



Yirat Adonai

The Fear of the L-rd

יְרֵאת יְהוָה יְרֵאשִׁית דָּעַת

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.

The “fear of the L-rd” (*yirat Adonai*) does not denote a cringing terror of G-d but a reverential awe at the glory of His Presence as He daily condescends to be involved in our lives. *Yirah* is really a form of devotion, a consciousness of the sacredness and mystery of receiving life itself from the Living G-d (*El Chai*), and essentially draws upon gratitude to G-d for this great gift.

יְרֵאת יְהוָה

Yirat Adonai

The fear of the Lord

Such an attitude of devotion yields wisdom (*chokhmah*) which is the result of “practicing the presence” of the Lord in our daily lives. As James tells us, this wisdom is “first pure, then full of peace, gentleness, mercy, good fruits, and sincerity” (see James 3:17).

Since we are created by G-d to worship and know Him, Psalm 111:10 is often recited in the morning to remind us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom:



יְרֵאשִׁית תְּחִמָּה יְרֵאת יְהוָה, שֶׁכֵּל טוֹב
לְכָל עֲשִׂיהֶם, תְּהִלָּתוֹ עֲמֹדַת לְעַד.
בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלֻכּוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever. Blessed be the name of his glorious kingdom forever and ever.”



Transliterated:

רֵאשִׁית חֲכָמָה יִרְאַת יְהוָה, שֵׁכֶל טוֹב
 tov se-khel 'Adonai yir-'at choch-mah rei-shit
 good insight LORD the fear of the beginning of wisdom

לְכֹל עֹשֵׂיהֶם, תְּהִלָּתוֹ עֹמֶדֶת לְעַד.
 la-'ad 'o-me-det te-hil-la-to 'o-sei-hem le-khol
 forever endures his praise who do to all

בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
 va-'ed le-'o-lam mal-khu-to ke-vod shem ba-rukh
 forever and ever his glorious kingdom Blessed is the name of

*Reishit chokhmah yirat Adonai, sekhel tov
 lekhhol oseihem, tehillato omedet la'ad.
 Barukh shem kevod malkhuto le'olam va'ed.*