

Rabbi Yitzchok Cohen

## *The Uniqueness of Tefillat Musaf on Shabbat*

Every Shabbat we daven an additional *tefillah*, *Musaf*, which -corresponds to the *korban musaf* which the *tzibur* (congregation) brought in the Temple on Shabbat and *Yom Tov* to reflect the uniqueness of the day. The opening words for the special insertion for Shabbat *Musaf* are "*Tikanta Shabbat*" – "You [*Hashem*] instituted the Sabbath." According to the *Shibolei Ha-Leket*, this opening phrase is a reference to *Mishlei* 21:2, "*tokhein libot Hashem*" – "God weighs our hearts." This reference to the verse is meant to convey to us the idea that *Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu* knows the thoughts and ideas of our heart that we are indicating in this *tefillah*, namely that by praying this prayer, our true intentions and true thoughts are to bring a *korban* that would be accepted by the will of the Almighty ("*ratzita korbenoteha*"). In fact, in contrast to the *korban musaf* on holidays, the *Musaf* on Shabbat does not contain a *se'ir* (goat) for forgiveness of sins. On Shabbat, we are not asking for forgiveness for sins, but rather simply wish to express our true *ahavah* (love) for God, and our sincere desire to offer an additional *korban* in honor of the day.

Furthermore, the *Tur* (*siman* 286) notes that the opening lines of "*Tikanta Shabbat*" contain words whose first letters are the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, in reverse order, a stylistic method known as "*tashrak*" (i.e., *taf...shin...reish... kuf*). The *Tur* indicates to us this format is an allusion to *Zechariah* 10:8, "*eshrikah lahem va-akabetzeim*" – "I will whistle to them and gather them," and is meant to evoke the hope for the *ge'ulah* (redemption), when *Hashem* will gather *Kelal Yisrael* together.

In his commentary on the *Tur*, the *Drisha*, R. Yehoshua Falk, explains that the future *ge'ulah* will come about through the merit of Shabbat observance, as the *navi* Yishayahu tells us, "*asher yishmeru et Shabtotai...va-havi'otim el har kodshi*" – "who will keep my Sabbath...and I will bring them to My holy mountain" (56:4–7).

Thus, the *tefillah* of Shabbat *Musaf* is unique in that through it we aim to convey to *Hashem* with all our heart and might that our -Shabbat observance is proof of our love and commitment to our Torah and *mitzvot* and in this merit we hope to see the complete Redemption, speedily in our days.