

## When "I" Am "I"

So much of my life I live for others. So much of my life I rival to excel others and seek to become like others. It is a vain ambition.

The words of Rabbi Mendel of Kotzk address my search. "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."

"Everything in the world," the Rabbi Mendel said, "can be imitated, except truth. For truth that is imitated is no longer truth." Whom dare I imitate and what self-deception would I perpetuate?

God does not create clones. God does not create redundantly. There are no spiritually identical twins in the world.

It is a precious and difficult wisdom to come to recognize that I am unique and that even my stumblings are unique. To preserve the singularity of my being is to overcome a lifetime of imitation.

At the end of my life, God will ask me not why I was not like another, but why I was not myself.