



SIEBENQUELL

»Because God gazed on her«



QUELLENANGABE: ROSEMARIE MONNERJAHN

Do you know the feeling when someone is talking to you but does not look at you? Or even that you are overlooked? Perhaps even by a person who is important to you, from whom you wish to be noticed? What happens? You become invisible, you feel unimportant, as unworthy of notice, small, indeed, perhaps even ugly and no longer loveable.

Several years ago someone told me the following story: He had travelled with a friend to Colmar to the museum of Unterlinden; they wandered – knowledgeably exchanging artist observation – from one work to the other. In front of a portrait of Mary they were witnesses of the following scene: A small boy asked his father: »Papa, why is that woman so beautiful?« The father crouched down, took his son onto his knee and answered: »Why is the woman so beautiful? – Because God gazed at her!«

Gazing means more than looking. It means to take someone into one's sight, to let your eyes linger. To gaze at a person means to turn toward them, to walk with them eye to eye. Or, as the Irish philosopher John O'Donohue puts it so beautifully, »When we gaze at something with undivided attention, we draw it into ourselves.« That means, when we are seen in this fashion, then we are received. To be truly seen conveys to us a sense of being safe and secure.

And we hear what is said between the lines: He sees me as I am, in the depths of my soul, in my personal core; there it does not matter whether I am important in the world, or not, whether I am rich or poor, healthy or sick, able to perform or in need to help, simple or imposing.

Do we allow ourselves to be seen? Or are we quick to diminish ourselves when someone praises or honours us? Do we want to be gazed at and noticed? Here a second aspect of this gazing and allowing oneself to be seen arises, namely, the aspect of the relationship between the two. For we all know, how good it is to be gazed at by another who loves me and for whom I yearn. This loving gaze makes us unbelievably alive. It can free energy and make unsuspected developments possible. We also know the opposite: Children who are never lovingly gazed upon start to literally deteriorate. They start to act out or are hindered in their development, because they feel unworthy and do not have the chance to grow and mature under a loving gaze and a trusting „thou“. And their eyes grow dull and empty. In the worst case scenario, they do not come into contact with their own beauty, with their possibilities for development and life. This becomes immediately relevant when we reflect on the people who flee in their hundreds of thousands.

The person upon whom no gaze falls will only find his place in life with difficulty.

In her poem, Hilde Domin says it this way:

Your place is
Where eyes gaze upon you.
Where the eyes meet
you become.

...and at the end she writes: You are
 because eyes want you,
 gaze upon you and say
 that you are.

If the loving gaze from one person to another makes life possible, how much more when the human being stands eye to eye with God, who is love. This experience grants us unfettered strength, deep joy, and creative vitality, sometimes in explosive fashion, often in tender growth.

I am, because He gazes upon me.
I can live out that which is mine, because He gazes upon me.
My being seen by Him makes me beautiful.
And the human whom I am presently encountering, is also gazed upon by God.

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September 1, 2015, Vallendar