

## **THE USE OF THE RITUAL NAMED 'KANAPPU YAVIMA' (SENDING A TEAPOY) THE PRESENT DAY SOCIETY**

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### **Introduction**

Kanappu yavima is a ritual. Rituals can be explained as a type of human activity which can be traced back to the beginning of the human civilization.

Different dictionaries provide different meanings to the term 'ritual'. One explanation is that rituals are a kind of witchcraft which brings harm to people. The sociological view of the term ritual is that they are a set of complex beliefs and actions practiced by individuals and social groups to control the environment in order to realize their expectations. Accordingly, it can be said that rituals include different kinds of sorcery which people use in order to achieve their worldly expectations and drive away evil influence which befall on them at unexpected moments.

E.B. Tyler terms ritual as a pseudo science since it is based on beliefs and ideas which cannot be explained scientifically or logically. George Fraser points out that at the first stages of the evolution of mankind religion was based on rituals. He provides two

basic concepts in relation to rituals. They are:

The law of similarity and  
The law of contact

The law of similarity is based on the belief that if someone wants to cause harm to an enemy, he can make a figure similar to his enemy and hurt him by means of burning it or pricking spikes. He cites an example from the Batic tribe in Sumatra Island. These tribal people believe that a woman who has no children is able to bear a child by making a model of a baby placing it on her lap and singing lullabies and petting it.

The law of contact is the belief that harm can be caused to an enemy by charming nails, hair and blood of the enemy.

Raymond Perth in his book called 'Human Types' divides ritual that a person uses at different times into 3 divisions. They are:

Productive magic  
Protective magic and  
Destructive magic

The first two are used for the well-being of the individuals and the society, and are socially accepted. The rituals which help to get a better yield in Agriculture, Fishing, and Hunting etc are known as productive magic. Rituals practiced to protect one's property, prevent disease and drive away harm caused by evil influence of rituals are called protective magic. Witchcraft which is used to bring about destruction of something or someone is called destructive magic.

Malinowski in his book 'Magic Science, Religion and other essays' points out that a person seeks the help of rituals when he is unable to realize his expectations through his own actions. He points out those rituals are based on 3 questions related to man's life. They are:

1. What is life?
2. What is fate?
3. What is death?

When a person is faced with complex situations because of these problems he seeks solace in rituals. Malinowski further shows that the rituals associated with the well-being of a person are named as 'White Magic' and those that bring about harm are named as 'Black Magic'. In order to get the best results from performing rituals a person has to observe clean habits and be free from defilements (killa).

According to the above discussion one is able to get a clear understanding of what is meant by rituals. Rituals are common among all social groups and have played an important role as an alternative means sought by people when they are unable to deal with complex situations on their own. They

can be either beneficial or harmful. It is also evident that their success depends on the belief the people place on them and on the purity of the persons concerned.

Rituals are used by people in the Sri Lankan society to realize their expectations. Sending a charmed teapoy to find the thief is one ritual which had been popular and which is being faded away from the society at present.

### **Research Problem**

Although technology has been developed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, people still believe in different rituals. It is true that there are legal methods which help to solve their problems, but still people practice different types of rituals to find solace. As pointed out by the media repeatedly the Police is doing whatever is possible to protect law and order, but there are occasions when the ritual *kanappu yavima* is used. In this research the social aspect of the ritual '*kanappu yavima*' and how it is used by people will be examined.

### **Methodology**

The research will use primary and secondary data. Both qualitative and quantitative methods will be used to examine the research problem. The sociological aspects of the concept will be studied through observation and field studies. The practice of this ritual has been examined with the help of 16 research assistants in the village named Kahanatgama in Mahawa in the Kurunegala district in Sri Lanka

### **Conclusion**

The ritual called '*kanappu yavima*' which is used by the rural community

to find a lost property seems to be oscillating between truth and untruth. There is a visible clash between scientific methods and ritual practices. In the face of modern technology and legal practices the practical use of this ritual is becoming problematic. It seems to be a complex mental action based on different fields of study such as Phonetics Exorcism and Astrology.

#### Refernces

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