



# AYIN

Psalm 119:121-128

121 I have done justice and righteousness;

Do not leave me to my oppressors.

122 Be surety for Your servant for good;

Do not let the proud oppress me.

123 My eyes fail *from seeking* Your salvation

And Your righteous word.

<sup>124</sup> Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy,  
And teach me Your statutes.

<sup>125</sup> I *am* Your servant; Give me understanding,  
That I may know Your testimonies.

126 *It is time for You to act, O LORD,*

*For they have regarded Your law as void.*

127 Therefore I love Your commandments

*More than gold, yes, than fine gold!*

128 Therefore all *Your precepts concerning all things*  
I consider *to be right;*

*I hate every false way.*

In a recent conversation with the church in Ukraine, I asked them what Bible verses have been significant to them during this time. Here are their answers:

Ps 23; 1 Cor 10:13; Ps 27; Ps 91; Ps 33:20; Isa 41:10; Jn 10:28-29; Rom 8:35-39.

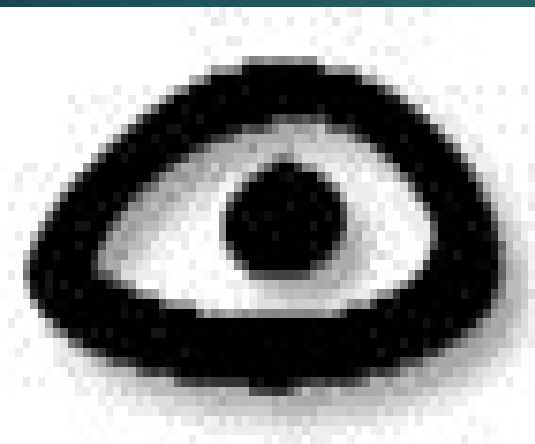
What verses for comfort would you add?

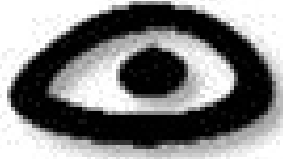
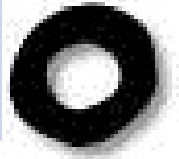




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Psalm 119:121-128

AYIN  
(Psalm 119:121–128)



Letter Name	Early Hebrew	Middle Hebrew	Late Hebrew	Modern Hebrew
AYIN				

**Pictograph:**

Eye

**Meanings:**

Watch, Know, Shade

**Sound:**

Silent





Ayin

Psalm 119:121–128

*“An Appeal to God to Take Action”*

The point of this meditation is that it is time for the LORD to intervene on behalf of his servant and end the oppression of the arrogant people.

Their rebellion against the Lord prompts the psalmist to confirm his love and devotion to the law of the LORD. When we see evil in the world, it should motivate us all the more to live godly lives.

## Short Outline:

- A. Prayer for Deliverance from Opposition 119:121-123
- B. Plea for Mercy 119:124
- C. Petition for Understanding 119:125-126
- D. Proclamation of Love for the Word 119:127-128

The psalmist thinks that it is time for the LORD to act to defend him and destroy the oppressors, so he appeals to God to deal with him in mercy and enable him to know and love the commandments (119:121–128).

The appeal for action toward his enemies is prominent (Psa 119:121b, 122b, 126).

The appeal is based on the psalmist's servant-relationship to God.

Notice its triple repetition in 119:122, 124, 125.

He is arguing, "I am your servant, so You are responsible to take care of me."

# **I. Prayer for deliverance from oppressors (Psa 119:121–124)**

Those believers who trust the LORD for deliverance know that they are servants of the Lord God; and so the word “servant” occurs several times in the psalm—“I am your servant” is at the center of this meditation.

**Psalm 119:121.** I have done justice and righteousness; Do not leave me to my oppressors.

I have done – This has been his manner of life. It is not as if he had done one or two good deeds.

He begins this section by stating that he has done what is just and right. These are qualities that God loves and honors (see Ps. 33:5: The Lord loves righteousness and justice).

justice מִשְׁפָּט (mishpat) justice, ordinance. the individual ordinances of Mosaic law (Deut 33:10, 21; 16 times in Ps 119).

Righteousness צֶדֶק (tsedeq) conformity to an ethical or moral standard.

Not only has he obeyed specific commandments of the Lord, his manner of life has been consistent with divine standards.

Because he has been loyal to the law of the LORD, he is confident in praying for God to deliver him from the oppression of the lawless.

His petitions begin with, “Do not leave me to my oppressors” –

Do not leave me     נִיַּח (nuach) rest, settle down.

signifies not only absence of movement but being settled in a particular place (whether concrete or abstract) with overtones of finality. This word usually is connected with rest from enemies, to be in a peaceful place. But here it has the idea of being abandoned.

Don't let the enemy settle down on me, don't abandon me to my oppressors.



my oppressors – עֲשִׂק (‘ashaq) oppress, defraud, do violence. “to those crushing me,” literally.

This word for oppression is concerned with acts of abuse of power or authority, the burdening, trampling, and crushing of those lower in station. It is often used of extortion.

**Psalm 119:122** Be surety for Your servant for good;  
Do not let the proud oppress me.

Be surety אָרַב ('arab) to become surety, give pledges.

The word “*be a surety*” is normally used with a legal sense, when one person takes the responsibility for another to guarantee the deal.

Here it is used figuratively because the psalmist is asking God to provide surety for him (a comparison with the legal activity). He is asking God to guarantee his welfare. He is essentially asking God to do something that will ensure his protection and deliverance.

for Your servant – Since he is God’s servant, it is God’s responsibility to take care of him

Those believers who trust the LORD for deliverance know that they are servants of the Lord God; and so the word “servant” occurs several times in the psalm—“I am your servant” is at the center of this meditation.

for good. Give me a pledge that you will do good; guarantee that good will come to me.

People who pray for God to act on their behalf must demonstrate their loyalty to Him by their obedience to His Word and rejection of false ways. The standard for effective prayer is experiential righteousness (James 5:16).

In praying for God's help, often the believer looks for some sign, some indication (like a pledge would be a guarantee) that God was hearing their prayers and would answer them.

This might be a partial fulfillment of the prayer, or a word of encouragement from someone else; but the sign that you desire may come through the confidence that God had heard the prayer. Such confidence comes from knowing and believing the Word of God.

Do not let the proud oppress me.

In the second part of the verse he simply asks God not to let the arrogant oppress him. It is only right that God fight for the righteous and not allow the arrogant unbelievers to triumph.

the proud זַדִּי (zed) proud, arrogant. See verses 21, 521, 69, 78, 85

oppress — The word for *oppression* is the same word as in verse 121.

His oppressors have abused their authority to crush the psalmist who is of a lower station.

**Psalm 119:123** My eyes fail *from seeking* Your salvation And Your righteous word.

In verse 123 the psalmist inserts a lamentation over his condition, repeating expressions he has used before.

He says, “my eyes fail for your salvation.” The idea is that of longing for something to the point of weakness (see Psa 119:82).



*Your righteous word* means the fulfillment of the promise of deliverance that God made to his people.

He has obeyed God's Word, and the enemies have not; therefore he prays for God to keep His Word to him. In the next verse he appeals to God to deal with His servant by His faithful covenant love and teach him his statutes.

He is saying that he is getting weak waiting for God's deliverance. The deliverance in this context is "*your righteous word.*"

*Your righteous word* means the fulfillment of the promise of deliverance that God made to his people. He has obeyed God's Word, and the enemies have not; therefore he prays for God to keep His Word to him. In the next verse he appeals to God to deal with His servant by His faithful covenant love and teach him his statutes.

**Psalm 119:124** Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy, And teach me Your statutes.

Deal with Your servant – again we see him appealing to his servant status as a basis for his petition.

mercy — חֶסֶד (*chesed*)

The word refers to loyal love or covenant love. The use of the term “loyal love” and the repetition of the word “servant” stress the covenant relationship the psalmist enjoys with the Lord, a relationship he correctly understands.

In verse 125 he states, “I am your servant.”

This is not only the language of the personal covenant relationship he has with the Lord, but also the expression of his dependence on God.

The believer in covenant with God is always the servant, always to be dependent, always to be obedient.

As a servant, the believer waits for God's Word that gives him instructions.

And teach me Your statutes – ten times in this psalm he says this: teach me. This is a prayer of true humility.

## II. Petition for Understanding (Psa 119:125–126)

**Psalm 119:125** *I am* Your servant; Give me understanding, That I may know Your testimonies.

*I am* Your servant

The psalmist focuses emphatically upon himself by using the first person personal pronoun *I*. Throughout this entire psalm, the writer makes one major assumption about himself: He does not innately possess the wisdom needed for life.

Give me understanding, בִּינָה (bîn) understand,  
consider, perceive, regard.

The verb and its derivatives are used 247 times. Its main English usage is “understanding” or “insight.” The background idea of the verb is to “discern,” and thus includes the concept of distinguishing between things, which will lead to understanding. Such understanding only comes through the Word.

That I may know Your testimonies. יָדַע (yada‘)  
know. Not simply to know what they are, but to  
understand and apply them.

Here the psalmist prays for God to cause him to  
understand that he might know God’s laws. This  
emphasis on knowing is also fitting for a relationship  
with God.

His prayer expresses his willingness to accept the claims  
of God made in the law.



Knowing God or His ways signifies proper behavior toward Him, i.e., faith and obedience. To know the LORD is the language of faith; this is seen in passages where the expression is paralleled by “serve God,” “fear God,” “believe in God,” and “call on the name of the Lord.”

The language of knowing is reciprocal: for God to know people means that they belong to Him, that He will deliver them (Ps. 1:6).

**Psalm 119:126** *It is time for You to act, O LORD,  
For they have regarded Your law as void.*

Time עֵת ('et) time. God is consistently presented as the One who is in control of all events. God is the one who has designed life's components so that each has a suitable season (Ecc 3:11; cf. Prov 6:14).

for *You* to act, O LORD. The verb “*to act*” (simply, “*to do*” something) in this context means to judge the wicked and deliver the righteous (see Jer. 18:23; Ezek. 31:11).

The psalmist could have said, “It is time to act because they have afflicted *me*.” While this is true, he does not say it. He says, “It is time to act because they have offended *you* (God).” Concern for the character and reputation of God is always at the forefront.

*For they have regarded Your law as void. פָּרַר*  
(parar) break, destroy, frustrate, invalidate, to violate or renege on revealed truth.

Of the fifty-three uses of pārar, in twenty-three the direct object is “covenant.”

As a servant of the LORD the psalmist knows the promises of the covenant, he states that it is time for the LORD to act, which goes beyond confidence to boldness.

He explains that this is not simply because he is in peril, but because God needs to vindicate His own laws which the arrogant have broken or nullified by their actions.

### III. Proclamation of Love for the Word (127–128)

**Psalm 119:127** Therefore I love Your commandments More than gold, yes, than fine gold!

Having made his appeal to God to act, now, the psalmist closes his meditation with attestations of his love for and loyalty to the commands of God.

He begins (v. 127) with “*therefore*” which gives the idea that the more the arrogant break God’s laws, the more he loves His commandments.

He loves God’s commands more than fine gold (an expression that is reminiscent of Proverbs and Psa 19:10).

**Psalm 119:128** Therefore all *Your* precepts concerning all things I consider *to be* right; I hate every false way.

Now he makes a statement that he regards God's precepts as right, and that is why he hates every false way.

Precepts פְּקֻדֹתֶיךָ (piqqûdîm), precepts.

This is one of the key words in this psalm. The word points to the particular instructions of the Lord, as of one who cares about details.

This word is from a root meaning to visit, to appoint. It refers to a charge and thus anything the Lord has ordered.

It views God as the definer of duty and is a general term for the responsibilities that God places on his people.



I consider *to be* right; יָשָׁר (yashar) be level, straight, (up) right, just, lawful.

Ethically, uprightness is a manner of life. It is a characteristic of the blameless (Prov 11:5) and of the man of discernment.

He is not passing judgment on the word of God by saying I consider your precepts to be right. Literally he is saying, “I have lived uprightly”.

I hate every false way.