Yirat Adonai
The Fear of the L-rd

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.

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:

“The fear of the L-rd 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:

ראַשְׁתָּךְ חֳכָמָה יִרְאַת יְהוָה, שְׁכֵלָּל טוֹב
tov sekhel 'Adonai yir'ah tov chokmah reishit
good insight LORD the fear of the beginning of wisdom

לִכְלָל נְשֵׁיָה, חֹלְלָהּ נְמָנֵר לֵעָד.
la'ad 'om-de't tehillato 'o-seihem lekhol
forever endures his praise who do to all

בֵּרוּחַ שֵׁם בֵּבְאָד מִלְכָּהָה לֵעָד.
va'ed le'o'am malkhuto kevod shem barukh
forever and ever his glorious kingdom Blessed is the name of

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