

The urge to live

**Where does my desire to live intensely come from? Where do I look for fulfilment?
What encourages me to trust life?**

**I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.
John 10,10**

What made me so thrilled and so happy during the last ski tour in *Karwendel*? The physical exertion of riding a bicycle over the *Lawinenkegel* into the lonely valley, of climbing through steep cirques and over ridges, of sailing over icy ferns? The calm at the peak, surrounded by glistening combs? The shining primroses between the limestone or the reflection of the crystal clear, turquoise creek, the white foaming waterfalls between larches and pines in green finery? My rustic comrade with whom I can speak seriously and laugh heartily? The refreshment and the bacon and eggs in the mountains? Probably all of that together. The fullness.

Back at my desk I open the Bible and notice: the urge to live courses not only through me, but also through the Bible from the beginning to the end. In the first chapter of Genesis God speaks a swarm of living creatures into life in his spiritually stormy world. Josef is sold into Egypt by his brothers to become the mightiest ruler of the world there. All of this just to save a large group of people from starvation and to protect their lives (Genesis 50, 20). In the book Deuteronomy Moses, on the last day of his life, summarises all of his wisdom and God's most intimate concerns. At the climax of his burning speech he addresses the conscience of each individual Israeli in the desert before they enter the flowing land: "Choose life so that you may live!" (Deuteronomy 30,19). In Psalm 36 David celebrates: "The source of life is in you, in your light we see light!" Due to his great pain Job's life nauseates him. He wants to live properly or not at all. For Ecclesiastes, the philosopher, everything seems like wind, but at the end he recommends enjoying life "with the woman you love."

Jesus virtually embodies the unsatisfied, divine will to life. He sees the meaning in life, "that they have life and have it to the full". After his death he comes into the midst of his fearful friends and breaths on them, just as God sent out the life breath to man at his creation. Receive holy breath! John wrote his gospel of Jesus with the goal that we, "in faith have life in his name" (John 20,31). At the end of the New Testament, at the end of Revelations the spirit calls with the "bride", the heavenly Jerusalem: "Come! Whoever has thirst receive the water of life for free!"

The Biblical God is stormy, thrilled life. He loves life, he loves our life. This much is clear to me as I close the Bible again. And the thought comes to me, my urge for life could not be only *my* urge to life, my joy in life not only *my* joy in life. It is a spirit that I have not called, a power which propels me to search for the grandeur of the world and life and the joy of participating in it. It is the courage to set out to the mountains again, to new people, new jobs, even to go towards crises. The holy breath of life.