort me? For I am become like a bottle in the smoke; yet do I not forget thy statutes."

His soul or "life" is being "consumed" and coming to an end; his eyes also are failing, using the same word.

His whole being is becoming desiccated, dried out and cracking, as Rashi says, "Like a flask of skin that dries in smoke."

Recall the Messianic **Psalm 22:15** - "My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death."

This describes a time of the apparent absence of blessings, the former and the latter rain are missing, and the temptation to lose hope and give up is strong.

### Enemies

**Psalm 119:84-87** - "How many are the days of thy servant? when wilt thou execute judgment on them that persecute me? The proud have digged pits for me, which are not after thy law. All thy commandments are faithful: they persecute me wrongfully; help thou me. They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts."

"How many" = How few!

"When wilt thou execute judgment on them" - "How long?" is the perpetual cry of the saints:

- **Revelation 6:10** - "And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

"The proud have digged pits for me" -

- **Jeremiah 18:20** - "Should good be repaid with evil? For they have dug a pit for me Remember how I stood before You To speak good on their behalf, So as to turn away Your wrath from them."

The pit or the abyss is a widespread metaphor in myth.

Jeremiah was literally thrown into a pit, as was Joseph. And Christ, who was crucified and descended into the grave for three days, will in the end cast Satan and his angels into the lake of fire.

- **Proverbs 28:10** - "He who leads the upright astray in an evil way will himself fall into his own pit, But the blameless will inherit good."

"They had almost consumed me upon earth; but I forsook not thy precepts." -

- **Psalm 44:18-19** - "Our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way; Though thou hast sore broken us in the place of dragons, and covered us with the shadow of death."

**Psalm 119:88** - "Quicken me after thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth."

"quicken" = *chayah* - life, restore to life. A reference to resurrection. (This is a cry throughout this psalm).

- **Romans 8:11** - "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

## LAMED

Lamed is the twelfth letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The design of the lamed is two letters merged together: the vav and the kaph. The Kabbalah says that the letter lamed is compared to a tower flying in the air.

The meaning of Lamed is to teach and to learn, drawing down truths of eternity down to our own understanding in this world.

Its numerical value is 30. The 'Ethics of Our Fathers' says: "When one reaches the age of thirty, he reaches the age of full strength."

The Midrash Shmuel states that one has the ability to guide and influence others for good at the age of thirty. Until then, he is simply laying his foundation. Jesus' ministry began at age 30. But learning continue one's whole life. Ethics of Our Fathers says, "Who is wise? One who learns from everyone." i.e. even those younger than you. In Torah study, the rabbis said, one must always be a child, ready to learn.

## Eternally Settled

**Psalm 119:89** - "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."

This assurance comes in the exact middle of Psalm 119. Other verses in this psalm likewise stress the eternal validity of God's words:

- **Psalm 119:144** - "The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting..."

- **Psalm 119:152** - "Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast

founded them for ever..."

- **Psalm 119:160** - "Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever"

Throughout the Bible:

"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever" (**Isaiah 40:8**).

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (**1 Peter 1:23**).

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (**Matthew 24:35**)

**Psalm 119:90-91** - "Thy faithfulness is unto all generations: thou hast established the earth, and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances: for all are thy servants."

Aben Ezra - "they stand or continue unto this day to do the will of God; to execute his judgments and decrees, or observe his order and ordinances."

His word is settled in heaven but also is active now in his creation. God as creator has established the earth and its peoples, and all of nature obeys His word, which sustains and maintains all natural and physical laws.

- **Psalm 24:2** - "The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof, the world and all who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters."

- **Jeremiah 31:35** - "Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The LORD of hosts is his name"

- **Isaiah 48:13** - "Surely My own hand founded the earth, and My right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them, they stand up together."

### **Even More on Affliction**

**Psalm 119:92** - "Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction. I will never forget thy precepts: for with them thou hast quickened me. I am thine, save me; for I have sought thy precepts."

His cry for quickening/resurrection is being answered. But it's ongoing and the danger lingers, and he still calls out "save me!"

**Psalm 119:95** - "The wicked have waited for me to destroy me: but I will consider thy testimonies."

"to destroy me" - either by death, or spiritually by drawing him away from the true path into the way of wickedness.

**Psalm 119:96** - "I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad."

The Jewish translation is, "Of every finite thing I have seen the end..."

Targum - "I have seen an end of all that I have studied in and looked into."

Rashi - To every conclusion of a thing there is an end and a boundary, but Your commandments have no end or boundary to their conclusion.

## MEM

Mem is the thirteenth letter of the Hebrew alphabet. its meaning is water and also the Messiah. Torah, the most vital element in our spiritual lives, is referred to as water.

There are two forms of the mem: the open mem and the closed mem. As the Talmud explains,<sup>1</sup> the open mem represents the revealed Torah and the closed mem represents the Torah's secrets. Additionally, the mem represents the womb—**רחם** (rechem)—which ends with a closed mem. The closed mem represents the nine months when the womb is closed. The open mem represents the period of childbirth, when the womb is open.

The numerical value of Mem is 40. Forty is the number of days it rained upon the earth during the Flood. And a *mikveh*, a ritual bath, is made up of forty *se'ah* (about 200 gallons). The Flood was for atonement, to purify and transform the world, in much the same way a *mikveh* purifies a person.

Forty is also the number of days Moses spent on Mount Sinai (three times). Moses' spies scouted the land for forty days. The Jews were in the desert for forty years. Jesus was tempted in the wilderness for 40 days.

Forty represents a metamorphosis, a transformation. After forty days, the embryo of a child begins to assume a recognizable form.

Throughout the entire Torah, the final closed form of the mem appears in the middle of a word only once, in Isaiah 9:6, speaking of Messiah: "His rule (i.e., the kingship of *Mashiach*) will increase and be blessed with peace without end." "His rule" with the closed Mem means Messiah will bring "closure" to the exile, and the hidden secrets of the Torah will take the place of what is revealed in the Torah now.

- **Matthew 5:18** - "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." The hidden secrets of the Torah - we know it as the new covenant (**Jeremiah**

**31:31-34**) and the law of liberty (**James 2:12**).

- **Romans 10:4** - "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

**Psalm 119:97** - "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."

As in the Shema: **Deuteronomy 6:6** - "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart"

**Psalm 119:98** - "Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me." (i.e. the commandments, not the enemies)

Demonstrated by Jesus in His temptation in the wilderness, answering Satan by scriptures.

**Psalm 119:99-100** - "I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts."

Recall Jesus among the teachers at the Temple as a boy:

- **Luke 2:46-47** - "And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."

**Psalm 119:101-102** - "I have refrained my feet from every evil way, that I might keep thy word. I have not departed from thy judgments: for thou hast taught me."

David may have desired this, but he did not fulfill it - Jesus did.

Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (**Hebrews 4:15**)

This probably is one connection with the Torah reading of **Deuteronomy 12:30** - "Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them (the ways of the Canaanites)"

Also **Deuteronomy 12:28** - "Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the LORD thy God."

**Psalm 119:103** - "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"

- **Psalm 34:8** - "O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth

in him"

See **Psalm 119:66** regarding discernment and judgment as "taste." See also **Psalm 19:10**.

Tasting and eating the word is a metaphor for taking in spiritual nourishment:

- **Jeremiah 15:16** - "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts."

**Psalm 119:104** - "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way."

Targum: "I hate every lying man." The original deceiver was Satan in the Garden of Eden:

- **Genesis 3:4** - "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:"

- **John 8:44** - "When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

- **2 Timothy 3:13** - "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived."

And even our own hearts are deceitful:

- **Jeremiah 17:9** - "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

God's precepts give us discernment to recognize a "false way" and to know when our own minds are deceiving us.