

Essay on Do You Consider Superstitions to Be Silly Nonsense, Or Do You Think That Some Should Be Taken Seriously?

Beliefs that are without any reasonable basis may be called superstitions. Almost everybody dreads Friday the thirteenth crows and the hooting of owls. All these are supposed to be associated with bad luck. Some hotels do not have the thirteenth floor because guests are reluctant to stay on a floor marked "13". These so-called harbingers of doom are avoided like the plague. For unavoidable circumstances, there are a lot of charms, mantras, and prayers available for averting catastrophe.

Nobody knows how much of these superstitions really bring about the calamities as they are believed to do. There are virtually no scientific studies carried out to confirm or deny them, so we carry on believing unreasonably and often fearfully. If ever a calamity occurs when an omen signifies so, the belief is strengthened even more. Superstitions are perpetuated not because they are irrefutably true but because nobody can show them to be untrue. So to be on the safe side, most people do the minimum necessary to prevent disasters, risk-taking is only for the brave or foolish.

Belief is a powerful force. We are products of our own mind. When Descartes said "I think, therefore I am", I am sure he is aware of the power of our mind. As we think, that is what we are. To consider all superstitions to be silly nonsense will not be a wise thing to do. Some of them should be taken seriously while the majority of them can be discarded only when we ourselves believe them to be mere nonsense.

Beliefs like Friday the 13th, knocking on wood, throwing salt over the shoulder and walking under ladders are examples that may be

regarded as nonsense. Unless it does make a person more comfortable to believe them, they can be thrown away like worn-out clothes. We do not need them at all.

However, there are other beliefs which I think should not be taken lightly. For example, the appearance of a comet is a sign of war and pestilence. In fact, history tells us that disasters did occur simultaneously with a comet's appearance. Recently some far-seeing scientists have postulated that the comet may actually be disease-carriers. Every time Earth passes by a comet's tail, the dormant spores from the comet may be activated by contact with Earth thus creating an outbreak of disease. How much does this theory hold water is left to be seen.

As for the moon, recent studies. in a hospital have shown positively that lunacy is associated With a full moon. The tales of werewolves and madmen during a full moon may have a sound basis after all.

In the Caribbean, voodoo is a way of life. Strange phenomena occur that may seem ridiculous to the uninitiated. No matter how we may try to discount the practice of voodoo, we cannot deny that it is certainly a potent power among the natives who are involved with it. Voodoo has the power of life and death over them. And who is to argue? Certainly not me, I prefer to keep away from this form of black magic. It is too risky to challenge it.

Within our country, black magic exists. No sane person will deny outright the power of these occult arts. At best, we try not to get involved in any of it. Science is virtually useless against the charlatans. Belief is more powerful than reason.

Unless one is prepared to risk life and limb to disprove a superstition, it is safest to walk the middle path. It is sheer

madness to believe blindly every superstition. It is equally mad to totally deny all of them. We must have some kind of beliefs to sustain our hold on life. In my opinion, it is all right to throw away any superstition that you believe to be rubbish, only if you really believe so. Otherwise, leave superstitions alone whenever you can and ride along calmly whenever you cannot. An excited mind has a tendency to frighten itself. A calm mind can withstand great threats. I never underestimate the power of my mind.