Task Sheet 11. Sacrifice

Task
In many religious traditions, adherents are asked to make personal sacrifices. For example, they might be expected to forgo certain pleasures or to adhere to prescribed ethical norms. Adherents might also be required to engage in spiritual exercises which might be time consuming or difficult to ‘fit in’ with other pressures on time and commitment.

As a tandem pair, discuss the sacrifices your religion calls for and how that affects your daily life.

Aim
To explore the difficulties of religious observance.
To identify the pressures which make religious observance difficult.

Objectives
On your own and with your partner define your objectives for this tandem exercise. What do you want to learn?

Consider asking yourself
What regulations are specified in my faith tradition for its followers?
Are there concessions for any particular constituencies?
To what degree do you follow these rules?
How do you negotiate how and to what degree you adhere to them?
What difficulties do you encounter in sticking to the expected standard?
How could your environment help you in keeping the standard you set/accepted for yourself?

Consider asking your tandem partner
You may ask all or none of the suggestions above plus:
How does it affect your relationship to your religious community, if you do not, or do not fully, follow certain prescribed standards of behaviour or practice?
How does the fact that people of other religions don’t follow the rules of yours affect the way in which you view them?

Things to reflect on together
- What are our similarities? Why?
- Where do we differ? Why?