

A "THINKING HEART"

Making room for the other

Can we make space for difference? Can we hear the voice of God in a language, a sensibility, a culture not our own? Can we see the presence of God in the face of a stranger?

Jonathan Sacks

This is the crucial test of faith. It is undoubtedly crucial in our world at present. If God takes into God's self the 'other' in creating this universe, is not this the way forward for us? The gospels repeatedly offer us the voice or touch of God in the face or the words of a stranger. Surely Jesus of Nazareth is suggesting that we are enlarged, not diminished, by difference.

Sacks says that we are being 'summoned by God to see in the human other a trace of the divine Other'.

Instead of being trapped in sameness we can be liberated by difference?

Instead of being closed we can be open?

We are to see as God sees,

learning to see beyond labels, names and creed

to the 'hidden wholeness' which is ours.

The other is not the obstacle in the way of my coming - to - be, but what makes the coming -to -be possible. The other speaks of the generosity which wants to distract me from my self-absorption in too small an identity.

James Alison

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