

# TEFILLAH TIPS

## TEFILLAT SHACHARIT—SHABBAT

*Yotzer Ohr Uvoreh Choshech Oseh Shalom Uvoreh et HaKol*

After *Barchu* we recite the blessing – “*Yotzer Ohr Uvoreh Choshech Oseh Shalom Uvoreh et HaKol*” – “G-d fashions light, creates darkness, makes peace and creates everything”. This concise blessing contains within it the secrets of the universe. In order to understand it, we must ask a few questions:

1. What is the difference between “*Yotzair*” – “fashions”, “*Borei*” – “creates” and “*Oseh*” – “makes”?
2. If, in the Torah, darkness exists before light (Gen 1:2), why does the blessing begin with light?
3. Why is it that the first time in the Torah during Creation G-d says “it is good”, is about light?

The *Siddur Hagra* explains that “*Voreh*” implies creation ex-nihilo, creating something from nothing, “*Yotzair*” means to fashion out of already existing material, and “*Oseh*” means to orchestrate and synthesize a myriad of ingredients (even opposing ones) into a whole.

The commentators explain that darkness is a creation itself and not simply the absence of light. It was created before light as it states – The earth was empty and there was **darkness** over the firmament. (Gen1:2). Therefore the blessing states “*Uvoreh Choshech*” – “and creates darkness”.

Rav Yaakov Emden explains that the light of the world emanates somehow from the light of G-d Himself, and therefore the appropriate word for creating light is “*Yotzair*” – “fashioned”, because it emanated from an existing Divine source.

In ancient times the philosophers believed and taught that different gods presided over different forces in the universe. The Zoroastrians in ancient Persia stated that there was a god of light and a god of darkness. The Torah teaches us clearly that *Hasem Echad* - there is only one G-d who created and creates both light and darkness, good and evil and harmonizes the different forces of the universe together. That is why the word “*Oseh*” which implies synthesis is invoked – “*Oseh Shalom Uvoreh et Hakol*” – “He makes peace and creates everything”.

In his book *On Prayer*, Rav Schwab explains that even though darkness existed before light, the blessing was coined “*Yotzer Ohr*” – “fashioned light”, **and then** “*Uvoreh Choshech*” – created darkness, as we recite *Shacharit* in the morning when the sun rises. He also writes that it was by design, that the first time it is written in the Torah “*Vayar Hashem Ki Tov*” – “G-d saw it was good”, is concerning the creation of light. This is because the creation of light enhanced all future creations to come. The sun has provided, light, energy, warmth, joy, beauty to the entire world from the third day of Creation until today.

It should also be mentioned that this blessing is based on the verse in Isaiah 45:5, but one word is changed – from “*Oseh Shalom Uvoreh Rah*” – “G-d makes peace and creates **evil**” to “*Oseh Shalom Uvoreh et Hakol*” – “G-d makes peace and creates **everything**”. The Talmud explains that the architects of our siddur chose to use more positive terminology - *Lashon Nekiyah*, that reflects the Talmudic dictum – *With peace we have it all, and without peace we have nothing*.

In summary, every day on earth is a gift, a blessing and an opportunity. It all starts with a breathtaking sunrise over the horizon. Each morning we acknowledge G-d’s handiwork, the darkness which precedes the dawn, the sun that lights up the world and the synthesis of the entire solar system and galaxies when we recite, “*Yotzer Ohr Uvoreh Choshech Oseh Shalom Uvoreh et Hakol*”.

Shabbat Shalom,  
Rabbi Ephraim Epstein  
Congregation Sons of Israel, Cherry Hill, NJ