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MAGIC VS BELIEF: EARLY CHRISTIANITY

B. Sanjeewa Maheshe Mendis

Dept. of Secondary and Tertiary Education, Faculty of Education, The Open University of Sri Lanka. Email: bsmen@ou.ac.lk

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Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to identify the beliefs of early Christianity and the relationship between occultism and occultism. Witchcraft, sorcery, and the occult have a long history, and occultism has been widely used in many early religious traditions. As a result, there is no clear distinction between sacred and pagan beliefs in their early stages. The differences here can be seen in that the religious basis begins to be explored from a scientific point of view. However, there was also a need to maintain religious beliefs scientifically. Another point is that occultism is more harmful than its use. Although such a situation is not represented in Christianity in the present context, it is in the study of primary sources that it is realized that its origin is not entirely based on scientific ethics. It was in some ways limited to myths and rituals associated with various occult beliefs. But this study also found criticisms of the use of magic in early Christianity. On the one hand, magic and occult were limited, but philosophical theologians opposed them. That is clear from the inquiries of St. Justin the martyrs and St. Irenaeus. On the other hand, the gradual stabilization of that scientific basis led to the influence of magic and sorcery. With the enactment of the Catholic Ordinance, a legal system was enacted prohibiting witchcraft in the church. Thus, it can be understood that Christianity practiced magic and sorcery during the first three centuries and some conflict.

Keywords: religious beliefs, magic, occultism, sorcery, practices

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Introduction

There are different facets of human thought. Some of them are spontaneous, while others are unconsciously functional. A man always pays more attention to the unconscious of manipulating emotions beyond his control. At the same time, man seeks to direct the unconscious emotions of man through various aspects to subdue the influence of consciousness. However, if a man has a deep consciousness, such forces will not direct man unconsciously. The scientific background that emerges in the current social context influences the handling of human thought. A man never tries to focus on truths outside of it because it can cause serious mental problems.

One can see how the occult, sorcery, and magical activities still active in every age of society continue to function. These are solving unconscious problems that are assumed to be incapable of various human abilities such as enchantments, lost search, witchcraft, hacking, unsold property, passing exams, healing of diseases, so forth. The forearm charms which are Dolapideni and Perethathatu used for this purpose are commonly found near junctions (Amaruwan, 2019)¹. Other religious rituals are adopted without religious background to such activities. Another factor is the practice of various rituals associated with one religion. It can also be observed that they are often done without knowing the nature of such practices. In this way, even today, man is drawn to the superstitious beliefs associated with witchcraft and magic based on various causes.

The reasons why man engages in such a process need to be clarified. Human thought is framed in an extremely limited way. He maintains a clear knowledge of what he can perceive through the five senses and develops uncertainty about what is beyond that limit. Such metaphysical beliefs may create assumptions that help or harm one. It is primarily due to their recognition of man's luck or misfortune. Different emotions are generated in man, and he engages in different activities due to the desire to satisfy them. If these can be accomplished, it is obvious satisfaction. However, if not, there will be frustration. Not everyone wants to be frustrated. So, he does a variety of activities to prevent them. Luck and misfortune have a profound effect on it. Therefore, he considers such destiny-based activities as destiny and seeks solutions using various factors, destroying his wealth.

Although such a background can be seen today, the nature of society in the early stages of Christianity was different. New ethical thought cannot function independently in different cultural backgrounds. As a result of culturisation, Christians spontaneously entered such a foundation to exchange different cultural elements between cultures. It was due to the reluctance of the people joining the new thinking to suddenly change the behaviors they had maintained up to that point. Therefore, history shows that problematic situations have been created from time to time.

Accordingly, various thinkers have tried to determine how a man can eliminate such harmful activities. It has been suggested that a thought pattern that strengthens the human mind is extremely important. As Roman society functioned under Greek influence, its deep thought patterns emerged from time to time. The basis of philosophy is also that man develops a love for wisdom. The philosopher's role is also to understand what he can see, and the reality embedded in it and distinguish between seeing it and reality. However, a purely philosophical basis alone is not enough to influence all the facts in the human mind. Therefore, the need for a stable religious belief is also extremely important. Therefore is more important to explore a religious philosophy that can provide such a basis.

When viewed in a functional sense, it is understood that magic and occults are closely related to religious beliefs. But magic and occults are interpreted differently from religion by immediate and personal motives, correlated behaviors, coercive attitudes, tools, and mechanical action (Versnel, 1991)². Anthropologists, in particular, argue that this approach does not make a significant difference between religion and magic and that man's view of magic and sorcery is incompatible with other cultures (Subbotsky, 2014)³. On that basis, there is an opinion in religion that the use of magic and sorcery in religion should be completely avoided. Although religions and magical myths deal with the supernatural, those realms change as one seeks to understand the supernatural. Magic and occults based on worldliness are classified as white and white according to their uses and purposes. But it cannot build a universally justified foundation because it is based solely on individuality. Therefore, there is no room for such magic and occults in the religious belief context.

Research Methodology

The basic methodology of this study is the literature-based analytical methodology. In focusing only on the early phenomena of the Middle Ages, it is necessary to refer primarily to the documents presented in this regard. It does not deal directly with these issues, but indirectly accesses information from various publications commonly referred to as the "non-contact method". Furthermore, such studies should fully share information. But accurate information cannot be identified by a single source. Therefore, the information presented by the sources should first be examined using the comparative methodology and the correct knowledge should be explored through it. This study has been conducted on that basis.

Relationship between religion and occultism

If the belief system is easy for a man to understand, his religious vision will be simple and clear. This nature is a truth common to all religions. When he reaches a higher level of religious knowledge, his faith becomes knowledge. It is an epistemological theory. However, if such a basis does not exist, it will inevitably lead to the creation of occultism. It can be created on everything. It is the basis on which our study is based. Occultism is based on religious beliefs, which form the basis for witchcraft and magic. Before examining the relationship between religion and occultism, it is necessary to clarify occultism. It is because the basis for the emergence of magic, magical concepts are created through occultism.

Although it must be proved that it is impractical to limit God to its original meaning, this confusion should not exist. Not only is there a lack of sufficiently clear understanding of the essential difference between the gods of historical religions and the gods of metaphysics, but it is also a measure similar to the reluctance to accept a truth that is sometimes disliked. Thus, God is a belief based on devotion, prayer, meditation, beliefs built on the knowledge that is inaccessible to the intellect (Leuba, 1916)⁴.

God is generally regarded as the supreme being, the creator of the universe, and the chief creature of faith. God is usually conceived within the monotheistic framework as omnipotent, omnipresent, universal, eternal, and necessary. God is often

regarded as infinite, and the said attribute is related to the concepts of transcendence or impermanence. (Bordwell, 2002)⁵.

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, occultism, by its semantics, implies a connection with mystery. In philosophy, occultism is a growing system of religious orientation and the desire to have a close relationship with divinity and the orientation of the human soul. As a philosophical system, occultism is seen as the end of philosophy, and through meditation and love, the human soul is directly connected with the divine and seeks to determine the processes and means of achieving this (Thurston, H. (1912)⁶.

Thus, if the belief system is easy for a man to understand, his religious vision will be simple and clear. This nature is a truth common to all religions. When he reaches a higher level of religious knowledge, his faith becomes knowledge. It is an epistemological theory. However, if such a basis does not exist, it will inevitably lead to the creation of occultism. It can be created on everything. It is the basis on which our study is based. The foundations for witchcraft and sorcery are based on mystical beliefs.

According to world religious history, occult concepts were also created at the beginning of religion. The term occultism in use today is derived from the Greek language. Its meaning is concealment (Gellman, 2018)⁷. However, the practice of occultism dates to Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Indian, and Greco-Roman religious contexts. The Mesopotamian faith, one of the oldest religious systems globally, is as old as 6000 BC (Jacobsen, 2012)⁸. Heka, the founding god of the Egyptian religion, is the master of magic and art, and those beliefs date back to 6000 - 3150 BC (Mark, 2017)⁹. Indian religious concepts were created around 3000 BC (Sanghvi, 2013)¹⁰. According to Diogenes Laertius, the roots of Greco-Roman occultism are traced back to the seventh century BC (Shapero, 2000¹¹, Janowitz, 2001¹²). Religious occultism has a long history.

Magic is any activity that seeks to obtain an action from supernatural forces. Ordinary rational theory cannot be explained by law. It also has no explanation and depends entirely on subjective conditions. It depends on the work of the magician or the client. The results can be good or bad (Teijeiro, 1993)¹³.

It may be noted that some of the most prominent features of these magic also have in common (Meggitt, 2013)¹⁴. That is, nocturnal and secret practices, and the use of professionals such as practitioners such as sorcerers, sorcerers, and witches to use places associated with death for such magical acts, such as cemeteries, slaughterhouses, isolated caves, ruins, jungles, so forth., Sun or Moon centred times, specific plants, human or animal parts, books, dolls, tied strings, so forth. In addition to relationships with people whom magicians themselves have murdered, all the beneficial or harmful effects of magic are associated with magic and sorcery.

William James, who provides a clear definition of occultism, often uses the word occultism as a mere insult (James, 2002)¹⁵. Any concept, opinion, action, or opinion considered vague, vast, and emotional cannot be built logically. There is a mystical basis in any person who believes in exchanging thoughts or the soul's return. What is used in this way has little value and contains many words with vague synonyms. On this basis, he has put forward in his religious studies four verses that are subject to transition from religious practice to occultism. If a mood is esoteric, it is most negatively affected by inefficiency. The second is the intellectual condition without

prudence. Maintaining secrecy is not easy, in any case. Accordingly, it is always in transition. It is the third. Finally, if one's religious beliefs gradually deteriorate, one becomes indifferent. Accordingly, magical thought, which comes in many forms, is culturally universal and an important part of religion.

Magic and sorcery always abound in every society¹⁶. With the development of theological doctrines in the Western world, Christianity was conceptually separated from witchcraft and magic¹⁷. However, such a situation does not exist in the Asian region. According to religious principles, only scientifically proven and approved miracles are accepted. However, the magic rooted in folk beliefs or occult speculation was discarded. The result was a clear distinction between religious beliefs and magic. There was no fundamental difference between the religious practices and the magic practised by some writers and priests in the early days of Christianity.

Early Christianity and occultism

From a historical point of view, various religious traditions with occultism continued to function until the end of BC. Jesus Christ, who created a new era, gave a new perspective on traditional Judaism. Therefore, it must first be noted that the beginning of Christianity was not only a new religion but also a new one with a new moral basis (Morris, 1889)¹⁸ because he focused on the practical aspect of Judaism rather than based on a new religion. He did not create a new system of faith.

Christianity, if properly considered, is a system of ethics, not a system of beliefs. Christ did not teach any religion. He lived his life by presenting high ideas of morality. The doctrines he preached are full of evidence of the influence of the Hebrew faith shortly before, and there is no doubt that his early religious education came to fruition. Many of his statements have persecuted the faith, but some carry interpretations based on them. He was a moral teacher, pure and simple, and at the top of humanity as a teacher of moral ideas. His teachings were the simplest and most sublime, his life was the noblest and most self-sacrificing, and literature and history are presented to our view. However, he is not responsible for the tenets of Christianity.

The existing faith was maintained the same way, and the distant God worked to bring man closer. Accordingly, it must be acknowledged that the origins of Christianity are completely mystical and occult. It implies that religious thought began in a more philosophical form based solely on reason. How did various mystical and magical things become part of religion in such a context? That situation needs to be clarified. The apostles created Christianity through the teachings of Jesus Christ. After his death, they spent a slow period but were subjected to various influences on their reintegration into society (Morris, 1889)¹⁹. In presenting a new vision for a society that lived under the influence of Jewish and Roman influences, it makes an interpretation relative to existing beliefs instead of accepting those concepts in the same way. Although the apostles maintained a new doctrine in a certain way, there was a strong need for the Church Fathers to present new interpretations in the face of various contradictions. Some based the basic analysis and those who maintained the occult basis. Thus, Christianity developed as a new religion amidst many ancient and pagan ideas. Sometimes a minority has maintained a mystical basis with their teachings.

Accordingly, like the ancient religious beliefs, Christianity was a religion of mythology and various magical practices. Although there was a belief, there was a need to create various external and sacred objects to maintain them. It also created religious systems that created various rituals. By the fifth or sixth century, this condition was at its peak. There are various incidents related to this in the history of the Church. Here are two examples. Based on the fantastic imagination of the god Horus, a magical group has killed small children as a gift to the gods. Bishop Priscillian of Avila (340-385) was also heavily involved in such activities. He was accused of having night meetings with women, praying naked and practising witchcraft (Janowitz, 2001)²⁰.

While there is some degree of acceptance of witchcraft and sorcery in religion, there have been conflicts over eliminating sorcery. Such events can also be traced back to history. The other side could not produce works that could compete intellectually with the great mythological authors who dominated the empire. However, with the help of the authorities, they were discouraged. This strategy has been used especially because they could not control and accept a low status. This need led to the persecution of the Platonists under the Byzantine Emperor Valentine. However, a wonderful revival of superstition developed (Draper, 1875)²¹.

A political need arose to discourage the party that dominated the empire, as it was unable to produce works that could compete intellectually with the great Pagan authors and could not accept inferiority. This need led to the persecution of the Platonists under Valentine. They were charged with magic, and many of them were murdered. As a result, the profession of philosophy has become dangerous, and it is a state crime. However, instead, there was a strange attitude toward superstition.

According to universal law, such actions in the pagan world are judged by their motives. Acts such as divination or divination are not criminal offences under civil law. Seeing believes. However, malicious witchcraft is a crime under civil law. The Church Fathers realized that magicians and sorcerers could perform miracles. The Church Fathers also realized that such abilities came from the ancient pagan gods. However, any magical act considered, whether a civil crime or not, was considered a form of demon worship and a serious religious offence (Douglas, 2013)²². There has been evidence that religions have subdued magicians in this way throughout history. However, the Church's intervention to oppose and prosecute those who believe in magic has changed due to public pressure and calls for action.

During the first three centuries, religious debates within the Roman Empire focused on appropriate and inappropriate magical practices, most notably in religion and beyond. In those days, magic was used to describe religious practices conducted by outsiders who did not conform to their belief system. For example, Christian and Greco-Roman writers denounced Jewish practices such as fasting, food restrictions, and the observance of the Sabbath. Jews and Christians magically denounced Roman pagan ideological rites (Janowitz, 2001)²³.

Many at the time saw the conversion of St. Justin's to Christianity as a departure from witchcraft and occultism. This event was recognized as a powerful turning point on a scientific basis. As Pliny noted, they subtly disguise themselves in this old application of magic in contemporary society. Such foundations may have influenced Christian thinkers in various ways. The founding Church does not represent a complete liberation from magic. That is why such submissions have taken place from time to time. Justin's inquiries were merely philosophical and were far more powerful than his predecessors. Therefore, this foundation is considered the

beginning of Christian philosophy. He, who gave a clear answer to the objection presented by Christ as a magician, explains that the powerful works of Christ are different from the magic of secular people. He built a solid foundation that what he prophesied before Christ was born into this world is not worldly (Falls, 2008)²⁴.

From the earliest times, many church fathers sought to remove the religious confusion caused by the spread of sorcery in society and the influx of many Christians. St. Irenaeus in Lyon was a church action that caused some opposition to magical practices. From the earliest times, many church fathers sought to remove the religious confusion caused by the spread of sorcery in society and the influx of many Christians. Irenaeus regarded pagans only as pagans because his real battle was with other Christians. He linked the metaphysical and magician interpretations to marginalize their followers, including Simon, Menander, Carpocrates, and Basilides. With every possible fake word he finds, the then Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius is described as the foremost magician and forerunner of the Antichrist among the magical scams (Scaff, 2019)²⁵. Irenaeus' teachings on magic were vital in propagating the Christian faith and retaining them. However, he was not directly involved in a conflict with paganism regarding magic and sorcery (Janowitz, 2001)²⁶.

St Irenaeus used the illusion of magic to explain that enemies thrive on the help of demons easily. However, there is a hidden point. That is, enemies have supernatural powers that bring them success. However, these forces have both negative and negative consequences. He points out that magic works as knowledge gained from Satan (Scaff, 2019)²⁷. However, he assures us that success is not God's work. He concluded that seeing God through good faith is the most powerful of all.

Writers who did not hold major positions and Christian writers who were not so interested in authority matters maintained various practices regarding magic and sorcery. Janowitz points to, for example, the inconsistencies in St. Clément's of Alexandria prose essays. She points out that the goddess who heals the sick receives the divine inspiration of sick souls and that her love is directed to men through love attraction. St. Clement did not doubt the magical workings. According to him, we should also consider what is known as the curriculum of studies presented in the appendix. Its top sciences include mathematics, magic, and the occult (Ferguson, 1991)²⁸. He contacted the inquiries of Greek philosophers before him and studied the studies of foreign magicians and intellectuals among them (Janowitz, 2001)²⁹.

Apologetic philosophers who defended Christianity and Christianity against magical accusations came forward to defend Christian texts and Christian practices widely. Protect practices are often indistinguishable from prohibited ones because it was not enough for you to do magic and sorcery and say I do not. The basis for classifying was whether an action was magical or not needed to be presented in some detail.

Origen's answer to the Greek-Roman writer Celsus' denial of antichristian attacks can be found in his book *Contra Celsum* (Chadwick, 1991)³⁰. Origen rejected the teachings of St. Irenaeus in vain and regarded some of its teachings as mere tactics. For example, Origen focuses on Celsus's mysterious events about a Jew in his book. In addition, Origen says he spent some time in Egypt learning about certain miracles. Janowitz believes this may have been Origen's ploy (Janowitz, 2001)³¹.

Real magic and sorcery are far more serious than such tactics. If this were done in Egypt, it would mean a confusing situation in theology. Instead, it has taken the form of theology in a different direction. Such actions involve the operation of a supernatural force in the eyes of the observer. Witchcraft and sorcery are contrary to belief in God because they are the work of Satan. So, these will be just tricks.

However, in response to this Jewish objection, God must manifest His divinity and punish them. He attributes this to God's protection (Chadwick, 2010)³². He may have had to build such a foundation because the opposition was mighty. As Christians, especially as the Greeks answer, we need to answer more. However, Origen Celsus's research says that the support of demons is important for future healing and its knowledge.

The Christian Foundation of Release from Magical Activities

Rome accepted Christianity in line with Constantine the Great's Christian orientation. The Christian contribution to his victory was profound. However, Roman magic did not affect their existence as it did not affect them. Emperor Julian's intention to re-establish Roman religious beliefs was temporary (Downey, 1939)³³ and Emperor Gratian realized the need to formally create Rome on a Christian basis with St. Ambrose of Milan (Radde-Gallwitz, 2018)³⁴. Rome converted Christianity by the Emperor Theodosius' the Edict of Thessalonica in 380 (Morrall, 1954)³⁵. The result was an unprecedented level of authority to the Christian Church. It also gave them the legal power to oppose magical and occult practices. In addition, it can identify the basis for Christianity's withdrawal from magical practices. The law was first enacted during the Priscillian of Avilla crisis (Markauskas, 2015)³⁶.

Conclusion

Thus, there were many problems in dealing with other powerful cultures in the early days of the religion. Although there are various factors in analyzing the faith and reason we are discussing today, religious beliefs can sustain such a foundation early. Although some philosophical founding fathers have argued in this regard, it is extremely difficult to respond to various contradictions and defend existing beliefs about such magical practices that have become so socially and culturally pervasive. The new follower who accepts the religious belief is not completely detached from the existing religious belief. He once defended both beliefs. Its differences are due to the knowledge he builds on the new faith. Therefore, it must be acknowledged that early Christianity had no scientific background and could not escape the occult, sorcery, and sorcery that existed in society.

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