

## SECRETS

1. There is a story of Saki, in which a cat begins to talk. He is amidst of guests in a party and tells everything he knows about the guest, what he saw them doing. The result is uproar and chaos. The old mechanism of culture is repeated. The cat is driven out and so peace is restored. In fact the unveiling of secrets is driven out. Life in culture is not possible when the secrets are unveiled. When this happens life runs out of control. Nothing is any longer secure. Structures and relationships crumble. Violence begins very quickly. A violence in which, again, not the real “culprits”, those with secrets, but the cultural culprit, the unveiler, the cat, is driven out. As Jesus, the unbeliever, is driven out.

With violence we are again in the neighbourhood of the sacred. Sacred comes from Latin *sacrare*, dedicated to a divinity, so setting it apart from normal life. Secret comes from Latin *secernere*, which is separate, distinguish. So in fact the words mean the same.

2. There is in all of us a deep knowing, eventually not conscious and just because of that very deep, that we cannot live without secrets and the secrets being secure. Hence the fears and anxieties about privacy because of the modern possibilities of registration.

A cultural expression of the knowledge is the official, the professional secrete. Here are already the two sides: Nothing can be done in certain situations when secrets are not unveiled and in the same time nothing can be done if the person who is unveiling the secrets is not really sure that the secrets will be kept. All the participation of secrets in teams endangers culture as such. That so much, which in a professional context is unveiled, is not kept secret, out of which reason ever, not only may destroy the person(s) involved, but culture itself.

3. That life cannot go on without secrets is true for every human being. It is equally true for groups, for nations, for culture itself. We now have an enormous industry, which sees it as her task, which gets the thrill out of unveiling secrets, the media. Any time they are forbidden to unveil secrets, they make big havoc. Any time they unveil secrets of culture and of groups and persons, the more so when they trespass interdictions, the destroying of culture goes on.

Of course the rationalization of all this is, that we “have a right to know” (which, mostly, I guess, certainly is not true). Or that it has all to be unveiled, that it has to be destroyed, because it is all hypocrisy. If this culture has to be destroyed might be a point for discussion, although I doubt very much if it has to be done consciously and even if so, in this manner. And more important still, as scapegoaters of scapegoaters are the better scapegoaters, so certainly people being after hypocritic people because they are hypocritic are the better hypocrites.

4. Because we all only can live, live at all, by living together, there is a central reality which is of the utmost importance: respect. Respect means: I accept you as you give yourself in the relationship. Of course you have your secrets, as I have. They don't matter. I respect your (to me unknown) secrets as I respect you. It is absolutely necessary in order to have the possibility to get along together in a human manner, that we respect each other. This is true for every relationship, as well in a marriage as in a

chance meeting. A marriage in which one wishes, or both wish, to know everything of each other, is destroyed. The same is true for the relationship between parents and children.

Because we are losing the structures, because more and more all relationships are built on feelings, we run evermore the risk that we try to find security by knowing everything. We hope that if we know everything we at last are at rest, not any longer afraid of the possible, the fantasized rivals. We know that it is counterproductive. We are not able ever to know "everything". Every answer opens new questions, more threatening ones. And we certainly destroy the relationship. Of course the same is true for the relationship between parents and children.

Respect and trust belong together. Without trust, in myself (because, in the end, I know to be trusted, to be safe) and so in the other, respect is not possible. Trust and respect are both present and/or they disappear together.

5. By far our most secrets we are not conscious of. Our secrets too, again, are a very complicated structure, as complicated as we ourselves are. We keep secrets, in our own interest, in the interest of the group to which we belong, consciously and unconsciously. There is one (sort of) secret the gospel orders us to keep secret: when we give alms to people who need them, when we help people who need our help (Matt. 6,1-4). Many human realities here come together. It is about the dignity of those who are given. About mutual trust between the receiver and the giver. About staying outside of rivalry, with each other, both with everybody.

There are here problems around the "helping professions" which might be important enough to investigate separately.

And, of course, parallel: Pray to your Father behind the closed door. Be with Him alone, without being diverted by who- or whatever, without being in any rivalry. But the praying as such is not a secret.

6. Secrets have the function that human relationships in culture are possible and that they remain the same as they are. This might be very good. Life is going on and possible for the people who have to do with each other. It might be very bad, because the relationships are bad, not giving the people involved a chance to be happy, to have a fulfilled life, making them unhappy, ill. Just in such cases secrets very often are very much defended, because there are in such relationships big fears and the people involved are afraid that if secrets come to the open, they will not be able to cope.

7. There are many situations in which secrets might be unveiled, come to the open:

7.1 Very often they just are exposed. Somebody does not stick to the "hidden pact" not to unveil secrets. To have a joke. Being malicious. Or without knowing. Or somebody can her-, himself expose her-, himself, bringing a secret to the open. Often then a joke is made to do away with the embarrassment. Or the person whose secret came to the open becomes, in which manner ever, angry or ashamed. She, he blushes, which means aggression, which is not ventured. Or people know: There happened something serious, something very good or something very wrong. Now we have to do more.

7.2 Secrets always have to do with relationships, with the form they have. So if the relationships are not good or bad, it is very important that people involved come together and tell each other about themselves. So they not only eventually do understand each other better. Probably far more important, that they tell each other their secrets, eventually even without knowing it. This means that such meetings need trust, eventually given by someone present, who is outside of the relationships involved. It is a going together in which trust and so openness grows and in which so eventually conscious secrets too can be shared.

These are the meetings of people out of different, each other distrusting cultures. These are too the meetings of couples, in groups, or alone, with a therapist.

7.3 All this is the more so, if we have the intention to tell, as far as we know them and can find them, our secrets. To somebody we love and trust. To a pastor, a therapist. We give ourselves in the hands of the other, in a sense knowing that our life will change when the secrets come into the open.

8. Anyway, life never can be the same when a secret is unveiled. If it happened in a situation we trust(-ed), life afterwards has more chances to unfold. We will never know how. In that sense too, we only can trust. This is even true when in such a being together, where it is about secrets, eventually without being conscious of it, a secret is or secrets are unveiled without anybody noticing it. A secret, which came into the open stops to do its work. Only when afterwards we are again distrusting or afraid, we have to have new secrets, to have the possibility to go on. The same is the case when, without our consent, secrets are taken away from us (see 7.1) and we cannot cope with this fact. Then too, we have again to hide deeper into secrets.

9. In the Kingdom there are not any longer secrets. The secrets of the world, of culture, will be revealed (the Revelation of St. John), and so everybody's secret(s) will be revealed (the Revelation of St. John), and so everybody's secret(s) will be revealed. And so we will be free at last, because the danger has gone. We need not any longer defend ourselves, with secrets and with everything. When God is everything in everybody, then the mimesis of desire has passed away. We are free and in peace. We have already firstfruits (Rom. 8, 23) of this freedom and this peace when we know that God knows all our secrets, those we know and the many we don't, that he knows, that he gets to the bottom of our hearts and that we, just because of that, are absolutely safe with him. Then we know who we are, because he knows all our secrets.