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Daas HaMis-Hapeches: Turning Over A Concept [\[1\]](#)

In this chapter we will discuss another power of our *da'as*, called "*da'as hamis-hapeches*" (when *da'as* which "turns over" information).

Previously, we discussed the three abilities of *daas d'havdalah*, *daas d'hachraah*, and *daas d'chibbur*, and then we discussed the three aspects of the evil "*Eitz HaDaas*" in the soul, which is the desire to break limits, the desire of the eyes, and the desire for knowledge.

Another of ability of *da'as* is that it can "turn over" information. This is called "*daas hamis-hapeches*". Earlier, we mentioned it briefly, and now will expand on this concept.

When Adam was sent out of Gan Eden after the sin with the *Eitz HaDaas* (Tree of Knowledge). Hashem placed a churning sword of fire to guard the *Eitz HaChaim* (Tree of Life). This was called the "*lahat hacherev hamis-hapeches*", a fiery sword that churns upside-down. The simple understanding of this is that it guards the path to the *Eitz HaChaim* so that no one can get near the *Eitz HaChaim*. But the truer, deeper meaning is that the sin with the *Eitz HaDaas* is what had caused this churning, upside-down sword of fire to appear.

When Adam ate from the *Eitz HaDaas*, the concept of *da'as hamis-hapeches* was introduced, therefore, the sword of fire which churns upside-down came, to show that the sin of Adam created a "turned-over" kind of *daas*.

What is the root of "*daas hamis-hapaches*", the "turned-over *daas*"? We explained earlier that the *daas tov v'ra* (knowledge of good and evil) in the *Eitz HaDaas* contained both *daas tov* (good *daas*) which is essentially the pure intellect, (*seichel*) and *daas ra* (evil *daas*), which is essentially the evil imagination (*medameh*). The power to turn over information is really the imagination, because the imagination turns over a fact and shows you an upside-down version of the original information.

Imagination shows you that A and B are similar, therefore, it tells you that A and B are comparable and exchangeable. If A and B wouldn't be deemed in the mind as being similar, the mind would never think that they can be compared and exchanged. When the mind sees Fact A and Fact B as being similar, the mind then thinks that A and B can be exchanged with each other. If they are not similar ideas, there is no notion in the mind to exchange them with each other.

The imagination is evil when it "switches" something good for evil. It is used for good when one turns something evil into good. So the power to turn over/switch around (in Hebrew, the word '*hafichah*'

means to turn over, and 'chalifah' is to switch or exchange) can be used for either good or evil.

Evil Imagination: When The Goal Is Switched

In a line, there are two endpoints, and a middle point of the line. The endpoints of a line represent the different paths that lead to the middle of the line, and the middle of the line represents the center, the goal that all the paths lead to.

We can understand that people will mistakenly compare one endpoint with another endpoint, that point A on the line and point B at the other end of the line can be interchanged. As for the center point itself, however, it is impossible for it to be switched around with anything else, because there is always one center point.

The nature of our imagination is that it switches around things. It will convince a person that A is the same thing as B or that B is A, and this is how it switches around the "endpoints" of a line. But it can even go so far as to switch around the center point of the line, even though the center point has nothing it can be compared with. That is the depth of the evil of imagination: it convinces a person that the goal of life, the center point of life, can be switched around for a different goal.

The desire to eat from the *Eitz HaDaas* was essentially imagination at work, turning over the goal of life and switching it for a different goal. The *Eitz HaChaim* was in the center of the garden, because it represented the middle point, the goal that all paths on a line lead to. The *Eitz HaDaas*, by contrast, was outside of the garden, as the Ramban writes. The imagination convinced Adam and Chavah that the goal of life, the *Eitz HaChaim* [life itself, which is to truly recognize Hashem] could be switched for another goal, and that was the knowledge of the *Eitz HaDaas*.

Now we will try to make this practical, and how it applies to our own power of *daas hamis-hapeches*.

Our [evil] imagination has two abilities to "turn over": it turns over "endpoints", and it turns over the "middle point" as well. When we turn over endpoints, we turn over A into B, and this can be an erroneous comparison, but with this kind of comparing, at least we understand that there are endpoints. Here the mistake is that one is turning over the path to get to the goal, but he is not turning over the goal itself. But when we attempt to turn over the "central point" of the line, we turn over the goal, and this is the totally evil use of the imagination.

This is also the depth behind all heresy: when the "middle point" of the line is turned over - when the goal of life is switched for a different goal. It is to imagine a different goal of life.

As an example of this concept, Bilaam wished that he could die like a Jew; he said, "*May my end be like theirs.*" What didn't he realize? He turned over the goal of life (to recognize Hashem) and instead came up with a new goal: an honorable death.

When someone takes something and turns it into the ultimate goal of everything, this is the depth of evil of imagination. It doesn't matter what it is. As long as a person turns something else in his life (other than the actual goal of life itself, which is to recognize Hashem) into his greatest goal, it is evil imagination at its total level.

So we have two kinds of *medameh*, in which we imagine and "turn over" our priorities: when we turn over and switch the "endpoints" of a line with each other, and when we turn over the "middle point" \ goal of life, which is even worse.

We can all see both of these abilities in ourselves. We can all be mistaken in what the goal of life is, and we can be mistaken in how to get to the goal of life. There is partial heresy, which is to be

mistaken in a path, and total heresy, which is to be mistaken about the goal of life.

Our hands represent our endpoints, for they are at the ends of the body, while the mouth is at the center of man. (This is a very deep discussion to itself but we will not get into it here). The sin of Adam began with the Snake, who used its mouth to sin, which shows us that evil begins when the “central point” (represented by the mouth) is exchanged for a different “central point”.

The first kind of evil imagination (being misguided about how to get to the goal of life) is represented by the letter *kaf* of the *Aleph Beis*, for *kaf* is referred to as *kaf hadimyon*, the letter that acts a prefix to a word in order to compare things. The second kind of evil imagination (to be misguided about the goal of life) is represented by the letter *pei*, which also reads “*peh*”, mouth. We have five points in our *kaf*\hand, because we have five fingers, but we have only one *peh*\mouth. This is because there can be many endpoints, but the central point is always one point.

Leaving The Evil Imagination

We began to explain that *hafichah* (turning over) leads to *chalifah* (interchanging). The question we began with was, we know how that ever since the sin of Adam, we have gone from good to evil; how can we leave that state and turn back all evil into good?

There are two parts to our power of *medameh* (imagination), as we explained. The lower function of *medameh* is referred to as *kaf* (the hands), and the higher function of *medameh* is called *peh* (the mouth).

Medameh is evil when the “center point” is turned into an endpoint; when a person thinks that the goal of life, which is to fully recognize Hashem, is just another random aspect of life, and he forgets that it is really the central point, the goal. To illustrate, when a person is heretical, he might be aware of *emunah*, but he doesn't know it's the central point. He has taken the central point and turned it into a side point.

Good turns into evil through *medameh*. This we see from the sin with the *Eitz HaDaas*, in which *medameh* was dominant, and turned our *daas tov* into *daas ra*. We were essentially lowered from the level of “*peh*” (mouth) to the level of the “*kaf*”, represented by the hands – we fell from the goal of life, the central point, into the endpoints. Thus, the converse is true as well: in order to go from evil to good, we need to switch from the level of *kaf* to *peh*. Herein lays the outline of how we leave the evil state we fell to and to turn back over again to our original good state.

Adam, before the sin, only learned Torah. After the sin, he was cursed with work, so he was essentially lowered from the level of “mouth” to the “hands.” Thus, we need to return to the “mouth”.

Rectifying Evil Imagination: Leaving Action

That was the outline of the concept, and now we will explain this in simpler terms.

The concept that we need to return from the “hands” to the “mouth” is really because the entire power of *medameh*\imagination is based on the “hands”, which represents physical action. This is clear.

Here is an example of this concept: before the sin, there was no work. After the sin, man is cursed with work\action. So clearly, the sin caused man to become demoted to the realm of physical action, as a result of the *medameh*\imagination that man entered into after the sin. Originally we were on the level of the mouth, for Adam only learned Torah and spoke about Torah, and after the sin, mankind fell from the mouth and into the hands.

Earlier, we spoke about *medameh* that takes places in our logic[2] (erroneous comparisons) and now we are discussing a lower use of *medameh*, which is when our *medameh* is used in the realm of action.

If we ascend from the level of action to speech, then we have essentially left *medameh*, because the entire power of *medameh* in the soul thrives on action. Two actions seem similar to a person and are thus compared, and this is the root of evil *medameh*. Even the undeveloped *medameh* experienced through our logic (erroneous comparisons) is a result of *medameh* in action. Esav is also called *Edom*, from the word *medameh*, because Esav [the gentile nations of the world] represents the realm of action.

So evil *medameh* is when we have been lowered from holy action into the realm of mundane action, and by contrast, holy *medameh* is to go from the level of improper action to proper action.

Nighttime is a time when imagination is dominant, as the *sefarim hakedoshim* write. The depth of this is that because there is generally no action at nighttime, whatever one “did” by daytime in his imagination, he “does” in his sleep.

How, essentially, do we leave our fantasies? The general outline is, by leaving the realm of action. This is how we leave “*Eitz HaDaas Ra*” in the soul and enter into the *Eitz HaDaas Tov*.

Look at twins. The first twins were Kayin and Hevel, but Yaakov and Esav are the first set of twins which the Torah calls as twins. They were constantly switching roles. Yaakov was supposed to exit the womb first, then Esav fought him and came out first, then Yaakov took the firstborn rights. Esav is Edom, from the word *medameh*, who is involved with the world of action.

This is the secret behind Shabbos, when we leave work and action. It represents the concept of leaving the realm of action so we can ascend to the higher realm (which was revealed completely before the sin of Adam), which is the realm of speech. On Shabbos we are also not allowed to have mundane speech, and the reason for this is, because not only do we leave action on Shabbos, but our speech as well is sanctified. Thus, a Torah scholar, who is called “Shabbos”, does not involved himself with physical labor, for his main occupation is in the realm of Torah study, which is the true level of speech.

Leaving Imagination: Letting Go Of The Fantasies

How, essentially do we leave the evil imagination? Now we will say it very practically.

Imagination thrives on the realm of action. Therefore, we can uproot it by letting go of action. Practically speaking, when a person imagines that he should do something, he can tell himself that it hasn't been actualized yet, thus, we have taken away the “action” aspect of it. If one is very clear about this, the imagination ceases.

So a person call tell himself: **“There’s nothing I can do about it to make this happen. It is impossible for me to make my imaginative thoughts happen in reality.”** The soul will then be calmed when one realizes that he can't actualize what he imagines he can do.

The depth of imagination is that it is settles upon some kind of action. As we have explained in the past, the power of [lower] *chochmah* is about seeing action, and [lower] *Binah* is about comparing actions. So *medameh* is only activated when there is some action involved. If you divest yourself from action, you lessen *medameh* more and more.

Thus, a Torah scholar who does not labor, has much less *medameh*, and that is why he is called

“Shabbos”. (Of course, sometimes even a Torah scholar is involved with action, but he “wears” it as a “garment”; this is represented by the six days of the week, which are about action. But on Shabbos itself is no physical labor, and a Torah scholar generally is not involved with actions, thus, he is called “Shabbos”).

Later, we will elaborate on this concept more: that the way to turn over all evil into good is essentially by leaving the realm of action.

May we merit from Hashem to reach the higher and complete kind of *medameh*.

[1] This translation has omitted much of the original Hebrew audio version due to its heavy esoteric content- so it is an adaptation.

[2] *In the first three chapters of “Utilizing Your Daas.”*

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