

Psalm 69:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Hear me, O LORD; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.

Analysis

Hear me, O LORD; for thy lovingkindness is good: turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies. After intense petitions (verses 14-15), David grounds his appeal in God's character. "Hear me" (אָנֹה/aneni) literally means "answer me"—not merely listen but respond actively. "Lovingkindness" (חסֶד/chesed) is covenant faithfulness, loyal love, steadfast mercy—God's committed, unbreakable devotion to His people despite their unfaithfulness.

"Thy lovingkindness is good" (תְּבוֹנָה חָסֶד/chasdekha) declares divine mercy's inherent excellence and beneficence. It isn't merely available but actively beneficial, life-giving, transformative. "Turn unto me" (פָּנָה אֵלֶיךָ/fenei elai) asks God to turn His face toward the sufferer—the opposite of hiding His face (verse 17).

"According to the multitude of thy tender mercies" (כַּרְבָּן רָחָמִים/kerov rachamekha)—rachamim derives from rechem (womb), evoking maternal compassion. It's visceral, tender, deeply feeling mercy. The "multitude" emphasizes abundance—God's mercies aren't limited or rationed but overflow inexhaustibly.

Historical Context

Attributes of God—especially chesed (covenant love) and rachamim (compassion)—are central to Israel's covenant theology, rooted in Exodus 34:6-7 where Yahweh proclaims Himself "merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth." Every appeal for mercy references this foundational self-

revelation.

The request for God to "turn His face" recalls the Aaronic benediction (Numbers 6:24-26): "The LORD make his face shine upon thee... The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Divine favor is depicted spatially—God's face turned toward brings blessing; His face hidden brings distress.

Christian theology recognizes Christ as the ultimate revelation of God's chesed and rachamim. In Christ, God not only turns His face toward humanity but assumes human flesh, entering our suffering.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does basing prayer on God's character rather than our worthiness change our approach to Him in desperation?
2. What does "turn unto me" reveal about the nature of divine presence and absence in believers' experience?
3. How do you experience God's "tender mercies" as more than abstract doctrine but as lived reality?

Interlinear Text

מְלֹא־כָּל־הָרָאָה־כִּי־וְבָרְאָה־נִי
Hear me O LORD is good for thy lovingkindness

אֶלְיָהוּ פָּנָה־בְּנֵי־עַמּוֹת־בְּרִכָּה
unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies turn

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 109:21 (Good): But do thou for me, O GOD the Lord, for thy name's sake: because thy mercy is good, deliver thou me.

Psalms 25:16 (Parallel theme): Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted.

Psalms 26:11 (Parallel theme): But as for me, I will walk in mine integrity: redeem me, and be merciful unto me.

Psalms 63:3 (Parallel theme): Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

Psalms 51:1 (Parallel theme): Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.