

Knowing Your Self Part 1

Source Sheet by Reuven Ibragimov

1. C. S. Lewis - The Screwtape Letters

My Dear Wormwood,

Be sure that the patient remains completely fixated on politics. Arguments, political gossip, and obsessing on the faults of people they have never met serves as an excellent distraction from advancing in personal virtue, character, and the things the patient can control. Make sure to keep the patient in a constant state of angst, frustration, and general disdain towards the rest of the human race in order to avoid any kind of charity or inner peace from further developing. Ensure the patient continues to believe that the problem is "out there" in the "broken system" rather than recognizing there is a problem with himself.

Keep up the good work,
Uncle Screwtape

"The more often he feels without acting, the less he will be able ever to act, and, in the long run, the less he will be able to feel" (61).

"It is far better to make them live in the Future...it is unknown to them, so that making them think about it we make them think of unrealities... it is the most completely temporal part of time- for the Past is frozen and no longer flows, and the Present is all lit up with eternal rays" (68).

2. Pirkei Avot 1:14

(14) He [also] used to say: If I am not for myself, who is for me? But if I am for my own self [only], what am I? And if not now, when?

משנה אבות א':י"ד

(יד) הוא הָגִה אֹמֵר, אִם אֵין אֲנִי לִי, מִי לִי. וְכִשְׁאֲנִי לְעַצְמִי, מָה אֲנִי. וְאִם לֹא עַכְשָׁיו, אֵימָתָי:

3. Rabbi Menachem Mendel Morgensztern of Kotzk, (1787 - 27 January 1859)

If I am I because I am I, and you are you because you are you, then I am I and you are you. But if I am I because you are you and you are you because I am I, then I am not I and you are not you!

4. Siddur Ashkenaz, Weekday, Shacharit, Preparatory Prayers, Modeh Ani

סידור אשכנז, ימי חול, תפילת שחרית, הכנה לתפילה, מודה אני

- (1) I offer thanks to You, living and eternal King, for You have mercifully restored my soul within me; Your faithfulness is great.
- (א) מוֹדָה [מוֹדָה] אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם, שֶׁהַחַיּוּת בִּי נִשְׁמָתִי בְּחַמְלָה, רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ:
5. **Exodus 20:2** שמות כ':ב'
- (2) I the LORD am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage:
- (ב) אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבְּיַת עֲבָדִים:
6. **Chasidic Tale** .ג
- A man who once approached one of the great Chassidic leaders, who in turn asked him, "For what did you come here?"
 "To find God."
 "Then you came for nothing. You're wasting your time."
 "Why?"
 "God is everywhere."
 "Then, tell me, master, why should I have come?"
 "To find yourself."
7. **Leviticus 19:2** ויקרא י"ט:ב'
- (2) Speak to the whole Israelite community and say to them: You shall be holy, for I, the LORD your God, am holy.
- (ב) דַּבֵּר אֶל-כָּל-עַדְת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדוֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:
8. **Genesis 12:1** בראשית י"ב:א'
- (1) The LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.
- (א) וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-אַבְרָם לֵךְ-לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ וּמִמְּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל-הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֶרְאֶךָ:
9. **Leviticus 19:18** ויקרא י"ט:י"ח
- (18) You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against your countrymen. Love your fellow as yourself: I am the LORD.
- (יח) לֹא-תִקֹּם וְלֹא-תִטַּר אֶת-בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ אֲנִי ה':
10. **Exodus 19:6** שמות י"ט:ו'
- (6) but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel."
- (ו) וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ-לִי מְמֻלְכֵת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קְדוֹשׁ אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּדְבַּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

11. **Isaiah 42:6**

(6) I the LORD, in My grace, have summoned you, And I have grasped you by the hand. I created you, and appointed you A covenant people, a light of nations

ישעיהו מ"ב:ו'

(ו) אָנִי ה' קָרָאתִיךָ בְּצַדִּיק וְאַתָּה זָקוּ בְיָדֶיךָ וְאַצְרֶיךָ וְאַתְּמַנֶּה לְבְרִית עִם לְאוֹר גּוֹיִם:

12. **Mishneh Torah, Human Dispositions 1:7**

(7) And how may a man inure himself in these tendencies so that they be permanent with him? He should try once, repeat it, and do a third time the things he is called upon to do in harmony with the tendencies of the middle-course, and repeat the practice continuously until the doing it will be accomplished with slight effort, and they will not be burdensome upon him, then will the tendencies be a fixed part of his being. And because the Creator is termed by these attributes which are the middle-way, this way is called the Lord's way. And, it is even in this that Abraham our father instructed his sons, saying: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, that they shall keep the way of the Lord" (Gen. 18.19). And he who walks in this way brings goodness and blessing upon himself, even as it is said: "In order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken concerning him" (Ibid.).

משנה תורה, הלכות דעות א'ז'

(ז) וְכִיצַד יִרְגִיל אָדָם עֲצָמוֹ בְּדַעוֹת אֵלּוּ עַד שֶׁיִּקְבְּעוּ בּוֹ. יַעֲשֶׂה וְיִשְׁנֶה וְיִשְׁלַח בְּמַעֲשִׂים שְׂעוֹשָׂה עַל פִּי הַדַּעוֹת הָאֲמֻצָּעוֹת וְיִחְזֹר בָּהֶם תָּמִיד עַד שֶׁיִּהְיוּ מְעֻשָׂיָהֶם קָלִים עָלָיו וְלֹא יִהְיֶה בָּהֶם טְרַח עָלָיו וְיִקְבְּעוּ הַדַּעוֹת בְּנַפְשׁוֹ. וְלִפִּי שְׂהַנְשׂוֹת הָאֵלּוּ נִקְרָא בְּהֵן הַיּוֹצֵר וְהֵם הַדְרָךְ הַבִּינּוֹנִית שְׂאֵנוּ חִיבִין לְלַכֵּת בָּהּ. נִקְרָאת דְרָךְ זֶה דְרָךְ ה'. וְהִיא שְׂלֵמִד אֲבָרְהָם אֲבִינוּ לְבָנָיו שְׂנֵאָמֵר (בראשית יח יט) "כִּי יִדְעֹתִיו לְמַעַן אֲשֶׁר יַצְוֶה" וְגו'. וְהַהוֹלֵךְ בְּדְרָךְ זֶה מְבִיא טוֹבָה וּבְרָכָה לְעַצְמוֹ שְׂנֵאָמֵר (בראשית יח יט) "לְמַעַן הִבִּיא ה' עַל אֲבָרְהָם אֶת אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר עָלָיו":

