

Psalms 119:169

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD: give me understanding according to thy word.

Analysis

Let my cry come near before thee, O LORD (תְּקַנֵּב רָגְנִתִּי לִפְנֵיכְךָ יְהוָה, tiqrav rinnati lefanekha YHWH)—The Taw (ת) section, final stanza, opens with urgent petition. Qarav means 'come near, approach, draw close'—often used of priestly access to God (Leviticus 21:21). Rinnah can mean 'cry, shout, song'—desperate appeal or joyful worship. The request: **give me understanding according to thy word** (קְדַבֵּךְ בְּבִינְךָ, kid'verekha havineni). Bin means 'discern, perceive, understand with insight.' Understanding flows from the Word itself.

James 1:5 echoes this: 'If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.' Christ grants the Spirit to illumine Scripture (John 16:13).

Historical Context

The image of the cry 'coming near' reflects temple worship, where prayers ascended like incense (Psalm 141:2; Revelation 8:3-4). The final section returns to the psalm's opening themes—seeking understanding (v. 169 echoes v. 34, 73, 125, 144) and divine instruction. The acrostic ends where it began: with God's Word as source of comprehension.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to ask for your prayer to 'come near' God rather than just asking God to answer?
2. How does understanding 'according to' (kid'varekha) God's Word differ from human wisdom or intuition?
3. In what specific area of confusion do you need to pray for God-given understanding rooted in Scripture?

Interlinear Text

בְּקָרְבָּן	רֹבֶת	לִפְנֵי	יְהִי	כִּדְבָּרְךָ
come near	TAU Let my cry	before	thee O LORD	according to thy word
H7126	H7440	H6440	H3068	H1697

בְּבִינָה:
give me understanding
H995

Additional Cross-References

James 1:5 (Parallel theme): If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Psalms 18:6 (References Lord): In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.

2 Chronicles 1:10 (Parallel theme): Give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people: for who can judge this thy people, that is so great?