



SIEBENQUELL

Reflection for Ascension

Not remaining orphaned



SOURCE: ROSEMARIE MONNERJAHN 2013

An old woman died at grand old age of 90 years. She was a matriarch and left behind many children and even more grandchildren. They were all well connected to one another, often in conversation with one another, and often on the road to or with one another. At the time, a word fell from the lips of her youngest daughter: »Now we have buried an entire world.« Who could now let us take part in the experiences before our time? Who sees the world as this mother and grandmother had seen it? Who will now give the aid, the wisdom and the depth, that until now only she could give?

Each of us is in some way orphaned. Perhaps we are fearful when this moment draws near. Perhaps we wish that we could hold fast to that which is passing away. Perhaps we feel too young and immature to master life without it.

Then we understand Elisha, the disciple of the great prophet Elijah. When the aged sage realizes that the Lord will take him up into the heavens, he wants to spare the younger man and says to him: » Remain here; for the Lord has sent me to Bet-El.« (cf. 2 Kings 2) Yet, Elisha will not and cannot obey: »As the Lord lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.« Even when the other sons of the prophets want to make it clear to him: »Do you know that today the Lord will take away your master from over you?«, he responds: »Yes, I know it. Hold your peace!« This repeats itself three times. How difficult it is to let go of a teacher, a father, a person to whom I have entrusted myself, who gave me wisdom and guidance! We know very well that it will come to pass, but still cannot bear the thought, while we remain convinced that we will never be capable of doing what »the great one« was able to do.

Arriving at the Jordan »Elijah took his mantle, and rolled it up and struck the water, and the water was parted to the one side and to the other, till the two of them could go over on dry ground.«

When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, »Ask what I shall do for you, before I am taken from you. Elisha replied, I pray you, let me inherit a double portion of your spirit.« Now the moment has definitively arrived - both men know it and both deal with it wisely. We know such hours, in which we no longer beat around the bush, avoid the topic or plead like a child, that this should not happen. To receive two portions of the inheritance means, according to Jewish law, that the recipient has attained the status of the first born. It is not easy to be the first born and thus Elijah replies: »You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken away from you, it shall be so for you. But if you do not see me, it shall not be so.«

This request can only be granted to Elisha if he faces the departure of his master - what a challenge, since this is precisely what he did not want. Thus, he becomes a witness: »As they still went on and talked, behold, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them. And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.« Elisha must experience this separation first hand. It shakes him to the core; he cries out what Elijah meant to him and the people; he tears his clothing. He has to, and he could, see and withstand, why and where his master had to go. Only in this way can he become an heir. On his return over the Jordan he will, like Elijah, part the waters with his rolled up mantle and all the other sons of prophets will realize, that the spirit of Elijah now rests on him, Elisha. Now Elisha, for whom the mantle of Elijah was too large at the time of his calling, has grown into it.

This is the way to truly become an heir.

This is the way to value the inheritance by becoming greater yourself.

That is why Jesus says to his disciples: If I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. (Joh 16, 7)

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