

## Martin Buber on Saying 'You' to the World

For those embarking on the LIFE experience, **a recent article in *The New Yorker*, *Divine Guidance*, May 6, 2019, by Adam Kirsch** provides useful background—describing how it's essential to truly connect with others to know God.

The article talks about the lasting impact of theologian Martin Buber's short treatise *I and Thou*, published in 1923, which remains greatly influential today. Here are quotes from the article:

- “At the heart of [Martin] Buber's theology was his theory of dialog—the idea that what matters is not understanding God in abstract, intellectual terms but, rather, entering into a relationship with him. Such a relationship he believed, is possible only when we establish genuine relationships with one another. ‘Whoever goes forth to his You with his whole being and carries to it all the being of the world, finds him who one cannot seek,’ he wrote.”
- “In daily life, we usually fail to live up to this ideal. We tend to treat people and the world around us as things to be used for our benefit. Without this mind-set, which Buber called ‘I-It,’ there would be no science, economics or politics. But, the more we engage in such thinking, the further we drift from ‘I-You,’ his term for addressing other people directly as partners in dialog and relationship. Only when we say ‘You’ to the world do we perceive its miraculous strangeness and, at the same time, its potential for intimacy.”