



SIEBENQUELL

»The Great Question«

after a children's book by Wolf Erlbruch



Have you ever been inspired by a children's book?

I believe that many a children's book contains a wonderful treasure for us »grown-ups«.

At any rate, I got an inkling of this when I looked at this book with my three-year-old granddaughter a few days ago.

The title of the book is: »The Great Question«. My granddaughter was already wide-eyed when I read the title to her and the title also made me very curious.

The cover picture showed a child laughing and standing on the side of a suggested globe with arms outstretched.

This child undertakes a journey through this world, meets people close to him as well as strangers, animals and nature, even death. All of them give an answer to the »Great Question« from their own perspective, their personal experience and their self-understanding within creation. What makes these answers so sympathetic is that they do not claim to be absolute, but are rather authentic snapshots of the moment. The answers are as strong as they are simple, and the same applies to the design of the pictures.

The first »answer« to the big question is given by the big brother to the child, who says: »You were born to celebrate a birthday!« In the picture you can see the big brother blowing out candles on a cake.

Isn't that a wonderful beginning?

Anyway, my granddaughter was very excited by this answer from the big brother.

So we encountered many more exciting answers to the »Great Question«.

The parents, for example, who kissed each other and said: "Because we love each other, you are in the world.«

My granddaughter smiled at this picture and looked at her mom, beaming.

»To sing your song«, said the bird in the book and my granddaughter started humming.

»To get up early«, said the baker and my granddaughter yawned.

In the middle of the book, Death has his say and says: »To love life, you are in the world.«

This sentence almost brought tears to my eyes and yet the words came across so lightly, the profundity so pure and real. Who can close their mind to such words?

At the end of the book there are blank pages with plenty of space for your own responses.

I asked my granddaughter, »Well, what do you think you are in this world for?«

My granddaughter hesitated and said, »Grandma, read it again.«

So we looked at the book again and I read the answers to the »Great Question« to her again.

When we got back to the blank pages, at the end of the book, my granddaughter looked at me and said, »I am in the world to be outside, and I am in the world to be with others«.

I looked at my granddaughter and said, »wonderful!«.

The naturalness of how she dealt with this »Great Question« delighted and impressed me greatly.

Since then, I can't get the »Great Question« out of my mind. It makes me search and little by little answers come to me. It is like a game and yet full of profundity. It is like a treasure that I am trying to discover. Like an invitation to accept life as a gift and to unpack and marvel at it bit by bit.

To get on the track of what is essential, to realign myself, to set out on a new path and perhaps also to let myself be found anew.

For me, these experiences are closely linked to the time ahead of us.

So I am looking for ways to walk Advent paths anew, especially or in spite of the crisis-ridden so »different Advent « this year.

May we be ready to bring our answers to the »Great Question« into life anew.

Advent lies before us, much like blank pages at the end of this book waiting to be filled with our story.

It will be some time before we can celebrate, as at the beginning of the book when the brother tells the child, » You were born to celebrate a birthday!«

In any case, it was self-evident for Jesus to speak out his answers to the »Great Question« and, above all, to bring them into life. We Christians have more than one story to tell about this.

It could be a beginning. What are we waiting for? Or what if he is waiting for us?

I wish you a blessed first Advent from the bottom of my heart.

It is up to God

to seek

the soul

our part is

attentive expectation

(Simone Weil)

Sylvia Ditt

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