

Of Life, Death & Salvation

Chapter Seven: The Lot of Solitude

„Liebe zu Einsamkeit ist nicht als ursprünglicher Hang da, sondern entsteht erst in der Folge der Erfahrung und des Nachdenkens, namentlich der Einsicht in die moralisch und intellektuell elende Beschaffenheit der Menschen.“

„Love of solitude is not there as an original disposition, but only arises as a result of experience and contemplation, namely the insight into the wretched moral and intellectual composition of humanity“

Schopenhauer lived a secluded and solitary life, he had no family and no children. Also he reflected a lot about solitude and many famous quotations about loneliness, that we know today, are from Schopenhauer himself.

For example Schopenhauer says that in loneliness your true identity gets revealed, so most people cannot endure solitude, because they cannot endure themselves. They more or less constantly need distraction and company, because they fear nothing more than their true identity, which is mostly so miserably constituted, that they literally have to flee from it. With a great wit, a sage, the contrary is the case: he doesn't flee from solitude, he flees from society! Everywhere he finds lots of people who don't understand him or even worse, who jealously hate him, because of his altruism and empathy, which they are never able to reach – and they instinctively know that!

Schopenhauer says *solitude is the lot* of every great wit and with age the reclusion is constantly growing, because: solitude is not an inborn manner but is formed of experiences and reflection, namely because of the insight in the morally and intellectual wretched character of most people. Schopenhauer is writing with black humor when he says: in his young age he was amused when the doorbell was ringing, because he thought – now it would come! But with age this feeling had by the same occasion become something more of a fright, because he thought: now it comes!

Schopenhauer says also to attain peace with solitude is one of the greatest achievements in human life, because then you can endure all sorts of situations. Only in loneliness you can really find peace. A real sage is characterised by solitude, because he has no problem to fill the loneliness with great thoughts and deep imagination. He doesn't get quickly bored, patience is his advantage and enlightenment his goal. Solitude is an important destination on the road to illumination, which we will deal now in the last chapter of our considerations.