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It is told;

Mendel of Kotzk (1787-1859) would shock a disciple by asking;

***Where can one find God?***

The disciple confidently responded; "The whole world is filled with God's glory."

The "Kotzker" would answer his own question -perhaps with an edge in his voice.

***One finds God wherever one lets Him in.***

"Let Him in? But it's an untidy mess inside; All those unspoken thoughts, unworthy aims, hidden acts, splits between what we let the world see and who we think we really are. Besides, there's all those "negative selves" living in our attic/basement, closeted away from others view and most often our own. We barely keep them at bay! They shouldn't be with us at all! If we open the doors just a crack they'll overwhelm us and trash the place! Let God in? Who are you kidding? Our inner life is not a fit place to bring anyone home to, especially God."

Yet, the core religious fact remains;

God has created each *human* being the **[Breathing/Image]** of God.  
*Each* of us and "*ALL*" of us is so created.

The **[Breathing/Image]** is *not* negotiable. It is a given, ever present in us and in all others. It is *not* contingent on our thinking and feeling correctly, behaving one way or another, on accomplishment or the lack thereof, on perceived goodness or experienced badness. The individual, do what s/he will, cannot be rid of it. It is our essence. Though obscured in the murky fog of compromised living, the **[Breathing/Image]** is *always* there in us and others, waiting to be seen, heard and attended to. When we and/or others turn away from the **[Breathing/Image]**, neglecting it in ourselves, ignoring and disregarding it in others, harm is done, commitments broken, intimacies violated, children hurt, trusts betrayed, and great evil perpetrated. Blame and contempt, anger and condemnation, all too often directed towards ourselves as well as others, increase our sense of alienation and

isolation. These turn us ever more away from the **[Breathing/Image]** in us, and block any chance of experiencing it in others.

The “*self*” we parade to the outside world is not all of us. From a very young age we are taught to think of our “being” as a singular *Self*. This singular *Self* is to be shaped and molded into a *Self* acceptable to what family, society, and religious community consider to be socially appropriate and desirable, whether that be living by the Boy Scout Oath or the Commandments of the Living God. We are taught that things, ideas, emotions, “*selves*” are either good or bad, are either one way or the other. The “*self*” of “To Thine own ‘*self*’ be true” means one’s good worthwhile, acceptable “*self*”, the other “*selves*” having been educated out. When inevitably unacceptable “*selves*” show up despite our best efforts to squash them, and take over center stage, people describe themselves and others in me/not me terms.

"It wasn't like **ME** to do that."  
"That's just not **Her**".  
"If only you knew the **TRUE ME**". “  
"What I did is just **NOT ME**."  
“The “**REAL HIM**” is always cheating.”  
“I just wasn't “**MYSELF**” when I hit her.”

God has created each *human* being the **[Breathing/Image]** of God.

In my therapist work, that's hard to hold onto. Dealing with people in pain, hurting, confused, angry, going through difficult times the **[Breathing/Image]** seems absent, missing in action. My struggle is looking for who else is in the room, for evidence of the **[Breathing/Image]**, while not losing contact with my own. Only when that is witnessed, brought forth, loved, appreciated and blessed, can healing begin. **SELF** comes to be when all those wounded “negative others”, both/all “*selves*” are simultaneously blessed and valued, acknowledged and appreciated, and in loving, respectful contact. **SELF occurs** in the relationship between our various “*selves*”.

So, we are not a *Self*. Each of us is a relationship.

The charge each of us is faced with is to search out, tune in to, stay focused on, respect, nourish, sustain and sponsor the **[Breathing/Image]**, first in all our “*selves*” and then in others.

That is a daunting challenge! It is, after all, in our inner life, that we are most vulnerable to ruptures in our relationship with our own **[Breathing/Image]**. When we lose contact with our **[Breathing/Image]**, we without fail lose contact with others. And losing contact with theirs is a sure sign that we have lost contact with ours. That these relationships break down time and again goes with being human. What do we do when in our inner life thoughts and feelings appear that despite our best efforts imply that we are *not* in the “Image”? How do we jibe our experience of these “negative *selves*”, that do not seem compatible with the **[Breathing/Image]**, with what our creation proclaims is our core and being? No matter the public persona we present, we consider these “negative *selves*” to be “persona non grata”. “They” distance us from the **[Breathing/Image]**, and leave us feeling diminished. We struggle valiantly that these “negative *selves*”, disappear or at least have the good sense and common courtesy to stay out of public view.

Repairing the breach by turning to our **[Breathing/Image]** is a supremely important undertaking. It requires an inner dialog of mutual respect, leading to a loving, personal human relationship between each and all of our “*selves*”; those we value and those we distance; the “positive” and the “negative”; the “acceptable” and “non acceptable”. To do this we must value and bless all “*selves*”, *and* bring each and all back, particularly those “*selves*” previously rejected, into relationship with the **[Breathing/Image]**.

So, it is true! *One finds God wherever one lets Him in*. For God, it is a welcome home to His own creation. For us, it is coming home to all we are.