

# If Hashem has it all, why does he want our prayers?

**Netiv HaAvoda 1,1:77** - Shlomo Ha-Melech said, "The sacrifice of sinners is an abomination, and the prayer of the righteous is His desire" [Mishlei 21].

This is not because He gets benefit from the service of prayer, for if so, He would benefit equally from the service of the sinners. Since the purpose of the service does not redound to Hashem, it follows it must redound to the person. Therefore, the sinner's service is rejected, as Hashem has no reason to benefit the sinner. You may ask, if so, why does Hashem command the sinner to bring a sacrifice? To answer this, consider that a sacrifice represents *mesirut nefesh* [self-sacrifice], giving one's self over to Hashem, at least one's wealth, as it diminishes the person who brings the offering to give over his wealth.

Avoda means the work a servant does for his master, and bringing a sacrifice to one's master shows he belongs to that master. It also shows that He is One and there is no other, complete and perfect and free of any defect. When we serve Him and sacrifice as He commands, we verify that He possesses all. The sacrifices are called "My bread for My fires, My savory aroma" [Bamidbar 28:2], as a man without bread is lacking, and the bread is his *shlemut*, in the same way this description of the sacrifice teaches us it

is His *shlemut*. He chose Israel, the singular nation that expresses Hashem's Unity morning and night to do this *avoda*.

*Column preped by Dr. Moshe Kuhr*