



The Necessity to Study & Know the Soul

from the soon to be published sefer "הצורך בלימוד והכרת הנפש"

When a person gets in touch with their
fundamental Four Elements, a new and amazing world opens before them, and their
entire life, from end to end, changes for the better.



First Edition

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"Self-Recognition & Empowerment of the *Nefesh*"

Under the personal direction of the
author of Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh,
Da Es Atzmecha, and more.

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"Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh - The Four Elements"



To receive additional copies, donate, ask questions,
leave comments, or for updates, please contact us:

Phone: 054-8408188

Fax: 03-5480529

4elements@bilvavi.net

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Important Point of Clarification

This pamphlet is meant for everyone: men and women, young and old. Any person, at whatever level of personal growth they are at will be able to find helpful information for further growth, with the help of Hashem.

At the same time, it is not practically possible to publish a single pamphlet in a style which will work for everyone. Because of this, we wish to clarify at the beginning of this pamphlet, and stress again:

This pamphlet is meant for everyone!

Our request of each reader, personally, is that they focus their attention on the **message** of this pamphlet, and then apply this message to their individual life, as they see fit!

Thank You!

Please Note

The path of "The Four Elements" is based on delving inside, to the good and peaceful inner world, and not on running to the outside world.

Although this pamphlet does touch on, to some extent, some sensitive and problematic topics of our generation, its purpose is not to *chas veshalom* insult or criticize, and certainly not to attack anyone. We only want only to clarify these topics for the sake of the reader, in the Torah way.

Especially since the topic of this pamphlet is to bring out the necessity of learning and getting to know one's *nefesh*, as a means to enter the inner world in a correct and precise manner, there was no way out but to touch on these topics, as "light cannot be appreciated without darkness".

"From here on in may there only be good"!

General Introduction to The Four Elements

The sefarim haKedoshim explain, that when Hashem decided to make the physical world, He first created four basic physical elements: fire, wind, water, and earth [which are rooted in the four letters of Hashem's name]. Afterwards, He set them, combined, and mixed together these four elements in many ways, with great variety, and through this He created the world and everything in it. This means that the entire physical world, with all its details that we see, are only the result of the different set up, combinations, and mixes of the four elements.

Similarly, when Hashem decided to make the spiritual world, He created four spiritual elements, and with them He created the spiritual world.

In other words, the Four Elements are the "parents"- the roots, whereas everything else which exists in the world are the "descendants"- the branches of the Four Elements.

If so, a person's *nefesh*, being a spiritual being, consists purely of a combination and mixture of the spiritual Four Elements. All the many capacities of the *nefesh* are all only the results, details, branches, of the Four Elements of the *nefesh*, which were set up, combined, and mixed in a multitude of ways.

But, since the setup, combinations, and mixture of the Elements differ from person to person, no two people are alike. Every person has a great variety of many different capacities: a different personality, different character traits, and different capabilities- each person is unique.

At the same time, to give a person the opportunity to perfect themselves and serve the Creator, Hashem made the world in general, and the *nefesh* of a person specifically, in a way that the setup, combinations, and balance of the Four Elements are not perfect. Because of this, some of the capacities of the *nefesh* are not readily accessible, do not function properly, or are not properly balanced. Additionally, life's circumstances add their share, in accordance with Hashem's plan, to the lack of accessibility, proper function, and proper balance of the capacities of the *nefesh*.

As a result of this, the improper character traits, emotional issues, and the like, also differ from person to person.

A person's "job" with all this, is to work with their *nefesh*- to use their unique capacities, to uncover their hidden strengths and develop them- to correct and balance out their capabilities which are imperfect or unbalanced.

The Seforim explain that there is a difference between the method used when learning to gain an understanding of the *nefesh*, and the method used when learning for the sake of practically working on getting to know one's *nefesh*. The established method when learning to understand the *nefesh*, is to learn the roots- the elements- and from there to get to understand the branches. On the other hand, the method used when learning for the sake of practically working on recognizing the *nefesh*, is to start from the stage of learning to recognize the outer branches of the *nefesh*, and from there to get to the understanding and recognition of the basic Four Elements.

Each level of recognition the *nefesh*, whether that of recognizing the branches of the *nefesh*, or that of recognizing the fundamental Elements, is in itself an amazing and important accomplishment!

A person who is cognizant of the outer branches and capacities of their *nefesh*, gains an outstanding benefit, as if they went from night to day. This person has the ability to lift up, build, and strengthen their *nefesh* and to live in a correct and proper manner, full of life and happiness. **And when person gets in touch with his fundamental Four Elements, a new and amazing world opens before them, and their entire life, from end to end, changes for the better.** This understanding enables a person to connect to the source of life and happiness, and to direct their life toward the fulfillment its purpose.

The will of Hashem is that a person should get to know, and thereby work with, both the outer branches of his *nefesh*, as well as with his fundamental Elements.

This is the Torah's formula for self-recognition, strengthening the *nefesh*, building a properly functioning way of life which is full of vigor and happiness, and for solving personal issues.

Rav Chaim Vital, the talmid of the Arizal, writes this formula in his *sefer Shaarei Kedushah*: "Similarly with the *nefesh*, the Four Elements exist for the good and for the bad, and from them comes the health of the inner *nefesh* of a person, or its sicknesses which come from the external and impure Four Elements of the *nefesh*. When one removes them from his *nefesh*, they will be able to be clothed with the four letters of the name of Hashem, which is the light which gives life to the inner *nefesh*..."

We can see that Rav Chaim Vital looked at the world in general, and the *nefesh* specifically, from the perspective of the Four Elements, and through this lens he formed a method of practically recognizing the *nefesh* and healing its problems.

But, not only Rav Chaim Vital used this method. This is the path taken by all of the *Chachmei Yisroel*, the "doctors of *nefashos*", throughout all the generations. Based on the perspective they made for themselves and their disciples which was a path of self-recognition and self-improvement, they arrived at their goal by focusing either on the fundamental Four Elements or on their outer branches.

But unfortunately, as the generations unfolded, and through the depths of our *Galus*, many people began to turn towards foreign methods of dealing with the *nefesh*. These are methods which come from the "broken pits" of the other nations of the world, which cannot contain the true methods of recognizing and dealing with the Jewish soul, whose root and source is from the Torah, [as we have been taught- "Hashem looked in the Torah and created the world"].

As a result of this, the difficulties of dealing with the *nefesh* kept getting greater, the pain and suffering kept increasing, the *nefashos* got weaker and weaker, and the difficulty of building a proper way of life that matches the makeup of the individual *nefesh* got harder and harder.

The cycle continued, with the increasing problems bringing a constant influx of new and improved methods of dealing with the *nefesh*, not based on the holy Torah, and are not beneficial to the Jewish *nefesh*.

On the other hand, Hashem, in his great mercy, sends in each generation His trustworthy messengers, to draw His beloved children back to the proper and good path. From across the spectrum of *Klal Yisroel*, *Gedolei Yisroel* have testified that one of the trustworthy messengers to teach the proper, good, way of life in our generation, is our Rov *Shlita*, the author of *Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh*.

The way of our Rov *Shlita*, is **to nurse the knowledge and methods of practical self-improvement from the Torah *Hakedoshah* alone**. The Rov *Shlita*, has given thousands of *shiurim* over the last 17 years in all areas of the Torah, and especially in the areas of the Torah regarding the *nefesh*. Throughout these years, the Rov *Shlita*, has explained the fundamental and inner teachings of life in the series "*Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh*", "*Da Es Atzmecha*", and many other related series.

Now, our Rov *Shlita* has established the goal of bringing to light the ancient, fundamental, method of the Four Elements in an orderly, step-by-step, and **practical** fashion. This will enable anyone who so wishes- individuals, therapists, counselors, people involved in *Chinuch*, parents, etc.- to learn and become familiar with the *nefesh*. One can work with its strengths, to lift it up and strengthen it, and through this to build a properly structured life, befitting the makeup of the individual person, to come close to Hashem and serve Him wholeheartedly.

The major advantages to the unique method of "the Four Elements" are, that it:

- ❖ Is founded solely on the pillars of the Torah *Hakedoshah*
- ❖ Contains in it all the other true paths [as it is the root method and they are like its branches]
- ❖ Explains all the necessary information and important introductions towards learning and working with the *nefesh*
- ❖ Is set up practically, step-by-step, beginning with the basic steps which are suitable for everyone (with almost no exceptions), and continuing until the deep and more complicated ones, which are meant for those interested in them.
- ❖ Gives anyone who wishes the tools necessary to move forward from **the stage he is at**, in a way and at the pace that works for him, to the **next level** that he is up to.

For the method of "the Four Elements" to include all these steps, and so that every individual should be able to find their place in it, it is being broken up into several sections:

- ❖ An explanation of the necessary introductions towards getting to know the *nefesh*
- ❖ Practical guidance for beginners
- ❖ Practical guidance for the advanced

- ❖ "Getting to know the *kochos* and their roots"
- ❖ "Building the *kochos*"
- ❖ "Building the roots of the *kochos*"
- ❖ "Correcting the *kochos*"
- ❖ "The essence of the *kochos*"

The Four Elements Institute is also working on developing and spreading the method of the Four Elements, so that it should be available and practical for all interested.

And this is all being done under the **personal direction** of our Rov *Shlita*.

In practice, the first step of getting to know yourself and strengthening the *nefesh* is understanding the topic of this booklet and internalizing it. Therefore, this booklet acts as an important gateway through which one can embark on the path of self-improvement in the proper way: step-by-step, and with precision.

May it be the will of Hashem that we each be privileged to get in touch with ourselves, to empower our *nefesh*, to live correct and proper lives of happiness and direction towards our life's purpose, and that we come to recognize "He who spoke and there was a world"!

Introduction

Before beginning to learn and recognize the *nefesh*, a person needs to know a few introductory points. The first and most obvious point is: why one needs to learn and recognize his *nefesh*.

This is because simple and correct reasoning tells us, that before a person begins any project of any sort, he must know the reason it is necessary to do so, as if not for this, maybe he should be doing just the opposite.

For this reason, we are discussing this point right at the beginning of the sefer "The Four Elements - Self-Recognition", whose purpose is to explain the necessary information, and provide the practical steps necessary, for learning and becoming familiar with the *nefesh*.

With the help of Hashem, we will publish this sefer, and hopefully soon.

However, due to many requests, we are publishing this introduction as a separate pamphlet, and is not waiting for the publishing of the sefer. This is because understanding the necessity of learning and recognizing the *nefesh* is a very pressing and crucial matter, especially in our generation.

And someone will ask: Is it so important to explain why one needs to learn and know the *nefesh*?! It is a simple and obvious thing that a person must know himself!

But the answer to this question lies right there- specifically because it is so simple and obvious is why it is so hidden and forgotten. As the Ramchal writes in his introduction to Mesilas Yesharim: "But just as much as these things are well-known and clearly seen by all as true, to the same extent are they very often overlooked and are oft-forgotten."

The facts will attest, that despite the simple and obvious understanding that a person must know himself, and despite the dire need that there is to learn and recognize a person's *nefesh*, very few are those who are working on this in practice.

Because of this, there is a need to explain why one needs to learn and recognize the *nefesh*. And through learning and reviewing this topic, "One will be reminded of these things which a person naturally forgets, and he'll pay attention to his responsibilities which he overlooks" (Mesilas Yesharim, there).

This pamphlet, then, will explain, with the help of Hashem, why it is necessary to learn and get to know the *nefesh*. Now, from one, general, perspective, we can divide the need to learn and recognize the *nefesh* into two main sections: for the sake of serving Hashem and doing the mitzvos, and for the sake of a person himself.

Aside from this, there is another, deeper, perspective on why to learn and get to know the *nefesh*, which is to be able to focus inwards and uncover the inner power of *achdus*. On the one hand, this perspective is deeper, necessary to gain an inner, true, outlook on life, and includes in it both above two reasons. On the other hand, not everyone is ready for the reading and understanding of this topic. Therefore, this perspective is meant primarily for those who are looking for added depth on this topic.

Based on this introduction, we will be dividing this pamphlet into three parts:

1. Learning and recognizing the *nefesh* for the sake of serving Hashem and performing the mitzvos.
2. Learning and recognizing the *nefesh* for a person's own sake.
3. Learning and recognizing the *nefesh* the sake of focusing inward and uncovering the inner power of achdus.

Learning and recognizing oneself for the sake of serving Hashem and keeping the Mitzvos

A person- a body on the outside and a *nefesh* inside

On the sixth day of Creation, Hashem made a man, as it says (Beraishis 1:27) "God created the man". However, at the beginning of his creation, Hashem did not create him as one entity but rather as two parts: a body- "dirt from the ground" (2:7), and a *nefesh*- "a soul of life" (there). Only afterwards did Hashem place the spiritual part into the physical one, attach them, and turn them into one being- "and He blew into his nostrils..." (there).

Because of these two parts, Hashem granted the being He formed the name "Adam"- "and He called their name 'Adam'" (5:2). The word "Adam" is one word, but has two connotations: 1. "Adam" from the word "*adamah*"- dirt and physicality, and 2. "Adam" from the root *dimyon* (comparing)- a power to compare. These two meanings attest to the makeup of what a person is. On one hand, a person's body is created from physical matter, but on the other hand, the *nefesh* of a person is the spiritual force Hashem created, and through it a person can become similar to His Creator, as the Navi writes: "I will compare to the One Above" (Yeshayah 14:14).

Accordingly, the makeup of a person is a combination of two parts: 1. A body- an encasement- a physical, outer, covering, and 2. A *nefesh*- the inner essence.

Two parts of a person serving His Creator

Just as Hashem created a person's body from the physical, as an outer encasement, and his *nefesh* from a spiritual force, as the inner essence, so too He created the world- a physical and outer world, and within it rests a spiritual and inner world.

Hashem created both the person and the world in a similar manner, so that a person should work with his body on the physical and superficial things on the one hand, and with his *nefesh* on the meaningful and inner things on the other hand. More precisely, Hashem did this so that a person should be able to serve His Creator and do His will in two ways, with the two parts of his existence: with his body, a person has to serve His Creator in a physical, outer, way, and with his *nefesh*, he has to serve His Creator in an inner, spiritual, way (as Chovos Halevavos explains clearly in his introduction).

The physical and outer service of Hashem is the serving Hashem with actions- keeping the mitzvos regarding actions. Hashem commanded us with 248 positive commandments and 365 negative commandments, plus Rabbinical mitzvos and

safeguards, and many of them we do and fulfill through the body- either by actively performing them or by refraining from transgressing them.

And the spiritual and inner service of Hashem is the service of Hashem with the *nefesh*- keeping the mitzvos which apply to the *nefesh*. Some of the mitzvos which the Torah and Chazal require us to do, can only be fulfilled through the *nefesh*. In a person's *nefesh* are included many facets, such as: desires, thoughts, emotions, etc., and a person's job is to serve His Creator with his *nefesh* and its functions- with his mind, with his heart, with his emotions, and with all his *kochos* (facets) and senses- "All of my being will say 'Hashem- who is like you!'" (Tehillim 35:10).

But neither of these parts of serving Hashem is the final goal. The end goal is not to leave the physical *avodah* (service of Hashem) just to the body and the inner *avodah* just to the *nefesh*. Rather, just as Hashem placed a person's *nefesh* inside his body and made them into one entity, so too is a person's job to combine and unify to two parts of serving Hashem into one entity- physical actions coupled together with the *kochos hanefesh* (facets of the *nefesh*).

The source of the obligation to work on oneself

Just as serving Hashem through actions is an absolute obligation on any Jew with intelligence (as opposed to children and *shotim* [those lacking mental capabilities]), and he must observe the *mitzvos* and stay away from the *aveiros* of the physical realm, so too is the inner service of Hashem an absolute obligation on any Jew with intelligence, and he must observe the *mitzvos* and stay away from the *aveiros* of the realm of the *nefesh*.

The source of this obligation to serve Hashem with the *nefesh*, is from the very fact that we are commanded by the Torah to keep the root mitzvos whose observance is dependent on the *nefesh*, such as: loving Hashem, fearing Hashem, following in His ways, clinging to Him, and the other mitzvos whose source is all one- serving Hashem with the inner parts of a person.

It is true that according to some of the Rishonim, there is an obligation to do actions to thereby awaken our inner emotions and fulfill the mitzvos which are dependent on them, but even according to them, the mitzvos themselves are fulfilled through the *nefesh* and not through the body.

Similarly, it is true that many times these mitzvos lead to external expression, or bring to practical actions, but they are still not mitzvos of action but mitzvos of the *nefesh*, and their observance is done through the *nefesh* part of a person.

For example, a person can love his friend in his heart and thereby fulfill the mitzvah of "You shall love your friend like yourself", and he can also express his love to him through action of kindness and the like. But if a person does actions of kindness with someone else, but in his heart there is only dislike towards the person, he definitely does not fulfill "You

shall love your friend like yourself", and by doing this he may even transgress the aveirah of the *nefesh* of "Do not hate your friend in your heart".

And the same applies to the other mitzvos of the *nefesh*- their observance is through the *nefesh*, either by the *nefesh* alone, or by actions which bring to an awakening of the *nefesh's* feelings.

This is how Rabbenu Bachaye brings these mitzvos of the *nefesh* in his introduction to Chovos Halevavos, and explains there that these mitzvos are primarily not *chovos ha'eivarim*- duties of the limbs- the body, but *chovos halevavos*- duties of the heart- the *nefesh*, and for this reason named his sefer "Chovos Halevavos" (Duties of the Heart).

The Chovos Halevavos writes, that he first thought that the Torah does not explicitly write out the commandments to serve Hashem with the *nefesh*, and therefore people think that the obligation to observe them is different than the other commandments. In the days of the "Chovos Halevavos" there were those who mistakenly believed that the service of Hashem consists solely of keeping the actions of the mitzvos, and there is no obligation to serve Hashem with the *nefesh*, nor any obligation to work on oneself in order keep the mitzvos dependent on it. They looked at the mitzvos of the *nefesh* as lofty spiritual ideals, which depend on one's desire or choice whether to pursue them or not.

Chovos Halevavos continues, that he found that there are actually **many** pesukim and statements of Chazal that clearly explain how great the obligation to work on oneself and keep the mitzvos of the *nefesh* is. For this reason, Chovos Halevavos expresses wonder about the people of his generation- why isn't it clear to everyone that serving Hashem with the heart is just as obligatory as serving Him using one's body?

Working on oneself for the sake of keeping the physical mitzvos

Besides for the need to work with the *nefesh* for the sake of keeping the mitzvos that apply to the *nefesh*, the mitzvos regarding actions are also largely dependent on the *nefesh* of a person.

Firstly, this is because it is the *nefesh* which supplies the willpower and other *kochos* necessary to perform these mitzvos, and therefore, the state of the *nefesh* has a very great effect on whether a person will keep the mitzvos, or *chas veshalom* not.

Additionally, the quality of the performance of these mitzvos is dependent on a person's *nefesh*. All the levels of perfection in performing mitzvah actions- such as doing them *lesheim shomayim*, with love, with fear, being meticulous in halachah, etc.- are all dependent on a person's *kochos hanefesh* and inner work.

This is what was meant above, that one can only achieve perfection in serving Hashem through combining both parts of the *avodah*: mitzvah actions together with the *kochos hanefesh*. The Seforim, based on this, write that the word

"mitzvah" is not from the word "tzivui"-commandment but from the word "tzavsa"-companionship. When one does a mitzvah, he puts together and connects his actions of *avodah* to his inner *avodah*, and through this, he himself becomes a companion with Hashem- he connects to Hashem.

Serving Hashem in a unique and precise way

Furthermore, although all intelligent people must serve Hashem through their actions and with their *nefesh*, the way they actualize this service is not necessarily the same for all of them. As Chazal teach us, "Just as their faces are different, so are their minds different"- the structure of the *nefesh* and the *kochos hanefesh* of each person different.

For example, let us take the mitzvah of *gemilas chasadim*:

One person is capable, keeping with the structure of his personality and his *kochos hanefesh*, to open an international institution of Chesed, and help many people with money, food, medicine, and the like. However, if this person is not accurately familiar with his *nefesh*, he is likely to not put enough energy into chesed, or to focus his chesed on areas which he is not meant to, or even to almost neglect this mitzvah completely for some reason or other.

Then there is another person, who is also capable of providing much help to people, but specifically by teaching them Torah. But if he is unaware of the structure of his *nefesh*, he may end up joining together with his friend who opened the Chesed center, and help people with money and food instead.

And there can be a third person who, based on the structure of his *nefesh* and his capabilities, is not meant to be involved at all in worldwide chesed activities, and his job is to perform this mitzvah according to his true ability. If he will come to recognize himself, he may discover that he can express his mitzvah of chesed in a truer way specifically through helping people by giving them suggestions or advice.

This same idea can be applied to every mitzvah, and for this reason, a person must come to recognize himself, to enable him to serve Hashem and keep the mitzvos in a more precise manner, befitting the structure and *kochos* of his *nefesh*.

To take this a step further: Each person has certain unique capabilities, which Hashem gave him to use them for His service, and for him to bring them out in a manner which brings honor to Hashem's name. This means that aside from fulfilling the mitzvos, which everyone is responsible to do, each person has his own portion, set aside for him by Hashem. Expressing a person's unique *koach*, which is the strongest and root *koach* of the person, for Hashem's sake, is the person's highest goal, his source of life and happiness, and is his place in this world.

Building the tools with which to serve Hashem

Aside from all this, in order for a person to be able to serve Hashem and keep His mitzvos, he needs to learn and become familiar with the way that the service of Hashem and keeping of the mitzvos are done, and to be sure that he has the tools necessary to perform them. This applies to both the mitzvos of actions as well as to the mitzvos of the *nefesh*.

Regarding the mitzvos on one's actions, every intelligent person understands that to properly and precisely keep the mitzvos, one needs to learn the halachos down to their minute details. Without thoroughly learning the halachos, either one will not be able to keep the mitzvos at all, or he will at least not be able to keep them properly.

Similarly, a person also must ascertain that he has the necessary tools available to him to be able to perform the mitzvos. For example, to be able to perform the mitzvah of tefillin, he must ensure that he has a pair of kosher tefillin, to be able to perform the mitzvah of Sukkah, he must build a Sukkah, and so on.

The same applies regarding the aspect of working on the *nefesh*. To properly fulfil the mitzvos which apply to the *nefesh*, a person needs to thoroughly learn the rules and details of these mitzvos. But aside from this, a person needs to recognize his *kochos*, build them up, fix them, and bring them out in a proper and precise way, in order for him to have available the tools necessary for serving Hashem and keeping His mitzvos, and in order for him to be able to fulfil his inner responsibilities towards Hashem in a proper and complete way.

For example, if a person's *koach* of belief is not properly balanced (such as that he does not believe in his own abilities, or he is untrusting of other people in an extreme way), how can he believe in Hashem with full and simple trust? If a person's force of love is concealed and covered over, how will he be able to fulfil the mitzvah of "You shall love Hashem your G-d"? If a person is unaware of his middos and does not work with them, how will he make them resemble the middos Hashem (which is one of the 613 mitzvos according to Rambam)?

However, when a person does build up the power of trust within his *nefesh*, and uses it out in a proper, balanced manner, now he is capable of reaching the level of truly feeling belief in Hashem. When the power of love is developed and revealed in one's *nefesh*, he can now turn his love towards His Creator and love Him with real, emotional love. And when a person's middos are familiar to him and he works on them, he can then correct them and balance them to make them similar to the middos of Hashem.

We see, then, that the building the *kochos hanefesh* of a person is building the tools necessary to serve Hashem and keep the mitzvos. Otherwise, without having these tools available, one will not succeed in properly fulfilling his responsibilities toward his Creator.

Strengthening one's personality- as a tool to serve Hashem

In addition to this, to serve Hashem in the best way, a person's *nefesh* needs to be uplifted and developed- strengthened- and not weak and downtrodden. This is for many reasons, and below are several them.

A person whose *nefesh* is developed and uplifted:

- Can toil and work hard in serving Hashem, in learning Torah, and in working on his middos.
- Is not imprisoned by his animalistic soul, and is able to grow and connect to the higher levels of his *nefesh*

(as we will explain in chapter 2).

- Can express and fulfill the unique, strongest attribute of his personality in a way which brings honor to Hashem's name.
- Does not lose a lot of time from his spiritual growth because of emotional hardships, weaknesses, spiritual downfalls, and other disappointments.
- Fulfills his goals with a feeling of life and happiness, and not based on a feeling of lack, weakness, and sadness.

And to develop and lift up the *nefesh*- to strengthen the *nefesh*, a person needs to be familiar with himself and his *kochos* and use them in the right way.

Understanding one's personality- as a means to know Hashem

Also, as a rule, the fundamental and root method to get to recognize Hashem is through a person recognizing himself- "from my flesh I see Hashem" (Iyov 19:26).

This means that after a person recognizes his *nefesh* and its *kochos* clearly, he can then take the next step and think into how his *kochos* are only an extension of Hashem's *kochos*, and even more, how they actually are Hashem's *kochos* which are revealed through him.

Through this, a person can merit to recognize the Creator through himself.

Hashem wants the good of humanity

There is another reason it is necessary to learn and recognize the *nefesh* for the sake of serving Hashem.

One of the underlying reasons for which Hashem created the world is to give goodness to His creations. Hashem is good, and "the way of the good is to give goodness" (Derech Hashem 1:2). This means that Hashem's will is that a person should have it good.

Accordingly, when a person learns Torah, does the mitzvos, etc., so that Hashem should give him goodness, he is thereby fulfilling the will of his Creator, and thus, he is serving Him by doing so.

Similarly, Hashem wants a person to learn and know himself for his own good, both for his physical good and his spiritual good, in this world and the next.

Therefore, a person who learns and recognizes his *nefesh* for his own good, is with this doing the will of Hashem and serving Him (if he has this in mind).

Recognizing oneself for the sake of fighting the Yetzer Hara

As an aside, there is another need to learn and recognize the *nefesh*, and that is to be able to fight the Yetzer Hara or other bad *kochos* inside a person.

There are two perspectives on this necessity: the superficial one and the inner one. The superficial view is that one needs to recognize the bad sections of the *nefesh* to be able to fight them.

The inner view is that a person needs to recognize all the parts of the *nefesh*, to be able to fix the parts which are misdirected and to make them also to be good.

[Note: This need is also related to the good of the person himself, as we will explain in Part Two of this booklet. We mentioned it here briefly so as not to leave it out completely from the discussion of serving Hashem, but we will be explaining it further there.

The reason it mainly belongs there, is because everyone, even those not primarily focused on serving Hashem, have the need to fight their bad *kochos*. Also, in general, when a person fights his bad *kochos*, he does so primarily because they affect **him** and bother **him**. Therefore, the person's personal agenda is the more focal part of this need.]

The mitzvah to learn the *nefesh* to be able to keep the Torah

Based on the above, we can go a step further. A person's *nefesh* consists of a great and wonderful variety of *kochos*- it is an entire world. As was explained, just as one needs to learn the practical halachos and get the tools to perform them, so too one needs to learn and recognize the *nefesh*, to develop it, to lift it up, and to strengthen its *kochos*, as a means to serve Hashem, keep His mitzvos, and recognize Him.

If so, just as there is a mitzvah to learn the Torah to be able to perform and do the mitzvos, so too, one fulfills the mitzvah of learning Torah when learning and getting to recognize the *nefesh*, if it brings to serving Hashem and fulfilling the mitzvos.

And through this learning, a person can get the opportunity to merit serving Hashem both with his actions and with his *nefesh*, and with them both together.

The lack of structure and clarity in understanding and recognizing oneself

However, the practical job of learning and recognizing the *nefesh*, is at times accompanied with a formidable difficulty. This is because the orderliness and clarity which are available on topics regarding working on the *nefesh*, are not the same as what is available on topics regarding the mitzvos of actions. So even though working on the *nefesh* is obligatory no less than doing mitzvos with one's actions, learning the *nefesh*- the inner world- is not as easy as learning the practical halacha.

As we know, for the sake of keeping the practical halachah, we have Shas and all the sefarim of the Poskim, Rishonim and Acharonim, down until contemporary Poskim, with rules and reasons for the mitzvos- their general rules, details, and their subtle points. Additionally, there is an abundance of sefarim which are organized and clearly written, broken into topics and subtopics, such as the Shulchan Aruch with its commentators.

Especially in our times, the sefarim libraries are Boruch Hashem full of sifrei Halachah dealing with a great deal of topics, such that any man or woman who wants to know how to keep "the actions which they should do" (Shemos 18:20), can easily find sefarim which speak about how to keep these mitzvos. Through this, everyone can be able to serve Hashem with their actions (if only we would indeed merit this to be the case!).

However, for the inner service of Hashem, there are few sefarim which deal with the inner world in a clear and organized manner.

It is true that regarding the inner world, there are many statements of Chazal throughout Shas, Midrashim, Rishonim and Acharonim, but these statements are scattered here and there, a little in one place and a little in another. The topics

of the inner world are not gathered in one place, and are not explained clearly enough- there is no Shulchan Aruch with commentaries to explain and organize the topics of the inner world.

And although a number of sefarim have appeared in our generation which do discuss the topics of the inner world, even so, sefarim which explain the **order** of the inner world, its **essence** and the great necessity of getting to know the *nefesh* and working with its *kochos*, are very lacking.

The result of the lack of Sefarim which discuss the inner world

This circumstance, that there is a lack of organized sefarim gathering and explaining clearly the topics of the inner world and the necessity of getting to know the *nefesh* and working with its *kochos*, makes it difficult for a person to learn about the inner world in general, and specifically about himself.

But besides for this, this circumstance also causes many mistaken outlooks regarding the learning of the inner world, and we will now discuss three of the more common ones.

Mistake #1- It is unnecessary to learn and recognize oneself to serve Hashem

There are people who believe that there is no crucial need to know yourself and the inner world to serve Hashem- it is just an added benefit to help one reach a higher level.

Many people think that even if there is some need to know yourself, they already know themselves enough, based on sefarim that they have learnt, or from experiences they went through, or the like.

Even more, there are those who believe that there is **no need at all** to learn the inner world and recognize oneself to serve Hashem, and one can serve Hashem even without all this.

Similarly, there are people to whom Hashem bestowed a natural tendency to understand themselves more easily than most people. Because of this, they assume that they have no need to learn to recognize themselves in a thorough manner, and it is enough that they "get" themselves naturally. However, while it is possible that, compared to others, they can better understand themselves, and at times they can even appear to be great experts in self-recognition, but this does not suffice for the self-recognition necessary for serving Hashem. This level of self-recognition one must acquire and achieve only through learning the words of our teachers- the physicians of the soul- thoroughly and step-by-step,

beginning from the basic *yesodos* and roots, and any other means of self-recognition is comparatively very shallow and superficial.

We can compare this to a person with a natural tendency for understanding the workings of the body, but never actually studied medicine. While he may have a better understanding of medicine than other people, his knowledge and understanding will definitely not compare to that of the professional doctor, who studies medicine thoroughly and consistently for a period of seven or more years.

The truth is that although there is no one place where the topics of the inner world and the greatness of the need to understand oneself are discussed or clearly explained, they are mentioned in many places throughout the Torah and the words of Chazal, and the necessity of learning and recognizing the *nefesh* to serve Hashem is immense.

Mistake #2- The inner world is simple to understand

When it comes to serving Hashem with one's actions, it is obvious and understood that every mitzvah is made up of rules, with principles, details, and details within the details, and every topic in halacha needs to be studied thoroughly from beginning to end, step-by-step, in order to be understood correctly and to arrive at the proper halachic conclusion. For example, to properly keep Shabbos, one must learn its halachos well, with all their rules, principles, and details- "mountains hanging by a hair" (Chagigah 10a). As the Mishnah Berurah explains in his introduction to Hilchos Shabbos, one who does not learn the halachos well, will certainly stumble, *chas veshalom*.

But when it comes to serving Hashem with the *nefesh*, since Seforim that explain, with depth and in a clear, organized manner, the complete build of the *nefesh*, level after level, are not very common, there are people who think that the concepts of the inner world are very general and easily understood, and there is no need to study them and think deeply into them.

For example, a person is familiar with ideas such as: loving Hashem, fear of Hashem, fixing one's middos, and other such concepts, and he is sure that the basic understanding of the concepts is all there is to understand about them, and this is enough for him to work on himself- all that's left is for him to actually fulfill these ideas practically.

But the truth is that there is no difference between the inner topics and those relating to one's actions, and these inner topics are also "deeper than the earth and wider than the sea" (*Chagigah 10a*), and consist of principles and details.

Even more, the mitzvos of the *nefesh* generally consist of many different levels. There are many levels in the mitzvah of belief in Hashem, the mitzvah of loving Hashem, the mitzvah of fearing Hashem, etc., and a person's job is to be on a path of advancement and growth from level to level.

Therefore, a person needs to study and get to know well the topics of the inner world and their levels, and to think them through and analyze them to understand them properly. Additionally, a person must learn and recognize his *nefesh* and his current level, to serve Hashem and move forward and grow in his observance of the mitzvos which apply to his *nefesh*.

Mistake #3- Getting help from non-Jewish sources

There is another mistake, a serious error, which to our deep dismay has become very commonplace in the past few years.

Since the paths of learning and recognizing the *nefesh* based on the *Torah Hakedoshah* are not so well known to the general public, there are those who **mistakenly** think that the *Torah chas veshalom* cannot be **the only source** for the learning and recognition of the *nefesh*, and for strengthening it and working with its problems. For this reason, many good people go out to foreign territory and drink from the "broken containers" () of the other nations of the world, in order to learn and recognize the *nefesh* and to strengthen it and deal with its problems.

But this is not the truth at all at all. The fact is that there is nothing in creation which is not rooted in the Torah, and the source of the existence of everything is in the Torah- "He looked in the Torah and created the world" ().

Accordingly, the *Torah Hakedoshah* itself is the source to learn about everything in the world in general, and specifically about the inner world. Every true path of recognizing the *nefesh* and strengthening it is a branch of the way of the Torah, and the solution to all the problems, including those of the *nefesh*, are found in the *Torah Hakedoshah*, which is the source and root of everything.

Just as Hashem so to speak "looked in the Torah and created the world", so too a person's job is to look into the Torah to get to know himself and build his personal life.

Furthermore, although among the nations there are methods which are indeed befitting for a non-Jew's *nefesh*, the vast majority of them are not befitting for the Jewish *nefesh*. This is because the build of the *nefesh* of a Jew and that of a non-Jew are very much different, and what befits one, does not befit the other. Just as there are foods which are okay for a non-Jew to eat but are not okay for a Jew, similarly there are methods of therapy which are okay for a non-Jew but not for a Jew.

A person who turns to these sources to study and recognize himself and deal with his problems, is like a person who wants to learn and keep the mitzvos of the *Torah Hakedoshah*, and goes to find them by the nations of the world. Obviously, he will not find what he wants there. Even with the best searching, in the best case he will find the *sheva*

mitzvos bnei noach, and no more. And even these seven mitzvos he will not end up fulfilling properly as a Jew, as the rules and details of these mitzvos differ fundamentally between a Jew and a non-Jew.

As we mentioned, the root of a person's *nefesh* is in the *Torah Hakedoshah*, as Ramchal writes in the beginning of his sefer "Derech Eitz Chaim" that Hashem made the *Torah Hakedoshah* and a person's *nefesh* in the same manner. If so, the root, complete, and exclusive source of information about the *nefesh* is only in the *Torah Hakedoshah*- in the written Torah and in the Torah Shebal Peh which Hashem gave over to the Chachmei Yisroel. The *Torah Hakedoshah* is the only source which describes and explains the **entire build of the *nefesh***, and does so in a clear, precise, and detailed manner.

And the exclusive source of practical ways to recognize and strengthen the *nefesh*, and to deal with its issues- directed and precise "instructions" on how to use the *nefesh*- is the *Torah Hakedoshah*.

"The truth shines forth"

One who is seeking the truth will see that none of these abovementioned mistakes are reason to weaken or exempt a person from learning and recognizing his *nefesh* and working with it in the proper way, as we are commanded to. To the contrary, a person's job is to yearn and work to live in a true world- a world of clarity, and remove all these doubts and confusions. And the difficulty of learning and recognizing the *nefesh* should only become a challenge which increases the motivation to reach the goal and the joy in getting there.

A person must know clearly that just as there is an obligation to perform the action-based mitzvos, so too there is an obligation to keep the mitzvos of the *nefesh*. Just as there is a need to learn the practical halachah, there is similarly a need to learn and recognize the *nefesh*. And just as we must learn the practical mitzvos in an organized and clear fashion, so must we learn and recognize the *nefesh* with an order and clarity.

A person must know that for the purpose of learning and recognizing the *nefesh* and working with its *kochos*, we cannot draw from the wrong sources but only from the *Torah Hakedoshah*- the source of life- as it is the source of the *nefesh*, and only from there is it possible to learn about the inner world and the makeup of one's individual *nefesh* in a correct, precise, and complete way. Even if this will entail work and toil, this is a person's job in life, and this is his source of merit.

This is the path which our Sages and their disciples took throughout all the generations. And by following this path, a person can direct himself towards Hashem's will, and serve Him both with his physical element and his *nefesh* element, and with both merged together, wholeheartedly.

Learning to recognize one's self for his own good

A person's need is Hashem's will

Until now we explained the need to learn to recognize oneself for the sake of serving Hashem and keeping His mitzvos. But besides for and in addition to this reason, Hashem wants a person to learn and recognize himself for his own good as well.

Hashem instilled in a person many wonderful and powerful *kochos*. The purpose of this was that the person should recognize his *kochos*, use them in the proper way, actualize his potential, and live a proper, healthy life, full of success and happiness.

Accordingly, one who does so, is thereby fulfilling the will of Hashem.

We can clearly divide the reasons why one would learn to recognize himself for his own good into two general categories: To solve problems, and to build a properly structured and developed way of life.

Solving problems

Every person who comes to this world (with almost no exceptions) comes with many *kochos hanefesh*, some of which are unrevealed, undeveloped, or imbalanced- some more and some less. Besides for this, the circumstances of our life increase and intensify the burying of the *kochos*, as well as their being undeveloped and unbalanced.

These causes lead to a host of emotional and personal issues, hardships with dealing with life's different and varying circumstances, and stresses over trivial matters.

To be able to solve these problems, one needs to learn and recognize his *nefesh* and its *kochos*.

This is a natural and correct approach- no one wants to suffer emotionally, to have a hard time dealing with things, or to be full of stresses. And in many cases, the need to learn the *nefesh* and solve its emotional issues is really a very great one, as there are people who are suffering from inner stress and need directed solutions to the issues which destroy their peace of mind and upset their normal way of life.

Building a properly structured and developed way of life

The second reason to learn and recognize the *nefesh* is to be able to build a way of life which is properly structured and developed.

There is no one who does not want to live a correct and developed life, full of life, success, and happiness.

But to get there, one needs to build himself a lifestyle tailored to the build of his *nefesh*.

This is because the spiritual level of the *nefesh*, the order, combinations, balance, strength, and quality of its *kochos*, differ from person to person. As a result of this, each person has a different and uniquely structured *nefesh*, and each person gets his life and happiness from a different source- from the shoresh of his individual *nefesh*.

Besides for this, the unrevealed, undeveloped, and unbalanced *kochos* also differ from person to person, as mentioned.

Therefore, a person's job is to recognize himself- the makeup of his *nefesh*, to bring out and use his positive *kochos*, to strengthen and uplift his self-image- **to strengthen his *nefesh***, to reveal his buried *kochos*, and to develop and balance those of his *kochos* which need this. Through this, one will be able to build himself a lifestyle tailored to the build of his *nefesh*, to actualize himself in the best possible way, and to be full of life, success, and happiness.

To clarify this point, we will present below several examples:

A person who understands the makeup of his *nefesh*, its *kochos*, his abilities, and his talents, can:

- Find the path which is right for him in Avodas Hashem.
- Focus on studying the parts of the Torah which are meant for him, and in the correct *derech* for himself.
- Work on his *middos* in a precise and balanced way.
- Be kind to those around him and help them with his unique *kochos*, and in a balanced way, according to his abilities- not too little and not too much, to the extent that he will be emotionally drained.
- Connect to his strongest *koach*- the shoresh of his *nefesh*, and gain energy and happiness.
- Use out his *kochos* in a precise and proper way, in the fields fitting for him.
- Strengthen his *kochos* which need strengthening, and establish limits for his *kochos* which he needs to limit.
- Develop the general build of his *nefesh*, including all its levels: the level of willpower, the level of thoughts, the level of emotions, etc.
- Recognize his uniqueness, and lift his self-esteem, self-confidence, and his satisfaction with what he has, not through conceit and imagination, but through a clear recognition of reality.
- Provide for his family by using his unique *kochos* and talents, which, by using them, give him energy and happiness.

- Be a good husband/wife, and build a *bayis neeman biyisroel* in a balanced way that works for both parties- a sure path for *shalom bayis* and *hashraas hashechinah*.
- Be a good father/mother, develop healthy parent-child relationships, and give to them as much as they need and as much as the parent is capable of.
- Develop good family/neighborly/social/community relationships, without losing his own personality.
- And in general, can engage himself in any field he wants or needs to engage in while keeping to his *kochos* and abilities- not more or less.

Clarity leads to precision in building our life

For one to be able to develop a lifestyle which matches the makeup of his *nefesh*, the basic self-awareness that one has of himself, which comes naturally- automatically- does not suffice. This picture is shallow and superficial, and many times inaccurate.

Additionally, people usually do not develop their lifestyle based on their understanding of themselves and in accordance with their *kochos hanefesh*. Their lifestyle is usually based on a mix of not thought-through emotional experiences, dreams, and aspirations they got from their surroundings, quick and unprecise conclusions that they never clarified, social norms, financial considerations, and similar trivial things. It is therefore no wonder at all that so many people do not live in accordance with their *kochos hanefesh* and do not feel satisfaction and happiness in their lives.

Therefore, for one to develop a proper lifestyle, built in keeping with the specific makeup of his *nefesh*, that will give him energy, success, and happiness, one needs to recognize his *nefesh* and its *kochos* in a thorough, developed, and clear manner. If one does not know himself well, how should he be able to develop his life in a correct and proper manner?!

This is like a person who uses a complex machine, without knowing what it is and what it was made for, and without knowing how to use it. A few different things may happen: he may not be able to accomplish what he wants to with it, he may use it the wrong way or not as well as he could have, he may actually break the machine, or even worse, he may hurt himself with it.

The person must first get to know the machine he wants to use- what it is, what it is meant to do, and how you use it. Only after knowing these things will he be able to use it properly. And the more he knows the machine, the more useful it will be to him, as he will be able to use it in a better way, and his benefit from it will increase.

The lesson is clear, and is much real when it comes to the *nefesh* than in our story. A person's *nefesh* is not just an object which he needs to use- it is the person himself. Additionally, one's *nefesh* is more complex than any machine one

can use. Because of this, to properly work with the *nefesh*, and to live a good and correct life, one must learn the *nefesh* and know himself well.

If a person would not use a complicated machine without knowing what it is and how to use it, it is inconceivable that he 'should walk' around with his *nefesh* his whole life and try to use it to its fullest, while his familiarity with it and his understanding of how to work with its *kochos* are sorely lacking!

If so, the necessity of learning and recognizing the *nefesh* to be able to develop a proper and correct lifestyle should be clear as day.

Problems fall away by themselves

Until now, we explained two general reasons why to learn the *nefesh* for a person's own good: to solve his problems, and to develop a proper lifestyle.

However, the need to learn and recognize the *nefesh* to solve problems, although it is a true and necessary need, is usually only felt once problems have already arisen, and the person is already suffering emotionally.

Additionally, this motivation does not usually bring one to learn and recognize the *nefesh* in a broad, thorough, and in-depth way, and certainly not to developing a correct and proper lifestyle. The objective is usually just to find solutions to counteract the problems which come up, and when the problems are resolved, there is no longer a further motivation to learn the *nefesh*.

Furthermore, the fact is that many problems stem from the very fact that one is not living in touch with the makeup of his *nefesh* and with the proper lifestyle for it. Therefore, as long as he is working only on solving problems and not on developing the proper lifestyle, he is in a situation which keeps on producing new problems all the time.

But when the second reason is what is motivating a person to learn and recognize his *nefesh*, he does not wait until problems come up and he is already suffering emotionally, and he does not look for problem or solutions for problems. Instead, he thirsts to recognize himself- his "I"- with all of its faculties, with all its depth and breadth, as by recognizing his *nefesh* and working with its *kochos*, his life will be correctly and properly developed, and will be filled with energy, joy, and success. And this way, slowly, slowly, a person directs his life in the proper direction, keeping with his *kochos* and abilities, and in accordance with the makeup of his *nefesh*.

It is certainly true that one must know his unrevealed, undeveloped, and unbalanced *kochos* to be able to cure himself from them. However, the root method is to not make this itself the reason to know the *nefesh*, but rather to consider it a part of a broader and deeper motivation, which is the second one. A person should strive to know himself in order to

establish a correct and proper lifestyle for himself, and as a part of this, one of the stages of this process, is to get to know his faults in order to correct them.

In addition, when one learns and gets to know himself, and he lives according to the makeup of his *nefesh*, this will automatically limit the emergence of new problems, and many old problems as well will **completely disappear**.

If so, it come out that learning the *nefesh* to solve its problems is learning it for a specific purpose, which brings partial results, whereas learning it to develop a proper lifestyle is the underlying and all-encompassing purpose, which includes in it the first motivation, and which leads one- to life itself.

Diagnosing and treating the branches or roots

There is another difference between the motivation to solve problems and that of developing a proper lifestyle.

Generally speaking, there are several methods of studying and recognizing the *nefesh* to solve its problems, but the basic, fundamental method is: **diagnosing the problem**- identifying which *koach* is unrevealed, undeveloped, or not balanced in relation to the other *kochos* of the *nefesh*, and **treating it**- finding the corresponding solution to reveal, develop, or balance out that *koach*.

Now, since the structure of a person's *kochos hanefesh* resembles a tree, having branches and roots, it is possible to identify a problem in the branches of the *kochos*, the roots of the *kochos*, or both. The broader the diagnosis is- in diagnosing the root and branches of the problem- the more precise and effective the treatment will be.

For example, take a person who is suffering from sadness and depression. One can identify the areas in which this problem expresses itself and what the effects of it are, and to work in these areas to prevent the undesirable effects- diagnosis and treatment of the branches. Alternatively, one can identify the root of the sadness and depression, which is the contracting-movement of the element of *afar* (earth) of the *nefesh*, and work to balance this movement with the expansion-movement which brings energy and happiness- diagnosis and treatment of the root. Or one can identify both the branches and the root of the problem, and work on both the effects of the problem as well as the expansion-movement of the *nefesh*- a broad diagnosis and treatment.

Now, when a person comes to learn and recognize the *nefesh* only to be able to solve its problems, his familiarity with the *nefesh* will generally be more superficial, incomplete, and limited. As a result of this, his diagnosis of a problem will also be more superficial, incomplete, and limited, and in the best-case scenario, he will be able to precisely diagnose the branches of the problem, but not more than that. And understandably, the effectiveness of the treatment will be the same.

But when one comes to study and recognize the *nefesh* to be able to develop a correct and proper lifestyle, his familiarity with the *nefesh* will be deeper, broader, and more comprehensive. He will therefore be able to identify both the branches and roots of a problem in a correct, precise way, and thereby find the best and most fitting solution.

Weakness and deficiency vs. capability and strength

Similarly, when a person's entire focus is on solving his problems, he is usually trying to work based on a lack. This is because he is not focusing on his positive *kochos*, but instead primarily on his "problems" which are bothering him, and these problems stem from a **lack** of the revelation, development, or balance of the *kochos hanefesh*. Aside from this, the *kochos* which are available to him in his emotional struggle are usually not very many or very strong. The reason for this is because he is trying to deal with his problems at the very beginning, before becoming very familiar with himself, so he is not yet connected to the inner layers of his *nefesh*, which are his root, strong *kochos*. As a result, all of his everyday work with his *nefesh* is founded on a feeling of deficiency and weakness.

However, when one's focus is on developing a correct and proper lifestyle, he will generally be in a state of fullness/adequacy. This is because he is not focusing on his problems, and he sees his situation as being "not too bad", and, to the contrary- he is interested and capable of advancing in his life, and is motivated to build himself a good and proper lifestyle.

Additionally, when following the method of learning the *nefesh* to develop a proper and correct lifestyle, one first learns and comes to recognize his positive and strong *kochos*. He then connects with them, brings them out, gets energy and happiness from them, and only afterwards does he begin to focus on his problems. Therefore, when he reaches the stage of dealing with his problems, his *nefesh* is already much stronger and more confident, stable, and happy. As a result of this, all his work with his *nefesh* in general, and specifically with his problems, will be based on a feeling of power and ability.

It comes out that even for the sake of solving problems, the better method is to learn the *nefesh* to develop a correct and proper lifestyle.

Solving problems- instantly and easily

Nonetheless, despite the many benefits which there are to learning and recognizing the *nefesh* to develop a correct and proper lifestyle, in many cases the natural tendency of people is to learn and recognize the *nefesh* specifically to solve

problems and not to develop a correct and proper lifestyle. But most of the time, the only reason for this tendency is the way of life of our generation- the generation of “instantly and easily”.

Many people in our generation have become accustomed to living in a way that anything which they wish, they try to achieve in the most immediate and easiest way possible. This has reached the point where this phenomenon has become part and parcel of their way of life- their image of life. The epitome of life for many people would be to be able to get everything- instantly and easily.

Below are several examples:

If one wants a hot food, all he needs to do is to push the button on the microwave. If he wants the temperature to be warmer or cooler, he pushes the remote of the air conditioner and adjusts it. Instead of walking from place to place, he uses an electric scooter, or even more- a ‘hoverboard’. Even a diet he can do easily, without needing to even get off the couch.

This phenomenon is seen to a much greater and more powerful extent with the different types of cellular devices. A person buys a cellphone for a few dollars, connects to some service provider for a few more dollars, and **everything** becomes available “instantly and easily”. He gets in touch with anyone he wants to with the push of a button. His phone numbers are all stored in the phone’s ‘memory’. Any simple mathematical calculation he does with the phone’s calculator. He does his shopping on the phone. Many things can be taken care of and gotten done with a click or swipe on the screen. In the last few years that the phone is getting “smarter and smarter”, until it has gotten so smart [הבה" "לתחכמה לו" that it can already think, see, hear, talk, feel, make decisions and work instead of a person, and all-immediately and easily.

The entire field of invention and technology has focused itself on one goal- to be able to get anything people want, as soon as possible and in the easiest way possible. Even the food industry does not sit by idly, and it constantly tries to produce more and more “instant and easy” products, to make life easier for its customers.

And so on and so forth, there are multitudes of examples, spread across all areas of life, from end to end.

It is true that there are some things which are necessary and whose benefit is clear, and there are even things which it would be very difficult [today] to live without them. But there are many things which, with a bit of patience and effort, one can survive without them just fine.

In any case, this fact causes that a person gets used to living his life, across the board, without working hard or having patience to accomplish something, and without expending effort to develop a functioning way of life. This itself causes a host of emotional and physical problems: the mind is not used enough, emotional development is lacking, relationships with friends are suppressed, patience for any process of development or growth is lost, the body is not active enough, and so on.

From a general perspective, a person is not developing and advancing in a healthy way, but the opposite.

And as time goes on, the difficulty of dealing with the circumstances of life, even the simple ones, gets greater and greater, and the problems of the *nefesh* increase more and more- stronger and stronger.

But here this phenomenon is yet doubled and increased, as when someone of our generation wants to solve his problems, he “for some reason” has a “natural tendency” to look for an instant and easy solution. This is how his whole system is built, this is his image of life: to find the method of doing things “instantly and easily”. The faster and easier a solution is, the better it is. And if someone else could just “come in” to his *nefesh* and solve his problems, this would be the best- “זאת עלית על בולנה”.

It comes out that the same way of life which a person is born into and breathes constantly, the same way of life which causes all sorts of emotional and physical problems, the same way of life which causes difficulty with dealing with things and that one should seek easy and immediate solutions, is what motivates a person to learn and recognize his *nefesh* to solve its problems and not to develop a correct and proper way of life, as this second motivation requires him to expend a bit more effort and patience.

"Amazing" methods- no wonder

When a person with the image of “instantly and easily” comes looking for quick and easy solutions to the problems of his *nefesh*, there is no wonder that he will be advised with all different “amazing” methods for dealing with them in an easy and quick manner.

But many times, these methods do not bring the results which one hoped for. There are methods which cause a person to imagine that he is what he is not, or which strengthen his negative *kochos*, or which are beneficial for one of his *kochos* but destructive to another one. Many times are the problems not only unresolved, but they are increased and strengthened. Therefore, it is no wonder that so many people feel and even say: “I tried everything, or almost everything, and nothing helps”.

On this we can use Chazal’s words “Do not know matters which are beyond (מופלא) you [the secrets of Kabbalah]”- it would be better not to know from these “amazing” (נפלא) methods.

Because of this, even someone who is looking for a solution to the problems of his *nefesh* must seek it only from the methods which are founded and rooted solely on the pillars of the Torah *Hakedoshah* and the words of Chazal. While it is true that these methods do not guarantee to “work wonders” instantaneously and easily, but the solutions they suggest are real, match the person’s *nefesh*, and bring to comprehensive, positive, change.

It is well known that there can be a path which seems to be short, as its results seem to come very quickly, but it ends up being long, because the difficulties and problems which are hidden on this path do not allow one to reach his goal. And there is a path which seems long, as its results do not show themselves very quickly, but before long, it becomes clear that this is actually the short path, as its results do actually come, and bring a person to his goal.

It is better for a person to take the long path which is short, and not the short path which and actually very long.

"Know your enemy"- the external perspective

There is another attitude, opposite of the "quick and easy" attitude, which also causes a person to learn and recognize his *nefesh* for the sake of solving its problems.

There are people who look to solve the problems of their *nefesh* with an understanding that these problems are just bad *kochos* which are inside them- the yetzer hara, *kochos* hara, etc.- and their will and desire is to fight those evil *kochos*. To accomplish this, they engage in learning and recognizing the "evil *kochos*", the "strategies of the yetzer hara", and the ways of fighting them.

While this outlook is not wrong, we must realize that there are two general perspectives on the inner world and on working with the *nefesh*: an external one and an inner one. This outlook is the external one.

Seeking the bad *kochos* of the *nefesh* to fight them, and looking at the *nefesh* as a war zone- this is a superficial outlook on the inner world and on working with the *nefesh*.

"Know yourself"- the inner perspective

The inner perspective on the inner world and working with the *nefesh* is completely different than the outer one, and it goes as follows:

A person's *nefesh* is an amazing thing- "A G-dly portion from above" (Iyov 31:2), and it encompasses many good and special *kochos*, which clothe it. **Every koach** of the *nefesh* is a present from Hashem, which can be used in the way it was meant to be used. However, Hashem's will is that the physical, outer, layer of a person cover over that of his inner *nefesh*, and that similarly, a portion of his *kochos hanefesh*, although they are good and special, should not come open, matured, or balanced properly.

A person's job is to be constantly and continuously learning and recognizing his *nefesh* and working with his *kochos*: he must recognize his positive *kochos*, connect to them, bring them out to the open, use them in a correct and proper way, and get life and happiness from them.

And his unrevealed, immature, and unbalanced *kochos* he must also recognize, develop, and balance out, but not with a life-outlook of fighting with bad, just as part of a life-outlook of recognizing the entire *nefesh* and developing it, and with an understanding that these *kochos* as well are amazing presents from Hashem and are **a part of himself**, and his job is to reveal, develop, and balance out these *kochos*. Once these *kochos* are open, developed, and balanced, he will connect to them as well, bring them too out, use them also in the right and proper way, and get energy and happiness from them too.

The closer a person's perspective is to the inner one, the more capable he is of recognizing his *nefesh* and working with its *kochos* in a greater way, and the closer he is to developing and perfecting his *nefesh*.

Yearning for peace, not war

Additionally, these two perspectives, the external one and the inner one, awaken different *kochos* of a person, and bring out different drives.

There are two *kochos* in a person: a koach of war and a koach of peace.

When a person looks at the inner world and on working on the *nefesh* with an external outlook- a perspective of fighting, this awakens the koach of war within his *nefesh*, and its drive to fight. It is with this koach and drive that he approaches his job of recognizing the *nefesh*- he is eager to find the negative *kochos*- the bad *kochos*, and when he finds them, he tries to fight them with all his might. He may succeed and he may not, but his whole approach is one of war, and the whole time he is fighting against his *kochos*.

On the other hand, when a person looks at the inner world and at working on his *nefesh* with an inner perspective- a perspective of recognizing the entire *nefesh*, he awakens the koach of peace within his *nefesh*, and its drive towards peace. It is with this koach and drive that he approaches his whole job of recognizing the *nefesh*, and specifically to fixing the immature parts of his *nefesh*. He yearns to recognize all his *kochos*, both the developed ones as well as the undeveloped ones, and work with them, from a perspective of peace, a perspective of calm, a perspective of connection, and a perspective of self-perfection.

For example, take a father who wants to get understand his children and be able to help them. He certainly wants to know where they are lacking- their immature middos and their struggles, to be able to assist and help them as much as possible. But would anyone think that the father's whole desire is only to see the bad in his children?! Certainly not! The father's desire is to see his children's good middos, talents, successes, etc., and additionally, their weak areas as well.

When a father sees the entire picture, and looks at things with the proper outlook, he recognizes his children in a true and precise way, but from a positive perspective. Furthermore, when he tries to help his children fix their undeveloped areas and deal with the challenges in their lives, he will do it with an accurate understanding of their reality and an attitude of helping them achieve perfection- an attitude of peace.

If so, when a person approaches his job of recognizing himself, he must also do this from a perspective of peace and a drive for peace, and not with an outlook and drive for fighting.

The difference between them is great.

The timetable for studying and getting to know one's self

When a person approaches learning and recognizing the *nefesh* to be able to solve his problems or to fight the bad *kochos*, it would seem to be enough for his study to be directed specifically on the problematic *kochos hanefesh*- the bad *kochos* and the strategies of the yetzer hara, after which he will be ready to solve his problems or to wage the war.

On the other hand, when a person comes with a desire to develop a correct and proper lifestyle and with the inner perspective, the process of learning and recognizing the *nefesh* does not end after a period of time, and cannot be placed among other studies to finish at a certain stage.

In other words, the process of learning and recognizing the *nefesh* is an inner and true way of life, which last throughout **all one's lifetime in this world**. A person can always learn and recognize new *kochos*, and even in the ones he already knows, he can recognize them deeper and deeper. He can always bring out his *kochos* more and more, develop and balance his *kochos* further and further, and organize his way of life to match his *nefesh* with increasingly more precision. And as a result, his energy, happiness, and fulfillment in life will become increasingly more- increasingly deeper.

What this means is that although to reach a high level of self-recognition, strengthening the *nefesh*, and developing a proper lifestyle, there is a certain length of time which does suffice, but this is not the end of the job of recognizing the *nefesh*. The *nefesh* of a person is 'longer than the earth and wider than the sea', and the more a person learns and recognizes himself, the more new depths he will uncover- a new life, which he can organize his life in turn.

Just as the Ramchal writes about a wise man: "the wise men are always continuously thinking constantly", in the same way regarding learning and recognizing the *nefesh* we can say: people of the "inner perspective" are continuously getting to know themselves better **constantly- their entire lives!**

"Necessity is necessity"

Until now we explained that the fundamental and all-inclusive manner of learning and recognizing the *nefesh* is to learn it for the sake of developing a proper and correct way of life. Similarly, we explained that included within this way is also the component of solving the *nefesh's* issues. This method involves one first going through elementary stages of learning and recognizing the *nefesh*, and only afterwards reaching a point where he is ready to get to know his negative *kochos* in order to fix his problems.

However, there are cases where it is proper to approach the job of learning the *nefesh* specifically to fix its problems, and "necessity is necessity".

Firstly, there certainly are cases where the emotional problems are very intense, and so long as the person is not dealing with them, he is not able to live a functional life at all, and certainly not to develop a good and proper lifestyle.

Additionally, there are situations where a person goes through extreme emotions which rob him of his basic peace of mind, and make him unable to learn and recognize his *nefesh* properly. In these cases, the person needs a focused solution to distance him from these extremes, and thereby bring him closer to the path of learning and recognizing the *nefesh* in the proper way, amidst peace of mind.

Similarly, there are cases where an urgent, focused, solution is needed, which cannot wait until a person learns his *nefesh* in a fundamental and comprehensive way.

Aside from these cases, even in cases where the motivation to solve one's problems stems from the "quick and easy" attitude discussed above, sometimes there is a need to work on an approach focused just on solving the problems. This is because the entire "picture of life" of some people is to find the quick and easy solution to their problems, and as a result, their emotional capability to invest and have patience, while present inside their *nefesh*, are not from their revealed and readily accessible *kochos* when they are starting out. Therefore, in these cases as well we must use more focused solutions, with which they will be able to deal with their problems, and which will enable them to slowly switch over to the more fundamental path of self-improvement.

Solving issues- a stage, not the goal

But in any case, even if a person chooses to learn and recognize himself for the sake of solving his problems, he must do so in a controlled and balanced way, and follow the path of the Torah *Hakedoshah*, as discussed above.

Additionally, a person needs to remember that this path will not lead him to his ultimate goal, and he cannot develop a correct and proper lifestyle based on this alone.

This is like a person who is in poor physical health, and also suffers from some side effects. While it is true that he needs to seek medical attention to rectify the side effects, one certainly would not think to focus only on fixing the side effects and think that this would cure his poor health. Additionally, sometimes taking too much medicine for side effects,

without caring generally for his health, can do further damage to his overall health. He must therefore work on both his general health as well as his side effects. Sometimes he should focus first on his general health and sometimes first on the side effects, and there are times when he should focus on both at the same time, but in all cases, he must work to increase his overall health in a thorough and complete way.

The same applies to solving one's issues. One should use the methods of solving problems only as a stage among the stages of self-improvement, either as an elementary stage to be able to move forward, or as a later stage to complete his thorough and comprehensive study and recognition of his *nefesh*. But he should always make sure that the general goal he is aiming towards is to develop a correct and proper lifestyle.

Clarifying the route before embarking

After all of the above, a person needs to clarify for himself, before embarking on a path of learning and recognizing the *nefesh*- for what purpose am I setting out on this task?

This is because the method of the study, the manner of practically working with the *nefesh*, and the results received from it, are very different depending on whether a person approaches the study and recognition of the *nefesh* to solve problems or to develop a correct and proper way of life.

If his goal is to solve his problems, he should turn to the corresponding method, which is learning and recognizing the unrevealed, immature, or unbalanced *kochos*, and finding the corresponding solutions, as mentioned above.

And if a person clarified with himself that his reason to learn and recognize the *nefesh* is for the sake of developing a proper and correct lifestyle, he should turn to the method meant for that. This means learning and recognizing himself, together with practically working to strengthen his *nefesh*, in a built-up, thorough, comprehensive, and steady way, step-by-step, from the bottom up- from the basic recognition until the root self-awareness.

"You shall know today... and accept it in your heart"

The goal of this booklet is to clarify the need to learn and recognize the *nefesh*. The truth is that to begin the project of trying to learn and recognize oneself, whether for the sake of serving Hashem and keeping His mitzvos properly, or to develop a correct and proper way of life, or to solve one's problems, a person must know clearly in his mind that it is the will of Hashem, and it is indeed possible, for a person to learn and know himself, to work with his *kochos*, to strengthen his *nefesh*, and to live a fortunate and happy life.

This knowledge itself is enough for one to start learning and recognizing his *nefesh*, and working with its *kochos*.

However, to be able to move forward and successfully keep working at this job, this knowledge of the mind must become clearer and stronger over time, and slowly seep into the inner recesses of the heart, until this becomes what one really wants and his heart's simple desire.

Practically, at the same time as one learns to recognize his *nefesh* and works with it, he should also think through and remind himself again and again of the need to learn and recognize his *nefesh*, and should strengthen and increase his desire and yearning to develop a true lifestyle, a more and more inner way of life.

And if a person does this, a significant portion of the job will sort of happen by itself. This is because through the process of learning and recognizing his *nefesh*, together with practically working on it, a person uncovers a complete world inside of himself- an amazing world- **he uncovers himself**. Slowly, slowly, he connects to his *kochos* and brings them out to the open, and build, uplifts, and strengthens himself, and becomes full of life and joy. His quest for life is thus automatically strengthened, which causes him to be willing to invest time and effort to further recognize himself. And all this- in keeping with his *nefesh* and its *kochos*, and with the Hashem.

Studying and recognizing oneself- to gain an inner focus and uncover the koach of "Achdus"- (unity). Meant for someone who desires more depth on this topic!

Another perspective on why to learn and get to know oneself

Until now the necessity to learn and recognize oneself was explained, in general: for the sake of serving Hashem and for a person's own good. Now we will explain another perspective on this need, on a deeper level – a depth within a depth.

This will stress for us the tremendous and fundamental difference between a person who is in the midst of learning and recognizing his *nefesh* and someone who is not.

The external and internal "self"

Everything Hashem created in the world has its externality and its inner reality. A person is made up of an external body and an inner *nefesh*. The world itself is made up of a physical world on the outside, and a spiritual world on the inside, and so on.

Furthermore, the classification of the inner vs. outer parts of things is relative. The *nefesh* of a person, although it is the inner part in relation to the body, is itself made up of external and internal parts – its superficiality and its depth.

In more detail, we can describe a person's *nefesh* as a building of many stories, where each floor contains a different world outlook and way of thinking. The lower floors contain the more superficial and external outlooks and thought

processes, and as the floors get higher, the outlook and thought process they contain becomes deeper and more internal. All material, both external and internal, that a person brings into his nefesh, is taken in by the floor which is suited for it.

The person's "self" – meaning his identity and consciousness, is always at a certain floor of his nefesh, and is connected to the outlook and way of thinking which that floor contains.

It is up to a person to "go out" to the externalities of his nefesh, or to "enter inwards" to its inside – to move from floor to floor, meaning to acquire and choose for himself a world outlook and way of thinking that is either superficial – lower, or internal – higher. And each floor a person stays by, for as long as he stays there, decides the level of his nefesh and his perception of himself.

It comes out, that if a person goes out to the externality of his nefesh, his world outlook and way of thinking change and become external, and his "self" becomes external, whereas if he enters inward to the inside of his nefesh, his perception changes to an inner one, and his "self" becomes more internal.

How? Through the power of focus

One of the root and fundamental kochos through which a person "moves" from floor to floor in his nefesh is his **koach of focus**.

A person can focus on all types of things, such as: on himself, on other people, on abstract thoughts, on stories, on objects, etc. Similarly, a person can focus on things in a more general way or in a more specific way, in deeper way or in a more superficial way, in a more focused way or in a less focused way, and so on.

Our Chachomim have taught us that whenever one focuses on something, he focuses his "self" on it. When he focuses on a specific thing, his conscious "self" so to speak leaves its current place and moves towards the thing he is focusing on, and connects to it. Slowly but surely, that thing penetrates to inside of him, becomes a part of him and his very koach of focusing [meaning his conscious self-perception and outlook].

[On a deeper level, a person's nefesh really contains everything inside it, both inner perspectives and superficial ones. When one focuses on a something, this awakens the corresponding way of thinking within himself, and can also cover over the opposite ways of thinking, as the Gemara teaches (Nedarim 32b) "At the time of the Yetzer Hara, no one remembers the Yetzer Tov".]

To explain this in more detail, a person uses his koach to focus not only with his sense of vision, but also with his senses of hearing, smell, taste, and touch, as all the senses are like windows through which he takes in and focuses on the world outside of him.

Additionally, a person's koach of focus works with his other kochos hanefesh, such as his kochos of ratzon [willpower], machshavah [thought], hargashah [emotions], etc. So, for example, when a person 'focuses' on something with his koach

of ratzon, his willpower connects to that thing, and it becomes a part of the 'floor' of wants in his nefesh. When he 'focuses' on something with his koach of thought, his thoughts connect to the thing, and it becomes a part of his way of thinking. And when he 'focuses' on something specific with his koach of hargashah, his emotions connect to that thing, and it becomes part of his world of emotions, and so on.

Additionally, there are times when one focuses with only a few senses or kochos, and there are times when one focuses in a manner that includes many senses and kochos. For example, a person can see something but not hear it or taste it, or he can see something that he also hears, smells, and tastes. A person can think about something without wanting it or having a feeling towards it, or he can think about something which he also wants and has a feeling for, and so on.

The more deeply and focused a person focuses on something, with more senses and kochos taking part in his focus, the more the thing he is focused on penetrates his nefesh and becomes a part of his "self".

So now, if a person focuses on something external, he connects to the external levels of his nefesh, while if he focuses on something internal, he connects to the inner levels of his nefesh. This way, his "self" moves from level to level in his nefesh, and if his "self" moves, his way of thinking also changes accordingly.

We will give a common example of this, which brings out this idea.

A person moves to a different city, and joins a certain community which he was until then unfamiliar with. He lives among them, learns with them, davens with them, works with them, sends his children to their schools, listens to their type of music, tastes their types of food, and so on. As time passes, this community has a big influence on him in many areas. Slowly, he finds himself thinking like them, acting like them, feeling their feelings, and sometimes even objecting to someone who is different than them.

Why does this all happen? Because this person focused himself many times and with many parts of his "self" on their world outlook and way of life. Through this, he left his 'place' and moved to their 'place', and slowly their outlook and way of life become a part of him and part of his outlook on himself and the world – a part of his own conscious "self". The result of this is that the "self" of the person "moved" from one floor to another floor within his nefesh.

Directing one's focus to the outside or to the inside

Additionally, a person can, both naturally and deliberately, turn his focus from one direction to another. For example, one minute a person can focus on something which he is learning, and the next minute he can 'turn his focus' to the smell of the food cooking on the stovetop. On minute he can be focused on his monetary situation, and the next minute he can turn his focus to his son who is late in coming home, and so on.

It is for this reason, that a person can turn his focus from one way to another, that a person's face is called his "*Panim*", because it turns [is *poneh*] from side to side.

[On a deeper level, just as the body has a physical face, the nefesh also has a face, and the "face" of the nefesh is the very koach to turn one's focus from topic to topic.]

Now, a person's focus can be directed outwardly – towards someone [or something] else, and it can be turned inwardly – to his nefesh.

And based on what we explained above, when a person focuses on someone else, his "self" "leaves" to what is outside, and the outside becomes part of him and his koach of focus [his outlook]. And when a person focuses on his nefesh, his "self" enters inward, and his inner nefesh becomes part of him and his koach of focus [his outlook].

Because of this, the word *panim*, which connotes the power to turn one's focus, has two other connotations, as is well-known: it is connected to the word *pinui*- emptying – when one's "self" leaves its place and goes out to someone else, and is connected to the word *pnim*- inside – when his "face" turns towards his inside and reflects it [that his face shows his inner self, as was seen with the shine on the face of Moshe Rabbeinu].

Turning towards others- the danger involved

In reality, although a person is able to turn his focus either towards someone else or towards the inside of his nefesh, the primary, instinctive, focus of a person, due to his nefesh *habehamis* [lower, animalistic layer of his nefesh], is to be focused on the outside and not on the inside. This means that of the two connotations of the word *Panim*, the meaning which is usually apparent is that of turning towards others and not turning to the inside.

However, the danger this causes a person is greater than its benefit. If one's koach of focus is primarily focused on the outside, this results in most of the action of his nefesh being movements away from himself towards the outside. His emotional connection becomes primarily to things on the outside, and the outside things become a part of him and his world outlook. Through this, he acquires himself a different identity and an external "conscious self": his *ratzon* becomes external, his thoughts become external, his feelings become external, and his very power of focus [his outlook] becomes external.

When a person connects to the outer parts of his nefesh, he loses his connection to the inner 'floors' and his inner "conscious self", and he is unable to identify, understand, feel, and experience what is happening on the inside of his nefesh.

Similarly, when a person is not connected to the inner layers of his nefesh, and his outlook is not internal, he is also unable to focus on the inner meaning of things and the inner reality of those around him, and can only see them

externally. As a result, his perspective on things and on people becomes imprecise and inaccurate, and many times even [completely] incorrect.

Once on this path, a person takes in more and more ideas, all on basis of this perspective, and his whole way of thinking, both about the external world and about the inner world, becomes superficial.

Additionally, since being focused on the outside causes the place of one's "self" to be in his outer layers and not inside himself, even when he expresses himself to someone else, his self-expression will be superficial. In other words, he will be unable to express the depths of his feelings, only their outer layers – the external parts of his ratzon, his thoughts, and his feelings. As a result, the connotation that one's Panim [face] reflects his Pnim [inside] will almost not be seen at all.

"Ikvisa Demishicha"- (the footsteps of Mashiach)- the lowest possible level

And in our generation, the danger lurking in focusing on the outside, is many times greater, as the "outside" in our generation includes in it **all the ills of all the generations** that ever were, and even beyond them.

Today, if one's koach of focus is mainly turned towards the outside, slowly [or maybe more accurately- 'very quickly', due to the abundance and intensity of the externalities of the world in this generation,] a person becomes the recipient of all these ill influences, and they become part and parcel of his "self" and his "focus".

To be more precise, it is well-known that Chazal called our generation – the last generation – the generation of "Ikvisa Demishicha" [the footsteps of Mashiach]. With this expression, Chazal hinted to us that in our generation, people will sink to the level of the Eikev (ankle) – the lowest part of a person's body – corresponding to the lowest 'floor' [of the nefesh] possible – and the greatest level of superficiality there is.

Here the truth compels us to explain these matters on a level deeper.

Externality vs. Internality – Disconnection vs. Unity

Above we explained that a person's nefesh is made up of outer parts and inner parts. But, in a deeper way, a person's nefesh is structured like a tree with one root [trunk] and many branches which separate from each other, where the root of the nefesh is its inside and the branches are its outside.

If so, the more a person "goes out" to the outer parts of his nefesh, to the lower 'floors' of his nefesh, he connects to the perception of the many diverging branches, and his world outlook and way of thinking becomes one of disconnection. And the more one "enters" to the inside of his nefesh, to the higher 'floors' of his nefesh, he connects to the perception of the one root [the trunk], and his world outlook and way of thinking becomes one of unity, as we will explain.

In general, one can look at anything in the world with the perception of disconnection, which means to perceive that one thing has no fundamental connection to any other part of creation. Even more, he can perceive that it has no fundamental connection with Hashem – that He is separate and above everything else and stands alone. Even if there is some level of connection between things, he will perceive that this is merely coincidental – that things connect for their own needs or benefit, but is not an essential connection.

According to this perception, the domeim [inanimate objects], tzomeach [plants], chai [animals], people, Torah Hakedosheh, and Hashem Yisborach – each one is a separate entity, distinct from the others and existing separately.

To the contrary, one can look at all of creation with a perception of unity – that [the inner essence of] all the creations are really connected to each other, and complement each other in forming one reality. And even more, they all together are joined with Hashem Yisborach – “Hashem is one and His name is one”.

Accordingly, when a person is at the external levels of his nefesh – on the lower ‘floors’, he is living with the perception of the branches – of disconnection. He will automatically perceive himself and the rest of creation as being each disconnected from each other and from Hashem.

But to the contrary, when a person is located towards the inside of his nefesh – on the higher ‘floors’, he lives his life with the root perception – that of unity. This automatically enables him to perceive himself as one with someone else, and to perceive all of creation as unified with itself and with Hashem.

Division and Unity in oneself

This difference of perception, however, which is the result of leaving to the outer layers of the nefesh or coming in to its inner layers, does not begin with how one perceives the world and Hashem, but with how he perceives himself. A person first perceives himself with the perception of the disconnected branches or the one root, and afterwards he uses the same perception also in how he perceives the rest of the world.

In other words, when a person goes out to the outer layers of his nefesh, he takes up the perception of separate branches **within himself**. His kochos hanefesh become disconnected from each other, and do not work together towards one goal. He starts wanting a lot of different, not connected, things. The same happens with his thoughts [which become scattered and not connected], his emotions [his different emotions become separate and contradictory], and his other kochos. Even more: his wants, thoughts, emotions, and other kochos each become disconnected with each other, and all stand alone. The result of this is that the “self” of a person is left as a distinct entity within a nefesh which is split into tens and hundreds of thousands of parts, each one standing alone and ‘pulling’ him in a different direction. His whole power of focus itself also becomes scattered and divided, and sees everything through a lens of disconnection.

On a deeper level, the outermost layer of a person is his body. When a person goes out to his outermost layer, this essentially means that he is connecting to the perception of his body – his “self” becomes his body. The perception of the body is that of *afar* [the element of earth], as that is what it was made from [“earth from the ground” (Beraishis 2:7)], which is the most divisible element. If so, his “self” is at the greatest possible level of disconnection and disparity.

On the other hand, when a person enters into the inner parts of his nefesh, he connects to the root perception **within himself**. All his kochos unite with each other, and serve one purpose. His wants, thoughts, feelings, and other kochos – each one of these parts becomes unified within itself, and they all unite together. This makes the person one, complete, entity, whom all his kochos, including his koach of focus, work together in a proper and correct manner, harmoniously and in peace.

After a person within himself is already in a state of disconnection or unity, he then looks the same way out at the rest of creation, and even more, at Hashem.

Additionally, as we mentioned, a person’s nefesh has a multitude of ‘floors’. Accordingly, as a person descends to the lower ‘floors’ [goes out to the outer layers of his nefesh] or goes up to the higher ‘floors’ [enters its inner layers], his own state changes accordingly between disconnection and unity, his koach of focus becomes more divided or unified, and his world outlook on himself, creation, and Hashem, changes between one of disparity or and one of unity.

The test [*nisayon*] of the final generation

When Chazal called our generation: “The Generation of the Footsteps of Mashiach”, they hinted to the fall of humanity to the level of the heel – the lowest possible level, the most external layer, and the lowest part within the level of the body itself – and they revealed to us what our final test will be. The final test is the test of the perception of disconnection. This includes disconnection among one’s kochos hanefesh, disconnection among people, disconnection between all of creation, and disconnection between creation and its Creator, *rachmanah litzlan*.

This test is not simply another test like the other ones which just happens to be last on the list, but it is the root and includes within it at the tests there ever were. All the tests of all time which ever came down to this world are coming down again, and they join and participate, and more, the assist and help this test, to make it **THE FINAL TEST**.

However, to enable this test to actually be **THE TEST**, its outer appearance – which is the way it seems and pretends to be, does not look like disconnection, but to the contrary, it looks like unity. And not only like partial unity, but like complete, total unity – as **a one instrument with which to include and unite everything**.

However, in its true reality, it has no ability to unite, and it does not unite anything at all, but rather it contains in it only **every** possibility of disconnection possible, and is itself the most disconnected and greatest disconnecter to ever exist from the time people walked on this world, and is completely imaginary. **This is THE TEST!**

The "Smartphone" – external unity and internal disconnection

What are we speaking about?

We are living in a time when the entire world has turned into one small village.

Through the different means of travel, people from all over travel from place to place for tourism, business, moving, etc., all in a few short hours. Different communities, cultures, and whole countries, mix with each other and influence each other. Many different groups gather in one place, and teach each other their customs and ways of life. As a result of this, a new reality is formed, which takes on a new shape by blurring all the defined barriers and the unique colors which each individual had, and makes them all similar and seemingly united.

But far beyond this is – The “Smartphone”!

In the past few years, advancement in all fields of technology and electronics brought their wake the device known as the “smartphone”. To be more precise, it did not “by chance” bring to this device, but, to the contrary, all the advancements were all merely a means to create this device, which is the goal of them all, and is getting closer and closer to its full development.

The essence of this device has two parts: its outer one and its inner one.

In its outer, imaginary, appearance – the smartphone seems to be **a single device which includes and unites everything**, or is at least becoming this. Its developers use **all** means available to include in it **all** people, **all** information, **all** means of communication and messaging, **all** emotions and feelings [“likes”], and **all** means of commerce, services, and the like.

Even more, all kinds of service providers, such as banks, pharmacies, offices, etc., are slowly discontinuing the ways to contact them directly, and are instead directing people to contact them through their “apps” on the smartphone, and the list goes on. As time goes on, **all contact** between people will be only through this device.

Aside from this, as of now a person connects to this device through his senses of sight, hearing, and touch. However, the developers of this device are not satisfied with this, and they work and sweat to develop a way that a person will be able to connect to it with his senses of smell and taste as well, so that through this, the **entire** person will be connected to it, and **all** his senses will be dependent on this device.

Even the other developments and advances in the world, are only serving the purpose of bringing a person to be completely dependent on this device, to bring him to a point where he will have **almost** no choice [but to give into it]. For example, many countries today speak of switching human labor for machines and robots, and some have them even begun to do this. The question is asked: if people will not have jobs to do, what will they do? The answer: No problem! They will have a lot to do on their smartphones, day and night!

[Even the whole phenomenon of “instantly and easily” which we discussed above, serves mainly as a means to make a person more dependent on this device, which gives the greatest results in the fastest and easiest manner possible.]

The result is that this device – in its outer appearance – is **one tool which includes and unites everything**.

[And to elaborate more: Just as a person is an *'olam shalem'* and includes in him all the parts of creation – thought, senses, speech, feelings, and actions – so too, this (imaginary) tool presents itself as if it will be able to include everything.]

However, in the inner essence of this device – its true reality, it does not unite anything, but rather includes in it **all** the ills in **one** place, enables **all** the forbidden and inappropriate connections which do not bring to unity but rather to separation, and exposes a person to **all** the defilement and evils of the world.

As facts testify, and studies confirm, this device causes a multitude of emotional problems (disconnection among the *kochos hanefesh*, as explained above), and disconnection between husbands and wives, parents and children, friends, communities, a person and the Torah, and a person and his Creator. In truth, there is nothing real about it, except for its real power of disconnection, imagination, and false hopes.

When a person turns his koach of focus towards this device, whose outer, imaginary, appearance is as one tool which includes everything and whose inner reality is total disconnection and imagination, his “self” goes out to it, and absorbs **all** the disconnected and dividing impure forces contained in it, **with all his senses and kochos**. This pulls him down to his lowest ‘floor’ and greatest level of externality, which is the greatest level of disconnection **within his nefesh** – where his *kochos hanefesh* become separated to tens and hundreds of thousands of parts, and the lowest level within the body – the ankle, [meaning that he is not only at the most external level of the body, but he is at the lowest level within it, the ankle of the body] – “The Footsteps of Mashiach”.

From there, the path towards looking at others, the world, and Hashem Yisborach, with a perception of disconnection, is short and quick, *Hashem Yerachem*.

"A world of disparity"

But this test does not end here. Since the smartphone influences the entire lifestyle of people, and, to be more precise, it becomes their “lifestyle”, the perception of disparity does not remain in its realm – on the smartphone itself, but it spills over outside, to the street. Even more, it takes over the whole world, and the entire world becomes **one big place for everyone**. As we mentioned above, the whole world is slowly “merging” – countries, communities, religions, etc., are all blending and seemingly uniting.

But from the true and inner perspective, this is not true unity. This blending is formed using *kochos* of disconnection and imagination – mingling in ways which are clearly inappropriate, and blurring all boundaries meant to guard the

uniqueness and individuality of each person. The result of this way of life is not unity but disconnection. If a person tries to lose his uniqueness to be encompassed in the world's "one place", he loses himself – as he is disconnected with himself, but he loses his connection to the group as well, as his whole "connection" is also only to all those who also lost themselves and are not connected to themselves "to be part of the group". In sum total, he finds himself alone in one place with many other lonely people.

Additionally, this state causes a person to feel empty and lacking, which causes his nefesh to thirst for fulfillment. But the fulfillment he finds is only more of the disconnected material of this imaginary device [and way of life], and he goes in circles. The more a person connects himself to this device, the more the emptiness in his nefesh grows, and his desire for fulfillment becomes stronger, like the well-known parable of someone who drinks salty water, which just makes him ever thirstier.

This is the test of the final generation – the generation of "The Footsteps of Mashiach", living in this world – "A World of Disparity".

Returning to our discussion, even someone who does not focus directly on the smartphone, but merely turns his focus out towards the outside, will very easily stumble on the perception of disconnection which can be found on all sides, *rachmana litzlan*.

This is the great, especial, danger lurking in focusing on the outside in our generation!

Turning the focus inside- a double benefit

However, when a person turns his koach of focus to himself – towards his nefesh, he gains from this a multiplied, double benefit.

First of all, he gains the immense and amazing benefits that lie in turning his focus inward, towards his true inner self:

When a person turns his focus towards himself, his "conscious self" is focused to the depths of his nefesh, and he "moves" to the innermost recesses of his nefesh – to the high and elevated 'floors' inside it, and he absorbs the world outlook and ways of thinking which are there. Slowly, he connects to his inner self, his inner focus, and his uniqueness.

Besides for this, when a person connects to his inner layers, he is also able to express them to others. Here the other connotation of "Panim" gets its true meaning, as his 'face' is turned inwards towards his inside and absorbs it, and afterwards can reflect and shows his inside to someone else – it can shine it out to others.

Additionally, when a person connects to the inner layers of his nefesh, he connects to his root perception – his perception of unity. He unites with himself – his kochos become united, and his world outlook on himself, the world, and Hashem Yisborach, becomes one of unity.

Similarly, when a person is connected to his inner layers, he is able to also see into the inner layers of others, and truly connect with them. [And if every person himself will connect to his inner layers, and unite with others at their inner layers, then the true means of unity which will include and unite everyone – the coming of Mashiach – will be revealed].

Aside from all this, with the very fact that a person is turned inwards towards himself, he saves himself from focusing on the outside, with all that comes along with it, as when his face is turned inwards, it is not facing outwards.

To live and face inwards- naturally

In addition to this, when a person consistently turns inwards, not only does he connect with himself and his inner “conscious self” and focus, but, with the passage of time, he moves away from dwelling on the outside. He begins to live, so to speak, within his nefesh – the inner layers of his nefesh become the new dwelling place of his “self” and his natural, visible, level. His inner focus also becomes his natural focus, not something he needs to struggle to acquire.

Similar to the example given above, of a person moving and becoming part of a new community, who, after some time, becomes like them, so too, a person who consistently looks inwardly, uproots himself from his external place of living and moves to an inner place, and acquires himself an inner perspective.

But there is a tremendous difference between the example and our case. In the example, it is possible that the person is leaving his true “self”, and turning into someone else – to be like the community he is associating with. But in our case, where a person limits his outward focus and increases his inward focus, he drops his outer, borrowed, and disconnected identity, and returns to his root and real “self”, and sees everything naturally with an inner and unifying perspective. In other words, he goes from being a disconnected person to being a unified person.

True focusing on someone else- is only from within oneself

As an aside, the correct way of turning towards someone else in a proper and real way, without being disconnected from the person on one hand, and without being affected by turning outside on the other hand, is to do so from within one’s inner place.

This means that one must first focus many times inwardly, into himself, and acquire a stable and permanent inward focus. Afterwards, the person can focus outwardly from within himself.

This does not mean that he simply focuses outwardly, as by doing so he will lose himself and his whole inward koach of focus. Rather he should remain inside, but from within himself focus outwardly. It is like a person who is inside his house and looks out through a window to see if it is raining, when he can see the weather without being affected by it.

Turning inside- getting to know oneself

Returning to our subject, above we explained, from one perspective, the need to learn and recognize the nefesh: for the purpose of serving Hashem and keeping His mitzvos, and for the good of a person himself – to develop a good and proper lifestyle and solve his issues.

But according to what we are now explaining, this necessity gets a new angle, which is broader and deeper, and we can see a very crucial and tremendous necessity to learn and recognize the nefesh, and that is: for the purpose of focusing inwardly and to uncover the koach of unity, and to save oneself from focusing outwardly, with all the dangers involved.

The reason for this is, because the primary method of practically turning one's focus inwardly, is to do so by learning and getting to recognize the nefesh. And the other way around, the whole process of learning and recognizing the nefesh can only be performed when a person turns his koach of focus from the outside inwards. One cannot at the same time be focused on the outside and get to recognize the inside – the nefesh.

Someone who wants to focus in on his inner layers and save himself from focusing outwardly, must learn and recognize himself. And someone who is interested in learning and recognizing himself and strengthening his nefesh, must agree to lessen his outward focus and turn his focus inside.

To say this simply, turning the koach of focus inwards, and gaining self-recognition – one without the other is impossible.

The direction of focus is the cause of the problems & solutions

To explain this further: When a person does not learn and recognize himself, in other words this means he is not turning his focus inwardly. And if one's face is not turned inwardly; it is necessarily turned outwardly. Aside from the side difficulties which are caused by this in his Avodas Hashem and his way of life, and the problems it causes within his nefesh, the very fact that one's focus is turned outwardly itself increases tremendously a person's distance from the service of Hashem and keeping His mitzvos, leads to frightening errors in one's way of life, blows up old problems immensely, and creates many new issues for the nefesh.

This is because outside there is kefirah and aveiros, outside there is darkness and confusion, outside there is a generation of "instantly and easily", outside there is a generation of "The Footsteps of Mashiach", outside there is the generation of the smartphone, among many other names for this generation, where the root of all these problems is – **imagination and disconnection**. When a person focuses on all these problems, his "self" absorbs them into itself, and they all become part of him and his "conscious self" and focus.

As a result of all this, a person finds himself with all the results of imagination and disconnection: distant from Hashem and keeping his mitzvos properly, distant from a proper and correct lifestyle, and with a longer list of unrevealed, undeveloped, and unbalanced kochos than he started out with.

But on the opposite side, turning the koach of focus inwards is what brings one closer to serving Hashem and keeping his mitzvos, to developing a proper and correct lifestyle, and to solving the issues of life. This is because within a person he can find the true reality: Hashem dwells inside him, within him is the unique makeup of his nefesh, which are his inner, wonderful, kochos – his life and his happiness. Within him is the capacity to build, uplift, and strengthen his nefesh, and solve his issues.

Additionally, in the root of a person's nefesh can be found the source of his unity, which unifies all his senses and kochos to serve Hashem – “**All** of my essence will proclaim ‘Hashem who is like you!’”, unifies his physical service of Hashem with the service of his nefesh, unifies his kochos and directs them to develop a lifestyle befitting himself, and unifies his unrevealed, undeveloped, and unbalanced kochos – which are all really just his disconnected kochos.

Certainly, even when a person's focus is directed inwardly and not outwardly, he still needs to have a focus within himself toward a specific direction, to be able to work in an orderly fashion and arrive at his goal: either towards serving Hashem and keeping His mitzvos, towards developing a proper and correct lifestyle, or towards solving issues.

But in any case, there is a dire necessity to learn and recognize the nefesh, **for any which reason**: whether a person wants to serve Hashem and keep His mitzvos, whether he wants to develop a correct and proper lifestyle, and whether he wants to solve his problems. Each time a person learns and works to recognize himself, he is also turning his focus inwardly, and is also saving himself from turning outwardly, as we explained.

Understandably, in order to truly enter the depths of the nefesh, to live with a true perception of unity, to acquire the inner “conscious self”, and to be properly saved from the dangerous outward focus, it is not enough to focus inwardly every so often, such as when working to solve his issues, but a person needs to constantly focus on his inner layers, in a developed, fundamental, thorough, methodical, and step-by-step way.

And the practical method of doing this is to learn and come to recognize the nefesh for the sake of developing a correct and proper lifestyle, as this path includes in it the other paths, as was explained above.

Acquiring the ability to turn one's focus inwards

Additionally, since a person's instinctive focus is generally towards the outside, the very ability to turn one's focus towards the inside itself is not inborn and natural, but needs to be learned and acquired.

The practical solution for this is to enter a conscious, deliberate, and steady program of learning and recognizing the nefesh. Through this, each time one works on learning and studying his nefesh, he turns his koach of focus from outwards

to inwards. Slowly, his deliberate action becomes habitual, and the habit becomes second nature for his nefesh. Through this, his ability to turn his focus inwards becomes useable and within his reach.

By traveling this path, a person reaches the stage where he turns towards his inner layers – and recognizes himself, in a natural and simple way, his “self” becomes internal with an inner “conscious self” and focus, he connects to his root perspective, uncovers the koach of unity in his nefesh, serves Hashem and fulfills his mitzvos, develops himself a correct and proper lifestyle, solves his problems, is filled with energy and happiness, lives in his true world, and unites with himself, with others, and with Hashem.

Summary

Hashem created a person by joining two parts: an outer body and inner nefesh. A person must serve Hashem with these two parts. With his body he must perform the physical mitzvos, and with his nefesh he must do the emotional mitzvos. Additionally, a person must join the two parts of his avodah – to do physical actions with his kochos hanefesh, as aside from the emotional mitzvos, a person's nefesh decides and influences himself very much even in regard to his physical mitzvos – in both quality and quantity.

And to serve Hashem and keep His mitzvos, a person must learn and recognize his nefesh.

Similarly, a person must learn and recognize his nefesh to develop the means necessary to serve Hashem, to serve Him out of a strong nefesh and not out of weakness and failure, to become aware of Hashem, for his own good, and to fight the Yetzer Hara.

However, since there is a lack of sefarim which gather and explain the nefesh and its kochos in an orderly way, the path towards learning and recognizing the nefesh is not so smooth. This reality causes several difficulties and mistakes.

Firstly, there is practical difficulty in learning and recognizing the nefesh.

Besides for this, people err to think that learning and recognizing the nefesh is unnecessary, or that these topics are very simple, or that *chas veshalom* of Torah *Hakedoshah* is not the solitary source for curing and studying the nefesh.

But the truth is otherwise. There is a great need for every person to learn and recognize his nefesh, the topics of the inner world are deep and broad, and the true, complete, and solitary source to learn and recognize the nefesh and cure its ailments is the Torah *Hakedoshah*. A person must toil to learn and recognize his nefesh, to merit serving Hashem both with his body and with his nefesh and with both of them together, in all areas of avodah.

Aside from the need to learn and recognize the nefesh to serve Hashem, Hashem's will is that a person learn and recognize his nefesh for his own good as well. This is for two reasons: to solve his problems, and to develop a correct and proper lifestyle.

The need to learn and recognize the nefesh to solve problems is on one hand instinctive and necessary, but on the other hand is incomplete, comes up only once problems have already arisen, and does not bring to developing a correct and proper lifestyle.

But the need to develop a correct and proper lifestyle is more fundamental and broader, brings one to learn and recognize the nefesh in a deep and thorough way, and leads to strengthening the nefesh, building a life full of happiness and fulfillment, and solving one's problems (besides for serving Hashem and keeping His mitzvos).

Many times, the motivation to learn and recognize the nefesh to solve problems stems from being used to a superficial lifestyle which tells a person to find easy and quick solutions to anything he wants – a generation of “instantly and easily”.

Because of this, a person is lured after amazing solutions for his emotional issues. But in most cases this approach does not work, and at times it even causes damage.

Similarly, there are people who try to learn and recognize their nefesh to be able to fight the Yetzer Hara and the negative kochos inside of them. This is a proper path, but it stems from a superficial perspective on the nefesh and its avodah, and it also awakens within the nefesh a desire to fight.

The inner perspective on the nefesh and on working with its kochos is more positive and inclusive, and it awakens within the nefesh the desire for peace. This is that a person's nefesh is "a G-dly portion from above" which is clothed in amazing kochos, and one must recognize them, bring them out, and get energy and joy from them. In addition to this, he needs to reveal, correct, and balance some of his kochos, after which he can use them too in a good and proper way. Through this, a person lives a healthy, happy, and successful life, built according to his kochos hanefesh.

When going with the plan of learning the nefesh to solve problems and win battles, the process of learning and recognizing the nefesh is a short one. But when following the plan of learning and recognizing the nefesh to develop a good and proper lifestyle and achieve harmony, the process of recognizing the nefesh is a lengthy one – all the days of one's life.

While learning and recognizing the nefesh to solve problems should be a stage in a broader process of learning and recognizing the nefesh, there are cases where "necessity is necessity", and there is an immediate need to learn and recognize the nefesh to solve its problems, such as: in serious cases, in more extreme cases which disturb the person's basic peace of mind, in more urgent cases, and in cases where the person is in the meantime not strong enough to endure the proper learning – each case must be seen on its own.

Even in these cases, a person should aspire to learn and recognize his nefesh in a thorough and fundamental way, to develop a correct and proper lifestyle.

As a rule, the process of learning and recognizing the nefesh to solve problems should be one of the many parts of studying and recognizing the nefesh to develop a good and proper lifestyle, and should not be its own goal in of itself.

Before actually starting his avodah, a person should clarify where he is heading – towards solving problems or towards developing a correct and proper lifestyle. This way, he can ensure that he will take on a path which will fit his goals.

While a mental understanding of the need to learn and recognize the nefesh suffices to begin working on it, but to move forward and succeed in the coming stages this knowledge will need to get stronger and become a real will and the simple desire of the nefesh. To accomplish this, together with a person moving on through the stages of learning and recognizing his nefesh, he must also think into and remind himself of the need to learn and recognize himself. As this will grows, his input and consistency in working on it will also grow, and so will his success in developing a good, proper, lifestyle, full of life, success, and happiness – all in accordance with his nefesh and its kochos and with the will of Hashem.

More for those who want to delve deeper!

There is an additional and deeper perspective on the necessity of learning and recognizing the nefesh, which is to be able to focus inwards and uncover the koach of unity.

The nefesh of a person is made up of inner and outer layers, and a person can 'go out' to his outer layers or 'come in' to his inner ones. For the sake of illustration, we can say that the nefesh has many 'floors', and the level where the nefesh is presently at is its perception of its "self". It is up to the person whether he will lower himself or raise himself up.

The way to go out to the outer layers of the nefesh or enter in to its inner layers, is through using one's koach of focus.

One of the important kochos a person has is the koach of focus. The koach of focus is performed through one's senses and kochos hanefesh. Everything which a person focuses on, he focuses on with his "self". And when he focuses, his focus, so to speak, brings him out of his present place to that of what he is focusing on, and that thing becomes part of him and his "conscious self" and focus. Accordingly, "Panim" connotes turning one's focus towards the thing he is focusing on.

A person is able to turn his focus towards the outside or towards the inside. From here come the two well-known definitions of the word "panim": when his focus is turned outside, it is defined as facing [away from himself] towards someone else, and when his focus is turned to his inner layers, it is defined as his face facing inwards and revealing it to the outside.

It comes out that the tool to bring someone outwards or inwards is the koach of focus.

Now, the primary natural focus of a person, due to the nefesh habehamis, is to the outside, where one's face looks out to others. Because of this, a person is in grave danger, as all the outside things become part of a person and his outlook. This causes a person to be superficial – he dwells in the outer layers of himself, takes in superficiality, and expresses superficiality.

The danger is even greater in our generation – the generation of "The Footsteps of Mashiach", where the "outside" contains the problems of all time, and even more. Here we will explain the danger on a deeper level.

The root difference between the outer layers of the nefesh and the inner ones, is whether one has the perception of disconnection or unity. The more a person lives in the outer layers of his nefesh, the more he perceives firstly himself, and then the world and Hashem, as disconnected. And the more he is found towards the inner layers of his nefesh, the more he perceives himself, the world, and Hashem, as united.

The test of the final generation is the test of disconnection. In this generation a device – the "smartphone" – was created, whose outer appearance seems to combine everything, but which is in truth only a tool for the imagination,

which includes in it all the filth and possibilities of disconnection in the world. And even more, this device turns the whole world into one place which seemingly encompasses everything, but which is really “a world of disparity”.

When a person focuses outward, and especially to the “smartphone”, he absorbs all these ill influences, G-d forbid.

However, when a person focuses inwards, firstly he gains from the very fact he is focusing inwards, by uncovering the depths of his nefesh and connecting to it. Over time, his “self” becomes deeper – he lives in his inner layers, and his “conscious self” becomes deeper – he sees inner things and expresses inner things. And the root of it all – he becomes united with himself.

Aside from this, he saves himself from focusing on the outside, as when one is focusing inwards, he is not focusing on the outside.

As an aside, the true and proper way to turn outwards is only when a person is able to remain within himself, and from there to focus outwards without being affected by it.

In any case, the process of turning one’s focus from the outside to the inside is done practically through learning and recognizing the nefesh. And, the other way around, the process of learning and recognizing the nefesh can only be performed when one turns his focus towards the inside. One cannot exist without the other.

To explain in more detail, the direction of one’s focus is essentially what brings to all the problems or solutions.

When a person does not learn and recognize himself, he instinctively focuses outwards. Because of this, he becomes distant from serving Hashem and keeping His mitzvos, messes up his correct and proper way of life, and comes to have all sorts of emotional issues. This is because on the outside are **all** the problems – all the disconnections.

But when a person focuses inwards through learning and recognizing his nefesh, he comes closer to serving Hashem and keeping His mitzvos, develops himself a proper and correct lifestyle, and solves the problems of his nefesh. This is because inside of a person is Hashem’s presence, the inner structure of his nefesh, and the kochos which can build and strengthen his nefesh and correct its kochos, and there is the unifying root of his nefesh and the source of his energy and happiness.

In addition, the ability to turn one’s focus inwards is not natural, and needs to be learned. When a person gets himself used to consciously turning inwards through learning and recognizing himself, he acquires this ability to turn his focus inwards.

Through this, a person merits to be an inner person with an inner focus, to connect to the root of his nefesh, unite with himself, serve his Creator, develop a proper and correct lifestyle, solve the issues of his nefesh, be full of life and happiness, live in his true world, and unite with himself, others, and Hashem.

Now what?

Dear Reader,

The message of what we have learnt is that embarking on a path of learning and recognizing the *nefesh* is not a luxury or an extra. Embarking on a path of learning and recognizing the *nefesh* is the key to all of life, and, in sharper and more penetrating words, it is **the key to life itself**. To be alive means to connect to myself- to be unified, and to get life and joy from the root of my *nefesh*, and additionally from my connection to the *Torah Hakedoshah* and Hashem.

In order to be alive, a person needs to serve Hashem and keep His mitzvos, to build himself a proper way of life, correct and full of life and joy, to solve his *nefesh's* problems, and to turn his power of focus inwards, in a way that brings to personal unity, to a deep connection to oneself and to moving one's place of living from the outside to the inside.

The proper and advisable path for us to follow to lead to all of this is self-learning and recognition, together with practically working on building and strengthening the *nefesh* in an understandable, fundamental, thorough, and step-by-step way. This path works with all the motivations that there are, and, with the help of Hashem, will bring one to achieve all the proper goals.

Therefore, the main purpose of the sefer "The Four Elements-Self-Recognition", which this booklet is an important part of, is to be a book of practical guidance towards self-learning and recognition and strengthening the *nefesh* in this way.

To provide the reader with the tools necessary recognize himself and strengthen his *nefesh*, we have divided the sefer "The Four Elements-Self-Recognition" into two volumes:

1. The necessary introductions to both learning and practically working on self-recognition.
2. Practical guidance to self-recognition and strengthening the *nefesh*, step-by-step, one step at a time.

The first volume of the sefer brings necessary introductions, such as:

1. The necessity of learning and recognizing the *nefesh* (this booklet).
2. Recognizing all the parts of the *nefesh*.
3. The root method of recognizing the *nefesh*.
4. The definition of the inner world.
5. The *nefesh* as a structure.
6. Studying the *nefesh* like studying a sefer.
7. Mind and emotion- definition and recognition.
8. The *nefesh's* experience of thought and emotion.

The second volume of the sefer brings specific guidance throughout all the steps of practical growth, such as:

9. Writing "My Sefer".
10. Identifying *kochos hanefesh* and mapping them out.
11. Identifying the *kochos* through mental understanding and emotional recognition.
12. Seeing generally and observing patterns of the *nefesh*.
13. Prioritizing the positive *kochos* and identifying the strongest koach.
14. Connecting to the source of life, which is the strongest koach.
15. Bringing the strongest koach out to action and getting life and joy from it.
16. Building the positive *kochos*.
17. Identifying the multifaceted *nefesh*.
18. Peace of the *nefesh*-balancing the extremes which cause distress.
19. Fixing the *kochos* which were not properly functioning.
20. Conclusion- building a proper and correct way of life.

Besides for this, as was explained briefly in the beginning of this booklet, the path of "The Four Elements" includes a number of sections, whose purpose is to enable every person to connect to this path from wherever he is, and to advance from there onwards in building a proper way of life, befitting the build of his *nefesh* and bringing towards the purpose of life.

To give the reader a broader and clearer picture, we will bring below the different sections of "The Four Elements" once again, in more detail:

1. The Sefer "The Four Elements - Self-Recognition" Volume 1- for beginners. [This sefer is currently being prepared for publication.]

This sefer is the **base and foundation** for all learning and working with the *nefesh*, and it guides one to practically become aware of his *kochos* and strengthen his *nefesh* in a practical way.

This sefer:

- Explains the introductions necessary for learning and recognizing the *nefesh*.
- Explains the basic 'for everyone' steps of practical *avodah*.
- Opens the way towards the more advanced steps of *avodah* for those seeking them.
- Acts as a map to find one's place in all the parts and stages of practical *avodah*. This gives a person general guidance, order, and clarity in his path, by showing him where he is and where his goal is.

2. The Sefer "The Four Elements - Self-Recognition" Volume 2- for the more advanced. [This volume is currently in the early stages of preparation.]

This sefer acts as a continuation and completion to the *avodah* explained in volume 1, and explains additional steps of the *avodah*, which lead one to become aware of the root Four Elements of his *nefesh*. This means recognizing the strongest element of the four, which is **the root of the *nefesh***, and becoming aware of the order of the other elements, from stronger to weaker.

One can perform the practical *avodah* explained in this sefer by itself, or together with the next series "The Four Elements - Becoming Aware of the *Kochos* and their Roots", to achieve greater results.

3. The series of sefarim "The Four Elements - Becoming Aware of the *Kochos* and their Roots". [Some shiurim have already been given in this series, and the material is currently in the early stages of preparation.]

This series explains the four root movements of the *nefesh* (which come from the Four Elements), the *kochos* which result from them, and their effect on the ten basic *kochos hanefesh* - from the koach of ratzon/willpower to the koach of shiflus/lowliness.

This series acts as a basic body of information about the basic *kochos hanefesh* and their branches, and gives a person the practical tools to become aware of his *nefesh* using the deep, root method of "The Four Elements". It acts as a self-contained body of knowledge for anyone interested in getting a general map of his *nefesh* and its *kochos* in an organized, clear, and fundamental way.

4. The series of sefarim "The Four Elements - Developing the *Kochos*". [This series is currently in the early stages of preparation.]

This series explains the practical method to build up the positive *kochos* of the *nefesh* (such as: happiness, love, alacrity, focus, etc.) and bring them out to the open. One can use this series together with the above stages of *avodah*, and it also acts as a self-standing body of information for one who wants to develop the positive *kochos* of his *nefesh* and bring them out.

5. The series of sefarim "The Four Elements - Developing the Roots of the *Kochos*". [This series has not yet begun.]

This series explains the practical method of developing and actualizing the four root movements of the *nefesh*.

One can use this series together with the *avodah* explained in the above series, and it also acts as a self-standing body of information for one who wants to build up the root movements of his *nefesh* and bring them out.

6. The series of sefarim "The Four Elements - Fixing the *Kochos*". [Over one hundred and twenty shiurim have already been given in this series, and some of the material is currently being prepared for publication.]

This series explains the practical methods of fixing the *kochos* of the *nefesh* which are imbalanced or misdirected. This means, in other words, fixing and solving the problems and issues of the *nefesh*, such as: sadness (lack of self-worth, lack of self-confidence, self-negation, fears, worries, depression, etc.), laziness (lack of self-actualization), lack of focus, desires and addictions, lack of self-control, lack of stability (emotional, social, etc.), talking too much, too much movement, jumpiness, haughtiness, anger, outbursts of rage, seeking recognition, etc.

One can use this series together with the above stages of *avodah*, and it also acts as a self-standing body of information for one who wants to fix the issues of his *nefesh*.

7. The series of sefarim "The Four Elements - The Essence of the *Kochos*". [Approximately one hundred and twenty shiurim have been given in this series. Volume one (on the element of *afar*) has already been published, and the rest of the material is still in early stages of preparation.]

This series explains the makeup of the *kochos hanefesh* in a thorough and deep way.

This series is mainly intended for someone who wants to learn and recognize his *kochos hanefesh* with more depth, and to get a broader picture of the *kochos hanefesh* and their inner essence, through which he will be able to perform his *avodah* in a better way and more precisely.

Additionally, to help make the path of "The Four Elements" readily available and practical for anyone seeking it, the Four Elements Institute has placed an emphasis, with the personal direction of our Rov *Shlita*, on two main fronts:

- Developing this path in a way that it should be as easily understood and completed as possible.
- Spreading the path of "The Four Elements" in Eretz Yisroel and throughout the world.

To this end, some of the projects of the Institute, currently and in the future, are:

- Publishing the Seforim.
- Publishing guided workbooks, including simple and practical instructions throughout all the steps of the *avodah*, pictures and examples, charts, summaries, tips, etc.
- Publishing the information in several languages and on multiple levels.
- Putting out a monthly newsletter.
- Establishing a central location that will provide information, advice, and updates.
- Establishing centers of study and *avodah*, with guidance for individuals and groups.
- Certifying mentors, giving courses, etc. – we will weigh these possibilities in the future, based on the level of demand.
- And more.

As was mentioned above and is clearly understood, the different parts of the practical *avodah* are not necessary for everyone equally, and each person should take only the parts which are necessary for his personal *avodah*, at the stage he is at, and according to his pace of advancement and personal style.

We are not asking a person to try to figure out alone what the different steps of the *avodah* are and how he should relate to them and fulfill them. This is the purpose of the Four Elements Institute, and for this purpose (among others) we are publishing the sefer "The Four Elements - Self-Recognition"- to act as a map to help one find his place among the parts and stages of the *avodah*.

But what is true for everyone, with almost no exceptions, is that the path of "The Four Elements" can help a person, wherever he is, to find his place in getting to know himself and strengthening his *nefesh*, and through this to advance, with the help of Hashem, to build a way of life which is proper, correct, healthy, full of life and joy, and directed towards the purpose of life.

In short succinct words, we can say that the path of "The Four Elements" is:

"The path towards self-recognition and empowerment of the *nefesh*!"

May we all merit to become aware of ourselves, to strengthen our *nefesh*, to live according to Hashem's will, and to be worthy of all the good hidden in the light of Hashem's unity, speedily in our days, Amen!

A Personal Request

We, at The Four Elements Institute, see the dire need our generation has for self-awareness and empowerment of the nefesh!

We want very much, and are working hard, to develop and bring to light the root, ancient method of “The Four Elements”, which is founded solely on the Torah *Hakedoshah*.

Our goal is to make possible and provide any person, wherever he is, the practical tools necessary to get to recognize himself, strengthen his nefesh, actualize his kochos, and live a proper, correct, healthy, and happy life, focused towards his purpose.

This method has well proved itself as helping in the development of happy and successful lives and solving emotional problems. With the help of Hashem, this method will be able to help many, many, people, in Eretz Yisroel and throughout the world.

But the resources necessary for the development and spreading of the “Four Elements” method are tremendous!

It is well-known that the Medrash says that when one helps others in a certain area, Hashem helps and assists him precisely in that area as well, as the passuk says “Who will proceed me – and I will pay him back” (Iyov 41:3).

Who in our generation does not need and want help and assistance from Hashem regarding the nefesh – for him and his family to be emotionally healthy and happy?!

We are therefore turning to you with a heartfelt request and a presenting rare opportunity:

PLEASE!

Help us and become partners in developing and spreading the method of the “Four Elements” in general, and especially in the publication of the sefer “The Four Elements – self-recognition”, which are very necessary and are receiving international recognition and acclaim!

Any donation you can make, whatever it is, will help further advance the development and spreading of the “Four Elements” method, and will be considered for you as if you yourself helped others with their nefesh. You will have helped not one person, but many.

There is no limit to the reward of those who bring merit to the masses!

You and your family will also be blessed with all good things, especially with lives of proper, correct, and healthy emotions, full of life and happiness, focused on your purpose!

The merit of the public will stand by your side!

(Donations may be made from maser money.)

Thank you, The Four Elements Institute

To donate, please contact us at:

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Or donate via the website:

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