



SIEBENQUELL

May the Lord lift up his face to you



In the book of Numbers, God explains to Moses how he should bless the People of Israel (Num. 6:23-27). And then he gives him the three priestly blessings. The last of these blessings says, »May the Lord lift up his face to you and give you peace (shalom).«

There is a lovely tale regarding a group of people who have gathered on a hillside by the sea. They assemble in order to watch a great ship that is sailing by. A small child is waving enthusiastically. One of the men in the crowd asks him why he is doing this. His reply: »I am waving so that the captain of the ship sees me and waves back.« The man replies, »But the ship is far from shore and this is a considerable crowd. What makes you believe that the captain of the ship can see you?« Then the young boy replies, »Because the captain of the ship is my father. He will see from a distance and find me in the crowd, because he is looking out for me!«

That is more or less what we mean when we pray, »May the Lord lift up his face to you and give you peace (shalom).« The Lord, who lifts up his face to us is the heavenly confirmation of our significance in the universe. We count as individuals, because God loves us like a mother loves her child. He is looking out for us, because in his eyes our lives have value, mean-

ing and dignity. It is why the priestly blessings are written in the singular, in order to emphasise that God does not just see us as a collective, but as individuals. For this reason, the sages of the Talmud will write, that a single life is a universe, and he who saves one life, saves the entire world.

This is the meaning of the last blessing. Here we experience that God has lifted up his face to us; we are not an indistinguishable face in the crowd, but rather people who are loved, wanted and seen. This brings peace (shalom). This is the fountainhead of peace. After all, competition, division, lawlessness and violence all flow from the psychological need to prove ourselves, to demonstrate that we are worth noting and that we have value. Here people are capable of doing terrible things in order to prove their worth, to prove that they are mightier, richer or more successful than the others. All of this is nothing more than the plea: Look at me! See me! Yet all this points to a failure of faith.

Faith means, that I trust that God is looking out for me. I am here, because I am a wanted child of God. He gave me this life, because he thought I would enjoy it and find my pleasure in it. Even though I am like the child on the hillside, watching as the great ship passes by, I know, that the God is keeping an eye out for me, that he is waving to me as I am waving to him. That is the innermost wellspring of my peace. We do not have to prove ourselves in order to receive a blessing from God. What we need to know, is that he is lifting up his face to us. Then we will find shalom, the peace that comes from living within God's order.

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Vallendar, January 18, 2017