



SIEBENQUELL

»He brought me out to a wide-open space« (Ps 18)



Many of us have been appalled and shaken for months by a phenomenon which the wide-open spaces, in which we have moved for years and decades, has unleashed: narrowness, exclusion and separation.

If we want to travel, then for many the destinations cannot be far-away and exotic enough; economically, globalisation could not be advanced quickly enough. Yet, the number of voices trying to slow this are multiplying, reflective voices, but also fearful voices, since the problems and needs from afar have drawn closer to us. Fear always has something to do with constriction, and therefore it is hardly surprising that salvation is being sought in the manageable world of our own, familiar places. This seems to offer security and orientation. We are experiencing spokespeople, from Washington to Moscow, who are recruiting their power out of this fear. Their language is hard, their actions often brutal. And many people are gathering in this constricted world in search of security and certainty. Indeed, it is true: wide-open spaces can be intimidating, when we do not know how to move through them, when I do not recognize the landmarks, when there is no one on whom I can depend.

Nevertheless, I am convinced, that we were not created for constriction.

In Psalm 18 we read:

»He reached from on high and took me, pulled me out of the many waters.
He saved me from my daunting enemy and from my foes who were stronger than I.
They came at me on the day of disaster, but the Lord became my support
And brought me out to a wide-open space, set me free, for his pleasure I was. «

Out of the life-threatening constriction of mighty waters and daunting foes, God pulls out the human person with a mighty hand, frees him and places him in a wide-open space. »For his pleasure was I.« God does not give us the wide-open spaces so that we get lost, but because he loves us. He grants us the wide-open spaces that we might discover them and move through them. We are his pleasure, and he takes his pleasure therein, that we explore these wide-open spaces, and how we do so.

»He makes my legs like a gazelle's, and stands me on the heights. «

To move with trust into the wide-open spaces effects a totally different attitude and way of moving: upright, light, and relishing the breadth of the view.

I knew a man who was born as the second of four children into a very poor and small working class world. He had a lucid mind and absorbed everything the teacher communicated in the one room, village schoolhouse. He discovered the beauty of language and the world of poetry. He loved arithmetic and geography. Everything expanded his horizons and roused his yearning for more. His teacher assisted him, so that he did not have to learn a trade in the village, like his brothers, but could instead complete his training as an accountant in a small city. It was certainly not easy, yet, he relished the new worlds which opened themselves to him. Decades later, he was able to pass on to those he trained, the enthusiasm that carried him into the wide-open spaces of his life. However, he never lost sight of the one who had brought him out into this wide-open space: »Here, where you have placed me, no other can stand« was a legacy to all to whom he entrusted this avowal. Breathing this relationship to God, he was able to traverse the dark vales of his life, to open up new worlds again and again, to rejoice, marvel, and radiate to his last breath.

»You lengthened my strides beneath me, and my feet did not trip. «

Let us courageously and joyfully explore and wander through the worlds which God opens for us, with him and with one another!

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