



SIEBENQUELL

---

# Reaping the Whirlwind

---



SOURCE: WWW.WEATHER.COM

Over the years I have often be startled by men and women who thoughtlessly say whatever is on their mind. They felt little or no compunction to exercise restraint and said whatever they wanted to whomever they wanted.

Everytime I experience this, a word from the prophet Hosea comes to mind.

»For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.« It is a word that is worth reflecting on.

When we sow, we already carry within ourselves a vision of the reaping. Therefore, if we wish to reap potatoes, we do not sow carrots. If we wish to reap wheat, we do not sow cabbage.

We sow what we are sure contains the potential within it to bring forth our desire when it fully unfolds and develops. Sowing is a deeply calculated and cautious endeavour.

To sow the wind, is the biblical image that expresses a dangerous moment, namely when we sow what we cannot really control. Wind is not under our control. As Jesus puts it so well in the Gospel of John: »The wind blows where it wishes.« (Jn 3,8)

The result of sowing what we cannot really control is that we reap the whirlwind. This is a wind that no longer blows across the land, but that turns in on itself, revolves around itself. It generates great power, but only for itself. A whirlwind does not drive windmills. It generates great destruction, but does itself no harm

At the same time, we have no power to control a whirlwind, even if our sowing of the wind has unleashed these forces. It does not heed our commands, nor does it do our bidding.

Sowing the wind happens in those moments when we do or say things we feel confident will bring about our desire. Then we resort to slander, discourtesy, disrespect, reproach and accusation, or level constant complaint about the other, all the while thinking, that this will give us relief, make us feel better and let things off our chest. However, the wind we sow here wreaks a havoc we cannot control, let alone predict. People are deeply hurt, relationships fall apart, division erupts and mistrust settles in and makes itself at home. Distance unfolds where closeness once held sway. I have watched people lose their sense of self-confidence and self-worth as careless, wind-sown words were tossed about. Yet, we can no more call such words back than we can make a whirlwind stop.

Appalled by the results that we did not anticipate, we then resort to the line »But that was never my intention!« Biblical spirituality is robust and muscular. It demands real and lived responsibility from us, including responsibility for the words we speak and the actions we set. If we did not want such unforeseen results, then we should have acted more responsibly. If we do not want a whirlwind, then we should refrain from sowing the wind.

Dante Alighieri carried this image all the way into the hell of his Inferno.

»Here sighs and cries and shrieks of lamentation  
echoed throughout the starless air of Hell;  
at first these sounds resounding made me weep:

tongues confused, a language strained in anguish  
with cadences of anger, shrill outcries  
and raucous groans that joined with sounds of hands,

raising a whirling storm that turns itself  
forever through that air of endless black,  
like grains of sand swirling when a whirlwind blows.«

*Dante Alighieri, The Inferno, Canto III*

»For they sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind.« If we take the word as seriously as Hosea and Dante, we may well avoid the hells we make for each other.

**Erik Riechers SAC**

*Vallendar, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022*