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פרשת משפטים / Parshas Mishpatim

“ועבדתם את ד' אלוהיכם וברך את לחמך ואת מימך והסרת מחלה מקרבך” שמות כג:כה

“And you shall serve Hashem your G-d, and He will bless your bread and your water, and I will remove sickness from your midst.” Shemos 23:25

This *pasuk* begs for interpretation as it begins in the plural form “And you (plural) shall serve Hashem” but curiously finishes off in the singular form when referring to “your (singular) bread and your water.”

The Rambam in פרק א הלכה א, learns that the “service” of Hashem mentioned in this *pasuk* is referring to the *mitzvah* of *Tefillah* (Prayer).

Therefore, as R' Meir Soloveitchik z”tl explains, the *pasuk* begins in the plural form as we are all commanded to pray. However, there are many different levels in the realm of prayer. For example, some pray with pure love for Hashem while others may pray only out of fear of Him. As such, the extent of the blessing that Hashem showers upon us as a result of our prayers will not be doled out equally, rather it is dependent on each individual’s level of *Tefillah*.

Hence the end of the *pasuk*, which refers to the *bracha* that abounds as a result of our prayers, is written in the singular form. Seeing as the amount of blessing received is contingent on each individual’s merit and devotion to prayer.

We learn from here an important lesson about the power of our individual prayers. Although we are all commanded to pray, the result of our individual prayers will differ greatly. It is up to us. What we put into it is what we will get out of it. The more we concentrate and disconnect from the distractions that surround us while davening to Hashem, the greater the *bracha* He will bestow upon us.

The *Shulchan Aruch* in סימן קצג סעיף ג talks about the prohibition of engaging in any other activities while one is saying *Birchas Hamazon*. The *Mishna Berurah* brings down that even a “תשמיש קל” (slight action) is prohibited. The *Taz* goes further to apply this *din* to *Tefillah* and all other *Brachos* as well, because it appears that one is making a blessing or davening by chance and without full concentration. Once again we are made aware of the importance of our actions with regards to *Tefillah*. Complete and total concentration is our goal. May Hashem reward us for our efforts.