

CAUSE AND EFFECT IN HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

1. Culture came into existence by the experience that if a cause, in fact 'the' cause of all the difficulties in the group, was found and eliminated, the effect was, that peace was restored. Since then, since this very origin, any time a problem arises, the cause was sought in order to get, by eliminating it, a good result. This mechanism, because it is a mechanism, became part of our very being. We did it (and do it) long before (systematic) thinking about it began. It is just the way to solve problems and to open ways forward. All cause and effect thinking in daily life and in the sciences, is originated in this primeval mechanism and still has the same character.

2. It is extremely important to see clearly what really happens. 'Cause and effect' thinking (but, again, it is in fact a doing, the thinking is later, a rationalization, a support of the doing) has as its goal the result: to have unanimity, to have agreement, to have peace. This in fact, if the mechanism works, is clear. To get this result, an arbitrary victim is chosen, to eject it, in order to get this unanimity.

The original scapegoat, on which culture was founded, was arbitrary. That it is arbitrary is the secret of culture. Myth tells us that the arbitrary victim was the real culprit. The same is still true for our daily life and for the sciences: The cause chosen, to get the result, is arbitrary. It is chosen, not because it is 'the' cause. We only choose it because we need a cause in order to get the unanimity.

3. To put it again in another manner: In fact we are not seeking for causes, we are seeking for results. Because we are seeking for results, we are seeking causes. We are convinced that what we are doing is true. We are as blind for the arbitrariness of what we are doing as our ancestors were when they sacrificed people, as innocent, or as guilty as the sacrificers were, convinced that they were sacrificed the only guilty one, the only cause. Just because of this blindness cause and effect thinking is a mechanism.

4. Against all appearances cause and effect thinking is never about truth, it is always about trying to get unanimity. Cause and effect thinking is not interested in truth at all. All philosophy about truth probably only is a prolongation of the old myths, with exactly the same result, the hiding of truth. In fact as soon as the truth becomes clear, all cause and effect thinking (and, maybe with some exceptions, all philosophy) is blow up.

5. The truth about cause and effect thinking is that it is arbitrary. That in all this thinking reality is sacrificed for a goal, the result. To put it in another manner: part of reality, aspects of reality are sacrificed, to have a result, the result that life stays habitable for human beings.

6. Even if we stay in this cultural context, in which cause and effect thinking (thinking here always used in an existential meaning, including the doing) was necessary, it is very clear that things are running out of hand. Our cause and effect thinking becomes such a complicated mess, that we eliminate, without being conscious of it, more and more of reality as causes, so in fact destroying life altogether. Life and human relationships become more and more inhuman. Wisdom is replaced (and driven out) by science, relationships by electronics, the concrete by the abstract.

7. This does not mean that we can leave cause and effect thinking altogether behind us. We certainly would disappear, immediately, in insolvable chaos. First of all we have to know what we are doing, although we have to go on doing it as long as we don't find another possibility. And we have to ask ourselves if we have always to do it.

8. There are two aspects of cause and effect thinking which are more and more dysfunctional:

8.1 It derealises the world more and more. Ejecting more and more causes out of reality, reality loses its concreteness and becomes more and more unreal. Our time is ultimately characterized by the fact that nothing matters any longer (Salvatore Satta, The day of judgment, Dutch translation pl07).

8.2 The cause and effect thinking does not any longer achieve peace for anybody. We all are hunting and are hunted; the world as a whole and human life as a whole becomes every day more and more miserable.

9. So we have to find ways out. And it might be that the only way out is that we begin again, where we began when culture came into existence, with human relationships. Once a human being, human beings were driven out of the group, out of life. They were absolutely random in that sense that everybody, every member of the group could have been that scapegoat. This still is done again and again.

In the same cause and effect process human possibilities are, in a random manner, taken as scapegoats, and so endlessly many human possibilities are driven out. So we are not only destroying endlessly many human possibilities we don't even know which ones. They are, as "causes", simply eliminated to have the result, the effect.

To find another way together, to get out of this mythical riddle of make believe that we have the only possible form of human living together in this cause and effect culture, we have to bring back all the human possibilities, as all the human beings, which were, nearly always unknown to us ourselves, eliminated, driven out, to have the cultural result.

10. This can only mean that we have to find other ways to get along together. The mechanisms of cause and effect thinking in human relationships are powergames. Non-verbal powergames (the original scapegoating processing certainly was non-verbal, and very many of these games still are) and "discussion" always try to get unanimity and unanimity invariably is the result of the scapegoating, of evicting human beings and human possibilities. We have to learn to get out of powergames and so, too, out of "discussions".

11. The reverse of all this, of our culture, is to stay out of powergames and so, too to stay out of discussions. Being out of powergames means, that we give everybody the right to exist in his, her manner, to have his, her opinions. Because existing is always existing together, it means that we listen to each other without judging. It means that we endure the fears, which rise in us, when we are not any longer allowed to cope with our fears by scapegoating. It means that we are open for the other, letting her, his existence enter ours, to changing us, enriching us. It means that talking together never is about agreeing, excluding so much of life. It means that the richness of life unfolds itself in us. It means in fact that we travel into another world.

It is in fact, the world of the Gospel. In the Gospel a way of life is shown which is not excluding, but including a way of life in which everybody with all her, his possibilities, "fits". This is however corrupt Christianity might be and in fact is, mirrored by the fact that people from all nations and cultures find their way in the gospel, staying in fact, or more in fact, becoming at last themselves. Being a saint in the sense of the Gospel (which is a reality, totally different from being a saint in the religious sense) does not mean being somebody extremely saintly and virtuous, in fact a human cripple, but being "at last" the totally individual person, with all its possibilities, given by origin and birth and by history, without being disabled and alienated by cultural mechanisms, as we all are.

12. Of course to travel from this absolute world of culture (which, in the same time we still need desperately) to another culture, which is including instead of excluding, is in itself a deeply exciting experience. Because the old ways are so extremely strong in us, much stronger than we ever will consciously now, it is an all-involving learning process.

We certainly can learn much of it by living with Jesus, in one way or another. But probably we only can, in the end, by being together, knowing about this reality, of a new world, and learning together about it, if we are conscious of Jesus as the origin of our knowing of this other culture or not.

It is very important to learn about this way of living, to be together in groups in which we tell about our lives, our difficulties and joys and in which we listen to each other. Deciding is, that we always speak about our experiences, and ourselves not trying to tell others how life really "is", or even to console or whatever. These are meetings of healing, just because the healing is given, in the being together, in the telling, in the trust.

If somebody is in charge of the group, especially she or he has to know about this other reality and to protect this reality, by preventing that we together glide back to our old ways of culture. Then the possibilities are lost again. We end up in ambivalences, in disagreements and eventually in chaos. Just in our world again.