

## Our Hidden God

God is hidden from the world. But only in one sense, because He is *holy*. The holiness of God means that He remains unseen to the eyes of the men. The human mind does not have the capacity to comprehend God in the way that everything else in the created realm is known. Wholly lacking and incomplete is every word that attempts to speak of the Divine Being. The Holy Trinity surpasses and transcends every man-made image of the Divine. Even the most beautiful metaphors of the Bible that speak to us of God's love, as from Psalm 23, "The Lord is my Shepherd," are mere analogies (i.e., not literalisms) because God's Being is infinitely more than the image or the word (in this case, "Shepherd") itself. The ideal of the Shepherd with His sheep is indicative, yes, but only in the sense that it points to Something beyond itself.

In a nutshell, God remains unknown to the human mind because there is no earthly, created reality suitable to His goodness and greatness. No human thought will ever adequately express of the immeasurability of God's love. "For You are ineffable, inconceivable, incomprehensible, ever-existing and eternally the same." (Anaphora of the Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom).

Yet the Lord, on account of this same love, does not imprison Himself in His holiness. Instead, He reaches out beyond Himself so that as creatures of His love we might encounter Him "face to face." This is the biblical paradox of a God Who is both hidden and revealed, known, and unknown, seen, and unseen.

God the Father is a Person. Because the Father is a Person (and not simply a "force" or an ethereal, nameless "spirit") He extends His very Being to the Son of His love and to the Holy Spirit of His love. The Son and the Spirit return the Father's love personally, again, by giving themselves back wholly to Father in perfect obedience. The Divine Reality is thus a Personal Reality. Modern theologians often quip that the labels "Father" and "Son" etc. are human concepts projected heavenward upon an un-namable God. But the opposite is true: fatherhood (and thus sonship) exist in this world because they are a revelation of the God's love. As St Paul writes, "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named." (Eph. 3:15).

This is not scholarly high-brow, theology, reserved for academics. Achieving "personhood" happens only when we give up ourselves up to others in love and sacrifice, as do the three Persons of the Trinity. The Father has made us so that we might participate in the mystery this "Person-to-Person" self-sacrificing love in a creaturely way. Although there remains a strict line drawn between the Divine Reality and the human reality, God's grace "stretches itself out" beyond the limits of the divine so that all created things might be bathed in His goodness and glory. Likewise, we too become fully human only when we do the same, when we decide not to hold on to ourselves, but stretch ourselves out from the limits of the self towards others so that we might love and be loved in return.

God is hidden, yes, but only from those who fail to truly love. To those who learn through faith how to love, however, He manifests abundance of love and grace. "For what no eye has seen, nor ear has heard, nor heart can comprehend, God has prepared for those who love Him" (1 Cor. 2:9).

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