

## Psalms 139

**1 O LORD, thou hast searched (*ḥâqar*) me, and known (*yâda*) me.**

- *ḥâqar* - penetrate, examine intimately; also searching (spying out) out land or a city.
- *yâda'* - to know. By experience, see, hear or perceive. *Yada* is a revelatory thing. As we begin to talk to God about what He has done, He will reveal new things to us. In other instances, it communicates the desire for God to use our arms and hands to partner with Him in the miraculous.

**2 Thou knowest (*yâda*) my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest (*biyn*) my thought (*rêa'*) afar off.**

- *biyn* - to know how to use the knowledge one possesses, to know how to function practically. It comes from the root word *bin*, meaning to discern between two factors, good and evil.
- *rêa'* - purpose, aim, thought, idea; personal friend, companion with whom feels very close and one shares confidences; Moses face to face, like brother or son

**3 Thou compasses (*zâra*) my path (*ôrah*) and my lying down, and art acquainted (*sâkan*) with all my ways (*derek*).**

- *zârâ* - search out, measure; to stir up the air to produce a scattering or dispersing for reasons of purification or chastisement.
- *ôrah* - way, path, well-trodden road
- *sâkan* - familiar, to minister, be serviceable, be of use, profit or benefit
- *derek* - road, journey, course of life

**4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest (*yâda'*) it altogether.**

Before he could frame a word on his tongue, God was fully familiar with what he would say.

**5 Thou hast beset (*šûr*) me behind and before, and laid (*šiyt*) thine hand (*kap*) upon me.**

- *šûr* - cramped, confined, bind, to hem in, completely surrounding
- *šiyt* - set, appoint
- *kap* - hollow of hand, palm - the hand itself always speaks of the miraculous power of God, partnering with man to create something from nothing.

**6 Such knowledge (*da'at*) is too wonderful (*pil'iy*) for me; it is high (*sâgab*), I cannot attain unto it.**

- *da'at* (derivative of *yada*)- knowing, to distinguish
- *pil'iy* - secret, incomprehensible, extraordinary
- *sâgab* - inaccessible

The psalmist uses four verbs of perception, reflecting Yahweh's attentiveness to the fullness of the psalmist's life: "to know" (*yâda'*); "to perceive" (*biyn*); "to discern" (*zârâ*); "to be familiar with" (*sâkan*).

- *yâda'* - to know, by experience, see, hear or perceive. *Yada* is a revelatory thing. When we begin to talk to God about what He has done, He will reveal new things to us. In other instances, it communicates the desire for God to use our arms and hands to partner with Him in the miraculous.

v1 You know (*yâda'*) me  
v2 Thou knowest (*yâda*) my downsitting and mine uprising,  
v4 there is not a word on my tongue, you know (*yâda'*) it altogether

- *biyn* - to know how to use the knowledge one possesses, to know how to function practically. It comes from the root word *bin*, meaning to discern between two factors, good and evil. It may feel at times that we are in the middle of light and dark. This is being in the middle of the battle representing the authority of the Lord and knowing what to do. It is a perceptive insight. Understanding has more to do with grasp and obey as opposed to having all the answers. It stems from the word for son (*ben*), as the Father entrusts a son to represent Him as a priest, mediator, facing opposition and to not be deceived and know what the assignment is.

v2 "thou understandest (*biyn*) my thought from afar"

- *zârâ* - search out, measure, to stir up the air to produce a scattering or dispersing for reasons of purification or chastisement. Grain is cleansed of chaff by using a fan to blow it away. God's covenant people require a purifying also, but it will be a chastening experience; hence the Lord is said, metaphorically, "to fan" his people (Jeremiah 15:7), with the result that they will be scattered as chaff to various distant places.

v3 "Thou compassed (*zârâ*) my path and my lying down

- *sâkan* - familiar, to minister, be serviceable, be of use, profit or benefit.

V3 ...and art acquainted (*sâkan*) with all my ways.

**7** Whither shall I go from thy spirit (*rûah*)? or whither shall I flee from thy presence (*pâniym*)?

- *rûah* - spirit, cool, whirlwind, wind in the OT  
Meaning the person of God. The heart and individuality of God. While it is usually mentioned as the Spirit of the Lord (*Yahweh*) or the Spirit of God (*Elohim*), it also speaks of that Spirit that resides within man. He is ever present to refresh, invigorate, energize and direct us in partnership with His purpose.

- *pâniym* - *paneħ* – (n) face, presence (closeness, intimacy) and (v) root *pana*, which means to turn towards a direction, a person or a thing. *Paneħ* is the role of the presence of God as it works within and through us.

**Jeremiah 23:23-24** 23 Am I a God at hand, saith the LORD, and not a God afar off? 24 Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

**8** If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell (*sheol*), behold, thou art there.

- *sheol* - derivative of *sha'al*, hell, grave in the OT, meaning to be shrouded or hidden and corresponds quite easily to the Gr. word *hades* in the NT, which describes the gates of hell.

**9** If I take the wings of the morning (dawn), and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea;  
**10** Even there shall thy hand (*yâd*) lead me, and thy right hand (*yâmîyn*) shall hold (*'âħaz*) me.

- *yâd* - the hand (open); speaks of the beginning of partnership and creativity, applied in the stillness of winter in our lives, the inauguration of the cycle of His ways.
- *yâmîyn* – right hand, stronger, more dexterous
- *'âħaz* - hold, seize, grasp, possess

**11** If I say, Surely the darkness (*hōšek*) shall cover (*šûp*) me; even the night shall be light about me.

- *hōšek* - dark, black, darkness, obscurity
- *šûp* - bruise, crush, break, cover

**12** Yea, the darkness hideth (*hâšak*) not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness (*hăšêkâ*) and the light are both alike to thee

- Even the darkness is not dark to God, darkness is as light with Him, night as bright as day.

**John 1:5** And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

**13** For thou hast possessed (*qânâ*) my reins (*kilyâ*):

- *qânâ* - created by God/acquire by purchase
- *kilyâ* - heart, mind, soul, seat of emotion, kidneys (organ that filter impurities from blood; innermost aspects of personality)

thou hast covered (*sâkaḳ*) me in my mother's womb.

- *sâkaḳ* - entwined, fenced in, covered over, hedged, overshadowed

**Exodus 33:22** And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will **cover** (*sâkāk*) thee with my hand while I pass by:

**14** I will praise (*yâdâ*) thee; for I am fearfully (*yârê'*) and wonderfully made (*pâlâ*): marvellous (*pâlâ*) are thy works (*ma'ăseh*); and that my soul knoweth (*yâdâ*) right well (exceedingly).

- *pâlâ* - separate, distinct, marked, separated, distinguished
- *ma'ăseh* – needlework

**15** My substance (*'ôsem*) was not hid (*kâhad*) from thee, when I was made in secret (*sêter*), and curiously wrought (*râqam*) in the lowest parts of the earth.

- *osem, from asam* – power, might, bones, structural system
- *kâhad* - concealed
- *râqam* – knit, woven, needlework

**16** Thine eyes did see my substance (*'ôsem*), yet being unperfect (*gôlem*); and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned (*yâšar*), when as yet there was none of them.

- *gôlem* – embryo, fetus; formless mass, incomplete vessel
- *yâšar* – molded, formed, framed, as potter with clay

**17** How precious also are thy thoughts (*rêa'*) unto me, O God! how great (*'âšam*) is the sum of them!

- *rêa'* – purpose, aim, thought, idea; personal friend, companion with whom feels very close and one shares confidences; Moses face to face, like brother or son
- *'âšam* - be strong, mighty, great, increased

**18** If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, **I am still with thee.**

**19** Surely thou wilt slay (*qâtal*) the wicked (*râšâ'*), O God: depart from me therefore, ye bloody men.

- *qâtal* – cut off, kill, destroy
- *râšâ'* - morally wrong, ungodly

**20** For they speak against thee wickedly (*mezimâ*), and thine enemies take thy name in vain (*šâwe'*).

- *mezimâ* - purpose; evil device; evil thoughts; discretion; plot with a purpose
- *šâwe'* – emptiness, vanity, falsehood - sense of desolating; evil as destructive, morally ruin

**21** Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved (loathe, detest) with those that rise up against thee?

**22** I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.

**23** Search (*ḥâqar*) me, O God, and know (*yâda*) my heart (*lêbâb*):

- *ḥâqar* – examine intimately and thoroughly
- *lêbâb* - inner man, mind, will, heart, soul

try (*bâhan*) me, and know (*yâda*) my thoughts (*śar'ap*)

- *bâhan* – put to the test, smelt, refine, examining to determine essential qualities, especially integrity, prove, investigate, tempt, examine, scrutinize
- *śar'ap* - cogitations, anxiety, disquieting thoughts

**24** And see (*râ'â*) if there be any wicked (*'ôšeb*) way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

- *'ôšeb* - idol, pain, sorrow, offence