



THE ROLE OF SUPERSTITION IN OUR EVERYDAY LIVES

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Nearly each and every one of us harbors a superstitious belief of some sort. Many of our beliefs have either been handed down to us by older people or simply fed to us by people we know. It can be difficult to let go of those beliefs readily. They may affect us so profoundly that we simply refuse to no longer stick to them and let them go.

A cat crossing your path is inconsequential, but if the feline happens to be black, then the perspective changes. Walking under a ladder is a no-no. Numbers always have a lucky streak to them especially when betting on lottery games, but the number "13" has always held a distinctive unlucky streak. Friday falling on the 13th of the month is considered particularly not in agreement with one's lucky stars.

Dogs howling are portents of death. We make the sign of the cross before going on an undertaking. We consult astrology and numerology before embarking on a very important mission or scheduling a huge endeavor like a ceremony or the opening of a company. We structure rooms and various parts of our houses based on the concepts of feng shui. Yes, superstition pervades so many aspects of our lives that we sometimes fail to tell where superstition ends and reality begins.

One time, I talked to a friend who also happens to be an architect. I asked her why the layout of doors and stairs and such other structures also find basis on the concepts of feng shui. She laughingly told me that feng shui in architecture, if studied carefully, also finds basis on simple logic. For instance, the reason why having a bathroom positioned directly at the bottom of the stairs could bring about unpleasant events: if someone accidentally falls down the flight of stairs, they'd end up falling straight into the toilet. A door positioned directly at the bottom of a flight of stairs would be a sure opening to one's death if it leads straight to a roadway, if one were, again, to fall down the stairs. Although those were the only examples she mentioned during our conversation, she was still able to enlighten me to a certain degree on why feng shui is such a vital link in the layout of houses.

Superstition that does not find basis in something as concrete and more palpable as logic is nothing but fanaticism and baseless inconsistency. Coincidences happen, but building beliefs based on mere coincidences is nothing short of not thinking with a clear mind. If superstition bothers with what we need to do instead of giving us a clear perspective on things, we need to see where our priorities lie. Superstition should not control each and every aspect of our lives. Once it does, we may never hope to live in the reality of living.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What are common superstitions, if any, you adhere to? What is the origin of those personal superstitions?
2. What are common superstitions that people in your country believe in? Be able to elaborate on those beliefs and their various bases.
3. Why do you think it is easy to attribute many unfortunate events to the failure to adhere to particular superstitious beliefs?
4. How can superstitious beliefs help us in some ways? Be as specific as needed.
5. Make a research on superstitious beliefs in other cultures. Be able to report about them in class.