

Tefillah Focus Of The Week:

REISHIS CHOCHMAH

Awe Of Heaven: Constant Comfort

MEANING: The simple translation of the prayer

The beginning of wisdom is the awe of G-d, good understanding to all their practitioners; His praise endures forever.

ראשית חכמה
יראת ה' שכל טוב
לכל עשיהם תהלתו
עמדת לעד

WORD TO THE WISE: Meaning within the meaning



The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 5) states that one's intent when reciting G-d's Name (spelled Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh) should be to express that G-d is **Master of All**. The Mishneh Berurah adds that the Name also means that Hashem "Is, Was, and Will Be." Nefesh HaChaim adds that the Name also refers to the fact that Hashem is "Mehaveh Es Hakol - Created and is Continuously Creating All That Exists."

THEME:

An essential concept of the prayer

A Constant Mitzvah

A Jew's goal is to cultivate a constant fear of Hashem.

INSIGHT:

Deeper meanings of the theme

Safe And Secure Under Hashem

Why is fear of Hashem a constant mitzvah? The Gemara explains that **it is, in fact, the very purpose of all of existence:** "The Holy One, Blessed is He, created His world only so that human beings would stand in awe of Him." The Maharal explains that when man feels this awe, he abandons his will to that of G-d and achieves profound closeness to Him, thereby achieving the goal of creation.

Notwithstanding the essential nature of *yirah*, most people do not want to feel fear all day, every day. We understand that *yiras Hashem* can save us from sin, just as a stop sign prevents one from advancing into oncoming traffic.

We also understand that the stark awareness of G-d's presence helps us control our words and actions. Even so, most people find the idea of such close Divine scrutiny to be an uncomfortable mind-set. Making it a constant mind-set is therefore even more difficult.

Yet, on a deeper level, **there is tremendous comfort in living one's life with a fear of G-d.** A person who always senses G-d's presence also always senses His protection. As King David writes in Tehillim: "*Gam ki eileich b'gai tzalmaves lo eirah ra ki Atah imadi* — Even though I walk in the valley overshadowed by death, I will not fear evil, for You are with me."

VISUALIZE:

Images that bring the prayer to life

When The Father Is Watching

Five-year-old Dovid can't wait to ride his new bike up and down the sidewalk in front of his house. It sits in the driveway waiting for him and his little heart is brimming with eagerness to get out there and ride.

On the other hand, he's scared. The big boy who lives across the street might run over and swipe his new bike out from under him, just as he swiped Dovid's basketball, his kite and his watergun. Worse yet, his other neighbor's annoying little puppy might race out of the yard and chase him.



There's another danger too; Dovid knows he has to be very careful to stay on the sidewalk, because if his father sees him ride onto the street, he'll lose the privilege of riding his bike for a whole week. "Why do parents have to be so strict?" he complains to himself.

The little boy's desire to ride his bike far outweighs his worries and he asks his father permission to go outside.

"Go and enjoy your new bike," his father says. "But pay very careful attention that you stay on the sidewalk. I will be

watching you and checking on you every few minutes, so don't forget!"

Dovid leaves the house happy. His father will be watching. If the puppy chases him or the bully bothers him, his father will protect him. True, he has to stay on the sidewalk rather than riding in the road like the older kids. But even this, he knows, is for his own protection. Being loved, being protected, being watched – it all comes from the same source.

The heart of this child reflects the comfort and security yiras Hashem confers upon those who are willing to make their Creator the foremost presence in their lives.

Try This!

We say G-d's name so often in davening that the awesomeness of His name is sometimes lost. This week, carefully read a translation of the Yom Kippur Musaf account of the Kohen Godol's service in the times of the Beis HaMikdash. Imagine that you are there as the ineffable name of G-d, a name no one else dare speak, emerges from the Kohen's pure lips, and you, along with the great mass of Jews assembled at the Beis HaMikdash instantly drop to the ground, kneeling and prostrating yourselves, shouting "Blessed is His glorious Name forever!" When you say G-d's name for the first time each day in Reishis Chochma, **recall that stirring scene and feel its power.**

Did You Know

Earning Constant Reward

Beur Halacha citing the *Chinuch* states that "There are six mitzvos that are constant in that they should never leave a person's thoughts. And each moment that a person thinks about these mitzvos, he fulfills a biblical commandment for which the reward is infinite." The fifth of these mitzvos is to fear Hashem.