



SIEBENQUELL

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**Reflection on Proverbs 9, 1-6**

# **Drop the Masks**

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QUELLENANGABE: ROSEMARIE MONNERJAHN 2011

Wisdom has built her house,  
she has set up her seven pillars.  
She has slaughtered her beasts, she has mixed her wine,  
she has also set her table.  
She has sent out her maids to call  
from the highest places in the town,  
»Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!«  
To him who is without sense she says,  
»Come, eat of my bread  
and drink of the wine I have mixed.  
Leave foolishness, and live,  
and walk in the way of insight.«

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This little story from the Book of Proverbs leaves a strange impression behind. The grand lady of the story, Wisdom herself, gets the idea into her head to prepare a feast. But what a feast, because she intends to place those people on the guest list who, at least at first glance, have the least in common with her. It is supposed to be a feast for the simple, the inexperienced, for those with little sense, for those who are without any great wisdom.

This is, of course, a cunning little trap which the storyteller has laid out for us, because normally we all would love to be invited by Wisdom and want to tell others that we are sitting at her table and partaking of her feast. But which one of us would brag about this invitation? Which one of us would boast that he had received an invitation addressed to the simple and those with little sense? Which one of us would admit that he or she has a reservation at the table for the simple? However, the Grand Lady Wisdom sets the table in her house of the seven pillars, for she is particular and precise in her guest list. Only the simple and the unpretentious people are invited.

The invitation has its charms. The meal is on the house. At least the price is right. But the Lady of this house does point out that there is one string attached: Her guests must be willing to leave behind the path of foolishness. They do not have to be people who never walked such paths. They do not need to deny that they ever trod such paths. They do not need to be ashamed that the once were foolish people. No, the hostess insists only that they come with the fundamental willingness to leave old foolishness behind so that they can try out her paths.

Therefore, the pretentious and the sophisticated people do not make it onto the list. For they have learned how to hide and mask their brokenness and insecurity behind their refinement. Behind the quips and witticisms and the conventional good manners they hide a world of doubts and superficiality where they find neither content nor meaning. They are not invited so that they do not pull off the same charade that they practice in »high society«.

In order to sit at this table, you need to drop the masks. My confrere Alexander Diensberg shows us the kind of questions that are raised the table of Wisdom in his song »When the masks fall«.

Whereto with all the many questions?  
Whereto with all the puzzlement?  
Whereto with all the many pictures,  
which really are only shards?

Whereto with all the darkneses?  
Whereto with all the vanities?  
Whereto with all the many fears,  
which really are only shards?...

Whereto with all the many sufferings?  
Whereto with all the sadnesses?  
Whereto with all the many crosses,  
Which really are only shards?

Whereto with all the many plans?  
Whereto with all the many tears?  
Whereto with my childhood dreams,  
Which really are only shards?...

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When the masks fall, they set faces free,  
the faces of us all, wounded and shy.  
Scars of old times will be buried deeply in them,  
Wounded and shy – but free!

This is how we will be invited by Lady Wisdom, which questions such as these in our hearts and on our lips. It makes we ask myself, who will accept her invitation.

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