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(Summary of Previous Chapter: We have begun, with Hashem's help, to explain the power of our da'as. We have briefly explained the three uses of our da'as – for havdalah (differentiating), for hachraah (deciding), and for chibbur (connecting knowledge). Previously we explained how to use daas for havdalah, differentiating. Now we will explain how to use daas for hachraah, deciding.

We have three mental abilities – Chochmah, Binah and Daas. Chochmah is to see the information we learn from our teachers. Binah is to compare that information, and Daas, as we explained thus far, is to differentiate between the Chochmah and the Binah.)

Daas D'Hachraah - Deciding Between Chochmah and Binah

Now we will address the second aspect of da'as, which is daas **d'hachraah**, deciding.

One's **chochmah** sees the information he has received from his teachers, and his **binah** analyzes the *chochmah* for further understanding. The **da'as** can decide between the information. This is called *daas d'hachraah* – using our da'as to “decide.”

We will explain here how to use *daas d'hachraah* to decide between the information of your *chochmah* and the information of your *binah*.

Da'as In Relation To Higher Binah and Lower Binah

When a person is only at the stage of *mochin d'katnus* (his mind is still at the immature level), he compares things that are really not similar. To counter this problem, we need *daas d'havdalah* to see differences.

Binah, when used through the lower level of the mind, compares two facts that bear no similarity, yet the person compares them through his imagination. We can use our *daas d'havdalah* to take apart the imagination [as explained in the previous chapter].

Comparing information through the higher use of our *binah* is done through mental reflection, as opposed to visualization or imagination. When our *binah* is analyzing the information through mental reflection, this requires more subtle work to refine it; this is when we compare things which indeed are similar, and it is harder to notice differences in such scenarios. This is the higher kind of *binah* – when we compare things that are similar. It needs a higher kind of *daas* to refine it.

So our lower *binah* [or *medameh*, or *tevnah*] makes comparisons that are not really similar, either through the means of visualization or imagination, and not through mental reflection. But our higher *binah* compares things which indeed are similar, through mental reflection. It's a more subtle kind of *medameh*, and using *daas d'havdalah* alone won't be able to take it apart and show us the differences.

Lower *binah* works in tandem with *medameh*\imagination, while higher *binah* is more of a logical presumption. Our lower *binah* leads us to compare things that are not similar at all, while our higher *binah* leads us to compares thing that indeed look similar.

We know that no two things are exactly the same, because Chazal say that all faces and all *de'os* (opinions) are different^[1]. Therefore, just because two things appear to the same doesn't mean that they are the same. So even when A and B are very similar, we need to see how they are different.

When we analyze one kind of logic and compare it to another kind of logic, we can find how they are very similar at first glance, but upon deeper reflection, we can see how the two points we have compared are really different.

Previously, we dealt with how to use *daas d'havdalah* to counter *medameh*\lower *binah*, which is how to see differences in things that are indeed very different from each other; too see both the similarities and the differences between A and B. Our lower *medameh*\lower *binah* (or *tevnah*) tells us that A and B are similar, whereas our higher *binah*\higher *medameh* is aware that A and B are different, and here we don't need *daas* to show us the differences. Here the *binah* itself is aware of the differences between A and B.

In the morning blessings, we thank Hashem for giving the rooster the ability of *binah* to differentiate between night and day. Where do we ever find that *binah* can differentiate? The *Talmud Yerushalmi* says that "if there is no *daas*, there is no *Havdalah*", so it seems that only *daas* can separate. But we also find that the rooster has *binah* to differentiate between night and day. So what differentiates - our *daas*, or our *binah*?

The answer is, it depends on if we are dealing with the lower or higher mode of thought. In the lower mode of thought, our *binah* cannot differentiate, and only our *daas* here can differentiate. In the higher mode of thought, even the *binah* can differentiate (and this is the kind of *binah* that the rooster has).

Thus, *havdalah* (differentiation) can happen either through our *daas* or our *binah*. So there is "*daas d'havdalah*" as well as "*binah d'havdalah*".

The Difference Between Daas D'Havdalah and Binah D'Havdalah

What is the difference between these two kinds of *havdalah*?

Daas d'havdalah comes to differentiate between something that was originally a total *medameh*, something that was completely false. *Binah d'havdalah* - which is really higher *binah* - already sees the differences between A and B and is aware of them; so here the *medameh* did not begin as a complete falsity. Rather, the *binah* comes to notice between the very subtle differences that are contained in the *medameh*.

This is essentially the difference as well between the lower state of the mind (*mochin d'katnus*) and higher state of mind (*mochin d'gadlus*). A child is entirely in *mochin d'katnus*; he only has lower *binah*, so he is found in total *medameh*, and as he matures, he develops some *daas*. His original perception is total *medameh*, and then he gains *daas* which he can use to take apart his *medameh*.

An adult can access his higher state of mind, in which his initial perception of *medameh* is not a total *medameh* and his *binah* is aware that there is *medameh* which it needs to sort out.

Initial Perspective and Second Perspective

In simpler terms, this can be explained in terms of your “initial perspective” (“*mabat rishon*”) and your “second perspective” (“*mabat sheini*”).

When it comes to *mochin d'katnus*, the lower state of mind, the “initial perspective” of the mind is a “total” level of imagination, and the “second perspective” that then comes to the mind can take apart the imagination.

When it comes to *mochin d'gadlus*, the “initial outlook” is only a “partial” kind of *medameh*; part of the information in the *medameh* has made an erroneous comparison between A and B, and the other part of the information in the *medameh* has made a correct comparison. A “second perspective” in the mind can then take the comparison apart, separating between what is “*medameh*” (imagined) and what isn't *medameh*.

Daas D'Hachraah: The Power of Bechirah\Choosing

What is *daas d'hachraah*, when we use our *daas* to “decide”?

The simple understanding of it is that it is essentially our power of *bechirah*, choosing.

A child doesn't access his *bechirah*, even though he can have some *daas*. He can have *daas d'havdalah*, but he has no *daas d'hachraah* yet. *Chochmah*, *binah* and *daas* are not fully accessed by someone unless he is over 13, where he becomes a “*bar daas*”, to be capable of sensible thinking; in other words, one who has *bechirah*. Before 13 years of age, a child is not a “*bar daas*”. The Sages state that a child can still have “*daas purta*” – a “little bit” of *daas* – because he can have *daas d'havdalah*, but he can't have *daas d'hachraah*.

As a person gets older, he gains *daas d'havdalah*, by default; but he doesn't always gain *daas d'hachraah*, which is the power of *bechirah*.

Deciding, *hachraah*, is really the power to choose, *bechirah*. Whenever you decide something, this is enabled because you have the ability to choose.

Two Sources of Decisions: The Mind and The Will

There are two kinds of *hachraah* (decisions). The elementary kind of *hachraah* is deciding how to act in the practical sense, but here we are dealing with our *soul's* power to decide; this has two sources to it.

One kind of deciding is coming from our ***ratzon*** (will), and this equates with using our *bechirah* (power of free choice).

The second kind of deciding comes from our ***mochin*** (mind), which means to mentally weigh out information (*shikul hadaas*) and then decide. This is when you see two options in front of you and you have to decide; this does not test your *bechirah* [or *ratzon*]; rather, it tests your mind (*mochin*). You can use your *daas* to be *machria* (decide) if you will stick with A or B. This is called *shikul hadaas* - weighing out information with your *daas*.

So there are two kinds of *hachraah* (deciding): a decision coming from either your will*ratzon*, which is

really your *bechirah*; or a decision that comes from your mind\mochin, which is really your ability of *shikul hadaas*.

Deciding Through The Mind: Mental Decisions

We will begin to explain *hachraah* of our *mochin*. Mental deciding is for a person to decide between two options: "There are two options. Which one is the one that makes more sense? A, or B?"

For example, we bring a question in front of two people, and we ask them both if A makes more sense or if B makes more sense. One person decides A, and another person decides B.

Every argument that ever takes place (when we argue about Torah) is like this. The first argument in our history was about if *semichah* (leaning the hands on an animal to sanctify it) on Yom Tov is permissible or not. Ever since then, all arguments about Torah discussions began. These are matters in which we use our *mochin*\mind to decide upon. Each Sage has a different *hachraah*.

If someone lacks *daas*, he has a superficial viewpoint on how to approach two different options. He thinks: "What I decide is right, and what the other decides is false." Such a person might have *daas d'havdalah*, but he has not yet developed his *daas d'hachraah*. In his mind, what he decides is the truth, therefore, what the other one says is false. When he differentiates and decides, he thinks he is differentiating between "true" or "false".

But if someone develops the ability *daas d'hachraah*, his thinking is more mature. When he decides A and his friend decides B, he doesn't view his friend as having the "wrong" opinion. Rather, he feels his mind drawn towards deciding A, and that this is the opinion he will decide on; but he does not have the attitude someone who decides B is wrong. He is aware that both points are valid, and it is just that he has to decide between A and B, but not because deciding on A will "invalidate" B.

"Their words and their words are the words of the living G-d."^[2] This was said about Beis Hillel and Beis Shamai, who always argued, but it applies to all arguments of our Sages (as the Maharal has written). This statement is really describing the power of *daas d'hachraah* - that even when a person decides between A and B, it's not because he's invalidating the other option.

When a person uses his *daas d'havdalah*, his decision means that he's deciding with A and invalidating B. But when a person uses *daas d'hachraah*, although he's deciding upon A, he is not invalidating B. It's a huge difference. Only of those who use *daas d'hachraah* can it be applied "Their words, and their words, are the words of the living G-d."

When people argue, and they invalidate the other one's opinion because they decide on a certain way, this means that they have not yet developed their *daas d'hachraah*.

Of course, even when one has *daas d'havdalah*, sometimes he will also have to invalidate others' views, and this is true when it is indeed apparent that the other view is false. There are indeed false views out there.

But if someone always feels that his decisions are right and that all who argue on him are always wrong, you can know that he is only the level of *daas d'havdalah*, and he has never reached his *daas d'hachraah*. When he decides, he only makes use of *havdalah*, not *hachraah*. (There is some small degree of *hachraah* involved in every decision, of course, even when it's only the level of *havdalah* and not *hachraah*; but this is not enough to be considered using the power of *daas d'hachraah*).

This is the major difference between *daas d'havdalah* and *daas d'havdalah*. When someone has only developed his lower level of thought (*mochin d'katnus*), all his decisions are only coming from *daas*

d'havdalah. When someone works his way up to the higher level of thought, his decisions come from *daas d'hachraah*. Sometimes the decisions will still be coming from his *daas d'havdalah*, but mostly, from his *daas d'hachraah*. He decides between A and B, but he still realizes that they are both valid options.

With *daas d'havdalah*, a person disregards an assumption (*hava amina*) in the Gemara after he has learned the conclusion (*maskanah*). A person with *daas d'hachraah*, even after he has seen the conclusion of the Gemara, is still aware that the assumption of the Gemara contained validity.

So *daas d'havdalah* means that when I decide what's right, the other option is always wrong. *Daas d'hachraah* means that even when I decide what I think is right, I still value the other opinion that argued on how I thought. A hint to this is that the word "*hachraah*" (deciding) comes from the word "*erech*", "value" – that even when I decide, I still value the view that opposes me; that when someone argues with my view, I can still have respect him and his views, even though I do not agree with him.

Daas d'hachraah can only be accessed in the higher level of our mind, *mochin d'gadlus*. (Higher than this is *daas d'chibbur*, which is a level of *ruach hakodesh*). When one uses *daas d'hachraah*, he decides between A and B, and since his decision is not stemming from *havdalah*, rather from *hachraah*, he recognizes that his *hachraah* doesn't have to make him feel separated from those who argue with him.

Refining Your Initial Understanding

Now we will get to the deeper ramifications of this concept.

Chochmah is the knowledge that one has seen and accepted from his teachers. *Binah* is to analyze what I have learned by comparing and understanding the information of the *chochmah*. But what is the role of *daas d'hachraah*? Why must I decide between the information, when I have already accepted the information (*chochmah*) and analyzed it (*binah*)? What needs to be 'decided' upon?

When I compare information using *binah*, I am using my own logic. I do not compare using the knowledge of my teachers, which is *chochmah*; I use my *binah*, my own logic, to compare the information I have learned. When I use my own logic, I am really using *medameh*, imagination. The information contained in the *medameh* always contains two options in it: the teacher's understanding about the knowledge imparted, and the student's understanding of what his teacher has said. We receive *chochmah* from the teacher, but we do not receive our *medameh* from a teacher. The understanding from the student's *medameh* is his own novelty, and he did not get this part from his teacher.

This is where the role of "*hachraah*" (deciding) comes in. A person can use his power of *hachraah* in an ever deeper way than what was described until now – he can decide between what he has actually learned from his teacher, with what was just imagined from his own understanding. He can use *daas d'hachraah* to carefully discern which knowledge is the actual *chochmah* that his teacher imparted to him, and which parts of the information were deduced on his own *binah\medameh*.

This is the depth of the words of the Sages that "one does not understand his teacher's *daas* until after 40 years", in conjunction with the statement of the Sages that "at forty years, a person gains *binah* (understanding)". Here is the secret behind the entire concept of *binah*: before 40 years, you can understand the *chochmah* of your teacher, and after 40 years, you can know the *daas* of the teacher; but in order to get to your teacher's *daas*, you first need to get to his *binah*. You get to the teacher's *binah* using your own *binah*; how? Through the power of *daas d'hachraah*. It is to discern between what I personally understand, with what the teacher actually imparted.

At that point, what exactly does one have to decide? I have to decide if the *chochmah* I have received from my teacher, which contains his *binah*, is perhaps being understood all along from only from my *medameh*!

To illustrate the concept, a student might think that has succeeded in comparing and understanding the knowledge he received from his teacher, but if the teacher is asked about the comparison his student made, the teacher might respond that it's not an accurate comparison. We find all the time that there were arguments in the Gemara between student and teacher.

So the depth of *daas d'hachraah* is to decide what of the knowledge was accurately compared, and which of the information was not accurately compared (thus it came from my own *medameh*); to analyze the information of the *chochmah* that one received from his teacher.

We are discussing *daas d'hachraah*, which can only be developed after one has reached higher *binah* - someone who already has gotten used to seeing differentiations in his comparisons. What is the role of *daas d'hachraah*, then? The *binah* knows what is similar and what is not similar. But that was only from my own *binah*, my own logic. Now I have another step: to discern if something came from my own logic or from my teacher.

This is the depth behind how after 40 years a person receives *binah* - the power to really compare information. After 40 years a person can gain *binah*, not *Chochmah*. The first 40 years are for knowing the *Chochmah* of one's teacher, and after 40 years, the *binah*-understanding towards the *chochmah* begins. Until 40 years, my *binah* comes from myself, which is really *medameh*. A student is supposed to be *meivin m'daato*"[3] - someone who understands from within himself - and this is how he perceives the *chochmah* of his teacher. After 40 years, the student can now receive the *binah\medameh* of his teacher. After 40 years, it is now the avodah of the student to gain *binah* - to decide between his own *binah*, and the *binah* of his teacher. (After that a person can ascend to the higher level, which is *daas d'chibbur*; we will not get into this point right now).

Before 40 years, a person can't do this, because he doesn't have *daas d'hachraah*. You can't decide on something you never dealt with. Before 40 years, you decide if your own *binah* is correct or not, but you don't understand it completely until after 40 years. [4]

So after 40 years, the avodah of the student is to try to understand how the teacher came to use *binah* to deduce the understanding of the information. In order to know this, a person needs to make use of constant *daas d'hachraah* for this. It is to constantly decide not only between what's *chochmah* and what's *binah*, but to decide between two kinds of *binah*; (it is also called deciding between *binah* and *tevunah*). It is to differentiate between what my teacher understood with what I understand from myself. (What I understand from myself is *tevunah*, which is called "*bas binah*", the "daughter of *binah*.")

Daas d'hachraah thus decides between *chochmah* and *binah*, and some describe this as deciding within *binah* itself - to decide between what is the real *binah* of my teacher, and what is my own *binah*, which is *tevunah*.

What am I deciding between, when I decide between two *binah* thoughts? There are two parts to it: what my teacher actually understood, and what I personally understand.

To know the difference between what my teacher said and what I understand, it takes subtle thinking, and this is essentially the power of *daas d'hachraah*. It is not about seeing how A and B are similar and different. It is rather about what I have understood from my teacher's words: Would my teacher agree with the comparison I made, or would he disagree with me?

This can only come after you are already clear how A and B are similar and different, which is viewed through your higher *binah*. After you have reached that kind of thinking, now comes the role of *daas d'hachraah*, which is to use your "*shikul hadaas*" - to weight out the information and see if the very comparison you made was even an accurate comparison to begin with.

"*Shikul hadaas*" of your "*daas d'hachraah*" is not something that can be written about or expressed about. *Daas d'havdalah* can be written down, because you can write down how A and B are similar and different. But *daas d'hachraah* is entirely a kind of "*shikul hadaas*", which is a subtle discerning you can make in your mind, thus, it cannot be written down or expressed about. It is to decide in your own mind between a *binah*-thought and *tevunah*-thought. *Binah* is what my teacher said, and *tevunah* is how I understand what he said; this is *daas d'hachraah*.[\[5\]](#)

Deciding Because of What You Want

Now we will explain about the other source for decisions: when your decision comes from your *ratzon* (will), which is also using your power of *bechirah*. Here, the decision is, that you **decide** what you **want**.

Part of our decisions comes from *mochin* (the mind). Chazal say that when a person sins, a *ruach shtus* (spirit of folly) enters him.[\[6\]](#) The meaning of this is that the person loses his *chochmah*, and that is why he sins; this implies that normally, when a person has his *chochmah* intact, he can have proper decisions. Thus, *hachraah* comes from our *chochmah*, which is in our *mochin*\mind. The Ramchal as well writes that a person is *machria* (decisive when it comes to analytical thinking) using his power of *chochmah*.

But there is also *hachraah* that comes from our *ratzon* (will). This when a person is aware of two options, A and B, and because he **wants** A over B, that is why he decides upon A. This is a deeper kind of *hachraah*; it is to be *machria* what my *ratzon* is.

One's *ratzon* is really the mechanics behind his *binah*. How can I use *binah* if I haven't received it from my teachers? How can I ever understand something through my *Binah*? When I use my *binah* to compare and understand, I am understanding based on what I want, which is really "*shochad*" in the soul - mental bribery. I am understanding what **I want** to understand. *Binah* stems from my *ratzon*, which can get swayed. Thus, I have to decide if what my *binah* is telling me is correct or not.

There is a kind of person who has no *shikul hadaas* at all. He never makes any use of his *binah*; he doesn't understand what his teacher said or what another teacher said. He understands things through *binah* solely because he feels inclined to understand A, and not B. A person can come up with all kinds of rationalizations even when he's deciding what the *halacha* should be, and this can come from *shochad*; this is a well-known concept that our Rabbis wrote about.

Thus, *hachraah* is needed to discern what the **reason** is that I made the comparison - if it is coming from my *ratzon* to understand it a certain way, which is biased on my personal feeling coming from my *ratzon*, or if it is coming from my *mochin*, the actual *chochmah* which I received from my teacher.

This is what one needs to ask oneself: "Why do I understand something in a certain way? Why do I feel more inclined to choose A over B?"

Becoming Aware of The Personal Motives In Your Thinking

Most people understand things based on personal feeling, tainted with some personal agenda that's causing them to think in a certain direction: "*negios*" (ulterior motivations).

Most people, in general, are still at the level of lower *binah*, so they need *daas d'havdalah* to sort out their mind. But *bonei Torah*, who are involved all day with their *mochin* and are thus regularly involved with *higher binah*, can still be very affected by "*negios*". Even our greatest Gedolim always suspected that perhaps their understanding was coming from their "*negios*", from some personal *ratzon* that was pulling them to think in a certain direction.

To counter this deeper kind of problem, we need to use a deeper kind of *hachraah*: we need to decide if our *ratzon* is good or not. This enables us to access our *binah* which can help us see if the *ratzon* is pure or not.

When you see an option in front of you, it appears a certain way; you feel inclined after A over B. That's what you *binah* tells you. Your *daas d'hachraah* tells you, "True, it appears that Option A makes more sense than Option B. But what is the reason that's making you be drawn after Option A? Are you concerned what the truth is - or do you have some personal motivation that is making you inclined after this?"

This is really the secret behind our *bechirah*. The simple use of our *bechirah* is to choose to do the *mitzvos*, so there are many ways we use our *bechirah*. But the depth of *bechirah* is to choose if I'm choosing something because I am seeking the truth, or because some personal interest is leading me to choose this.^[7]

Thus, *daas d'hachraah* can stem from our very mind/*mochin*, and this is the lower use of *hachraah*. A higher kind of *hachraah* is coming from our *bechirah*, essentially our power of *ratzon*, which is also within our *mochin*. We will not get into the broader discussion about *bechirah*; we are rather discussing *daas d'hachraah* stemming from our *bechirah*.

The idea of this is to discern what kind of thought you are having. When you are thinking about A and B and you are trying to decide which of them is the truth, ask yourself if it is coming from your *chochmah*, *binah* or *daas* - or if it is perhaps stemming from some "*negios*".

As we know, *chochmah* is what one received from his teachers, and *binah* is when a person begins to think about the *chochmah*. The *chochmah* is the original understanding of information; once you activate your *binah*, though, there can be "*negios*" involved. Thus, before you begin to think into the *chochmah*, first use your *daas*, by "cleaning yourself" off from any "*negios*", and only after that should you use *binah*. So when you begin to think into the information you have learned, first think from a fresh place in yourself - start over your thought process from scratch, as if you've never seen A and B. Then, think into it again and analyze it as usual.

The Purified Thinking Process: First Chochmah, Then Daas, Then Binah

So there are two totally different ways to begin thinking about something. The way that most people are familiar with is to first see the *chochmah*, and then they think into it and analyze it, which is *binah*. After that, a person will look back at what he has learned and understood and now attempt to see why he thought the way he did, to see if perhaps he had any "*negios*" involved in how he thought. This is *daas* - to analyze the *chochmah* and *binah*.

The order that people are inclined to go in is *chochmah-binah-daas*. But we have described here a deeper way to begin the approach: first see the *chochmah*, then use your *daas* - and only after that should you use your *binah*. Beginning with *daas*, as opposed to beginning with *binah*, is a much deeper approach to use when you think.

When you begin with *chochmah* and then you use *binah* (which you are naturally inclined to do), you are really learning the Gemara through your own logic. It's much harder to refresh your thoughts after

this and to try thinking from a fresh, clean place in your mind. There is an opposite approach you can take, which is deeper: you can start with *chochmah*, the thinking you received from your teachers, and then, use your *daas* to clarify if you are thinking from a pure place in yourself or not.

For example, you are learning a *halacha*. What is the first thing you do? Instead of first clarifying what the *halacha* is and then trying to remove your "*negios*" from how you may be thinking, instead, first ask yourself if you have any "*negios*" in the first place when it comes to this *halacha*. Maybe you are inclined to arrive at a certain conclusion, for whatever personal reason you have. Then, after making this clarification with yourself, you can begin to learn the *halacha* and clarify it.

So the clarification you need to make is: to see if your *binah* is coming from a pure place in yourself, or if it is stemming from your "*negios*" (which you are indeed trying to purify.) If you don't discover any "*negios*", then your *binah* will be more accurate as you learn Torah. If you become aware that you did have "*negios*" to start out with, then you know that you can't rely on your *binah* as you are learning Torah.

Two Uses of Bechirah: Havdalah and Hachraah

On a deeper level, mankind is charged with the task of rectifying this with the "*Eitz HaDaas Tov V'Ra*" (the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil),[\[8\]](#) and it can be rectified both on a lower level as well on a higher level, using our abilities of *havdalah* and *hachraah*.

The lower level of rectifying it is when we use "*Havdalah*": when we separate the "*tov*" (good) and the "*ra*" (evil) from each other; when we choose good over evil. The higher way to rectify the *Eitz HaDaas* is through "*hachraah*": to be "*machria*" between one kind of "*tov*" and another kind of "*tov*".

In other words, there is a concept of choosing between good and evil, and our *avodah* in this is to use our *bechirah* to choose good over evil. That is all but the lower aspect of our *bechirah*. The higher aspect of our *bechirah* is to purify our motivations - even when we are doing something good. In this way, we choose between *tov* and *tov* - and we choose a higher kind of *tov*. This is the depth behind the concept of *hachraah*: to be *machria* between *tov* and *tov*, when we purify our inner motivations.

After the sin, a *daas ra* ("evil *daas*" - a mixture of good and evil) entered the world. Since Chavah was the one who sinned, and women mainly use *binah* and not *chochmah*, there was a damage done to the power of *binah* in the world; so *binah* can become infected by "*negios*". Our *avodah* is now to restore our *chochmah*, which in turn refines *binah*, and then we can properly rely on *binah*.

The Difference Between Deciding Through Mind or Will

So there are two systems of *hachraah*: deciding through our *mochin*\mind, and deciding through our *ratzon*\will.

Our *daas d'havdalah* can be used to practically differentiate between *chochmah* and *binah*, and this is just its superficial use, because it differentiates between our lower *chochmah* and lower *binah*.

As for our higher *chochmah* and *binah*, they need to be sorted out through the higher use of *daas*, which is *daas d'hachraah*. This is a deeper power than *daas d'havdalah*. It is a *hachraah* that makes use of our soul - namely, our *mochin*\mind, and our *ratzon*\will.

As we explained, the *hachraah* we utilize through our *mochin*\mind is to decide what I think, but I still validate the other. This kind of *hachraah* does not involve any *havdalah*, for it does not separate me from the opposing view. In actuality, it is to follow what I decide, but I can still validate the opinion of the other person who argues with my decision; so there is no *havdalah* created here.

Hachraah through my *ratzon* will is to decide what my *ratzon* is. Unlike *hachraah* of *mochin*, this kind of *hachraah* involves a *Havdalah*, because in deciding to choose A, I am separating myself from B.

So *hachraah* from the *mochin* is really about connection; I hold one way, but I am still connected to the other view. *Hachraah* of *ratzon* is that I decide between true and false.

A person should not approach *hachraah* of his *ratzon* with the same approach he has towards *hachraah* of his *mochin*, because that would bring down his higher kind of *hachraah* (*ratzon*) to the level of lower *hachraah* (*mochin*). When we use *hachraah* of **ratzon**, it is about *havdalah*, and when we use *hachraah* of **mochin**, the purpose is not *havdalah*.

We must not confuse their roles. *Hachraah* on my **ratzon** is about *havdalah* – it is about separating myself from a *ratzon* that is inappropriate. *Hachraah* of *mochin* is not about *havdalah*; it is so that I can decide if I will act upon A or B, and it is not about invalidating the other option I don't choose.

So when it comes to using *daas d'hachraah* of *mochin*, there are two valid options, A and B, and I decide how to act, but I am not trying to invalidate the other option. But in *daas d'hachraah* on my *ratzon*, I am deciding to separate myself from the other *ratzon*.

Deciding What The Proper Ratzon Is

It is written, “Wisdom is found in *ayin* (nothingness)” - the source of all of one's *chochmah* is called “**ayin**”, a “nothingness”, a hidden source. It is also identified by our Rabbis as the innermost “**ratzon**” (will), because *ratzon* is initially hidden from the person. So the *ratzon* is really the source of our *chochmah*; our *chochmah* is drawn from it.

Thus, when I use *daas d'hachraah* to decide which *ratzon* I should follow, I need to separate myself from the evil contained in my *ratzon*.

Today and The Future

In the future when all evil will cease, there will be no need for *daas d'havdalah* to choose between good and evil. Our *bechirah* will entirely be *daas d'hachraah*, to choose between one kind of good and other good, and we will be *machria* between them. But until then, as we live currently, we still cannot use *daas d'hachraah* alone, and we need to make use of *daas d'havdalah* between good and evil.

In today's times, most of the *bechirah* going on in the world is used on a simpler level: choosing between good and evil. “*Hachraah*” is mainly accessed these days to choose between good and evil, which is really *havdalah*.

Purifying The Mind From Ulterior Motivations

The more a person gets used to using *daas d'hachraah* over his *retzonos* (various desires), the more his mind is purified, and this also refines his *chochmah* and *binah*. He uses his *daas* to separate himself from evil *retzonos*, and his *daas* purifies the mind with the more a person gets used to this. In turn, his *chochmah* and *binah* will get refined and sharpened from this.

The superficial motive of why people want to improve the mind is to “sharpen” the mind and become smarter. But the inner reason of why we must develop and improve our mind is to purify our *ratzon* will that leads it.

The more a person accesses his point of *ayin*, which is by separating himself from a *ratzon* that is evil, the more *chochmah* he will gain as a result. The less he separates from evil *retzonos*, the less refined his *chochmah* will be, because the entire *chochmah* in a person gets its source from *ayin\ratzon*. Using *daas d'hachraah* towards our *ratzon* gives a person a new mind entirely – it gives a person much clearer understandings because it refines the mind.

This is how *daas* purifies the *binah* and improves it. (Later we will deal with the higher part of the mind, which is *ruach hakodesh* - a flow of *chochmah* from above the mind.) Some people have a flow of thought from *binah*, and some people's thoughts flow from *chochmah*. By accessing our *daas d'hachraah*, it can purify our *binah* and this in turn improves our *chochmah*.

The more a person purifies his *daas*, he becomes like the “*nekiyei hadaas* of Jerusalem”; those whose minds were cleansed from any impurities. Our *daas* gets its strength from our *ratzon*; when we cleanse the *ratzon* - when we cleanse our various “*negios*” (ulterior motivations) – we then gain *daas*. The *Mesillas Yesharim* describes this as the trait of “*nekiyus*” (inner cleanliness): to be free from “*negios*”; to purify the *ratzon*. This, in turn, refines one's *binah*.

We have discussed here *daas d'hachraah*; we will hopefully progress in the next chapter, with Hashem's help, to discuss “*daas d'chibbur*”.

[1] Berachos 58a

[2] Gittin 7b

[3] Chagigah 13b

[4] *In response to a questioner, the Rav said that this is not referring to 40 physical years but rather through maturing in our soul, for everything that is in time is also in the time; thus, if you develop your soul, you can reach “40 years” old in your own soul].*

[5] *The Rav clarified to a questioner that if it is clear what the teacher said there is no need to clarify what he said. But we are referring to things you are not clear about.]*

[6] Sotah 2a

[7] *The Rov clarified to a questioner that “Even after we develop the power of *daas d'hachraah*, we can still have *negios\personal motives*. There were *Gedolim* who suspected themselves of ulterior motivations for their entire life, with regards to the area of “*kelipas nogah*” – matters that are permissible but which can bring down a person's spirituality when he misuses them. There is no one who can say on himself that he has no *negios* when it comes to these areas. You can go deeper and deeper into yourself and discern your motivations, but you can never know for sure if you are not being affected by “*negios*.” There is always *safek* (doubt) in the world, due to *Amalek's* presence. For this very reason, we must always make use of our power of “*daas d'hachraah*” for our entire life. You*

can never know for sure if you are always acting right, so you must always suspect yourself....”

[8] As explained in many works of the Ramchal and others

Source: <https://bilvavi.net/english/utilizing-your-daas-02-deciding>