

2. There are hundreds of superstitions which survive in various parts of the country, and the story of them is rather amusing. We are told, for example, that it is unlucky to point to the new moon or to look at it through glass, but if we bow nine times to it we shall have a lucky month.

Now suppose you tell a scientist that you believe a certain superstition — let us say, that the howling of a dog is a sign of death. The scientist will immediately require evidence before he can accept your belief. He will want figures to prove it. It will be useless to quote two or three cases; he will want hundreds. He will want also to know (a) if it ever happens that the howling of dogs is not followed by a death, (b) if ever a person's death is predicted by the howling of dogs. The answer to the former question is in the affirmative, and to the latter in the negative. Your superstition will not bear investigation. It may impress an ignorant person; but it cannot face the light of facts. Your case would not carry conviction in a court of law. . . . 10

Apart from this process of testing by results, any intelligent man will want to know the "reason why". What connection can there be between a howling dog and an approaching death? Can it be cause and effect? Can it be that the dog has a gift of foreseeing such events? Or is the dog the instrument employed by some uncanny power that moves invisibly in our midst?

— is one of the most wonderful practices among those who think that they can afford



Superstitions and Rational Minds

People in various regions hold amusing, but irrational beliefs, such as bowing before the moon is considered lucky, while howling of a dog is taken as a sign of death. These illogical beliefs easily impress ordinary people, especially the illiterate ones. In contrast, scientists will demand substantial evidence to accept any false belief. A few pieces of evidence would not be enough, but significant statistical proofs will be required. Thus, rational minds always seek evidence rather than blindly accepting the false beliefs.

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