



SIEBENQUELL

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# Beautifully – heavy – In Praise of Gratitude

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QUELLENANGABE: R. MONNERJAHN 2014

Recently a woman told the story of an excursion which she had undertaken with her sick father. It was a short trip, over roads that he had not driven for a long time, through landscapes that he loved and had not seen for a long time. It took place on a summer evening which immersed everything in a special light. Her father was happy, repeatedly thanking her for this excursion. And as the images increasingly filled and enthused him, he began to sing, which he used to sing gladly while he was still a member of the choir: »Great, O Lord, are the works of thy hand, great, O Lord, are the works of thy hand. Thou givest the stars their course, you decorate the glacier walls and pile the clouds up like mountains.«

And it dawned on her: He saw much deep and further. The glory of the summer evening was to him a testimony and a gift of the one, from whom all things come. »Yes«, so ended her story, »it appeared to me as if the heaviness of the past weeks had laid bare this deep joy and gratitude.«

We have similar experiences of need and heaviness on the one hand and of joy on the other. Perhaps one of your loved ones has returned safely from a long and arduous journey; after weeks of fretting and waiting, of fear and uneasy feelings, the doctor proclaims to you the good news that your health is no longer in danger and that there will be a future that you had no longer dreamed of as possible; after the mother was gravely ill throughout the pregnancy, a child is born, healthy and well; you experienced friendship and assistance where you no longer expected it – manifold are the difficult experiences which surprise our hearts. In the hour of need we feel the heaviness, the burden and the fear and cannot imagine that it will ever be otherwise. Thereafter, we feel alive, drenched with joy, happiness and gratitude. The more uncertain and heavy the times were that preceded the joyous event, the more deeply we relish that which has been given to us. Therein lays the surprise. And then it is possible for us to sing:

»I wish to thank you with all my heart; . . . for great is the glory of the Lord.« (Ps 104)

The Hebrew word for glory means weighty or heavy. That which is glorious, which the praying people of the psalms praise, is not beautiful in the external sense of the word, but instead has weight, is heavy. Although we often consider this to be negative or burdensome: it does not flutter away, is not lightly carried away. Indeed, in the course of life, how often do we build on that which is weighty, because it becomes a foundation and is lasting, be it our houses or our relationships. Thus, we can view the heaviness that we bear as the other side of the wondrous that is given to us, which we can relish gratefully and in relationship to the creator.

Khalil Gibran tells the following short story that can help us recognise the treasure in that which is heavy: Said one oyster to a neighbouring oyster, »I have a very great pain within me. It is heavy and round and I am in distress.« And the other oyster replied with haughty complacency, »Praise be to the heavens and to the sea, I have no pain within me. I am well and whole both within and without. « At that moment a crab was passing by and heard the two oysters, and he said to the one who was well and whole both within and without, »Yes, you are well and whole; but the pain that your neighbour bears is a pearl of exceeding beauty. « (from: *The Wanderer*)

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