



SIEBENQUELL

» Beauty will save the world«



»Beautiful - not beautiful! Either it works or it doesn't!« This is how pragmatic the exclamation of a young man sounded many years ago during a lively conversation about the current construction of single-family houses and the art of architects. There was much laughter in the round at the time, but I never forget that sentence.

Is it true, that beauty plays a subordinate role and that functional, practical utility, is much more essential? Indeed, it is often the case: refugees need a roof over their heads quickly. A car is urgently needed and the budget does not leave much choice. The main thing is that the coat is warm at - 20°. . . We are all limited and cannot surround ourselves only with beautiful things.

And yet, deep within us there is a longing for and a sensitivity to beauty. A girl of about 8 years recently described on the phone the alpine world that was new to her and that she got to know during a brief holiday. As she did so, she swept her mobile phone camera across the landscape and said, »And there is just beautiful nature!« Her eyes were joyful, her heart elated. It was all one and all good for a moment. A brief divine moment!

The eyes of people who have retained this gaze can tell us about beauty into old age. They have perceived beauty, absorbed it and it has shaped their inner being. This is how they radiate beauty. When we talk about being edified by beauty, this is exactly what we mean: we can, indeed should, turn to beauty and let it work on and in us. This requires time, attentiveness and amazement. We find beauty everywhere: in nature in a blossom as well as in a grandiose landscape, in music, in the faces of small and large people, in art since time immemorial. In pausing before beauty, we come into contact with God, for it is an attribute of God.

That is why it is not a negligible detail whether I take in beauty or not. If I live entirely according to the principle of having to function - »it works or it does not work!« - my soul, the divine in me, is not nourished. That is why an Italian proverb says: »La bellezza salverà il mondo.« (Beauty will save the world). It was quoted in an article about the fascinating architecture in the northern Italian city of Brescia. What an effort people made to make the city beautiful, to invest in architecture far more than what was needed. And it has an effect on those who live there and on everyone who visits the city. Because experiencing beauty uplifts us. It fills us, it has an effect on us and makes a deep impression on us.

This has consequences. It makes us want to create something beautiful ourselves and, above all, we want to protect and keep what we have experienced as truly beautiful. We want to preserve it. Perhaps too many people have already grown up consumer-oriented and purely pragmatic, perhaps too many people have already become accustomed to a life that is similar to what Michael Ende attributed to the increasing influence of the »grey masters« in »Momo« almost 50 years ago. These stole people's time with the argument that time must be used optimally. Beauty, however, needs time.

Rafik Schami, the gifted storyteller, has the young Sharif say: »Everything that has time becomes beautiful. Buildings, trees, souls. Look at the pyramids, the cathedrals, the hammams, the mosques and the old palaces, time dwells there and brings forth this beauty.« (from: Sami and the Desire for Freedom, p. 41)

In »Momo«, the increasingly hectic and grey world is saved by a child. Probably we have to learn to realign our eyes and hearts and also those of our children.

In any case, when we are old, I wish our eyes to be beautiful, because they tell of beauty that is within us, that we have collected like little treasures that have saved us again and again when arid times came.

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