

THE USE OF "POWER-WORDS" IN ANIMISTIC TUGEN WORLDVIEW IN LIGHT OF BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVES

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Cite this article in APA

Kigen, J. (2022). The use of "power-words" in animistic Tugen worldview in light of biblical perspectives. *Journal of pastoral and practical theology*, 1(1), 35-40. <https://doi.org/10.51317/jppt.v1i1.325>



A publication of Editon
Consortium Publishing (online)

Article history

Received: 27.10.2022

Accepted: 13.12.2022

Published: 16.12.2022

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online



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Abstract

This study sought to examine the phenomena of Power-Words which have significant power to exert control of both the physical and spiritual or invisible realm. Power-Words have power beyond the ordinary speech of communicating ideas. It is direct and does not need meditation. The study found that Power-Words are said to have inherent power to deal with all realms of life. They are used in the animistic worldview for protection, provision and treatment against the exigencies of life experienced in the physical and spiritual world. In the use of Power-Words, the findings observed that a careful application of Power-Words is needed so as to avoid a syncretistic attitude that enters the biblical worldview from an animistic worldview which presupposes the sovereignty of man where he plans what is desirable for oneself in his environment. Man becomes God for himself or becomes co-equal with God, which is a humanistic attitude of trying to achieve one's own desired goals. This is a false authority in handling and working out one's own destiny. This piece of work concludes that God cannot be manipulated in any form or any means. God will not share his glory with man; hence Power-Words used by man without acknowledging the sovereignty of God are contrary to the character and nature of God.

Key terms: Animism, words, worldview.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The secular worldview affirms that all there is in life is what can be seen and experienced with the physical senses and has nothing to do with spiritual realms because it cannot be perceived by man's natural senses. This, to some extent, has produced techno-scientific advancements which have radically affected the quality of human life for the better, leading to the spirit of humanism pushing God out of human life regarding his salvation to be within the realm of his cognitive which is a Gnostic mindset. Here man does not need a god to deal with the challenges of life.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The animistic worldview perceives all of life to be spiritual; hence the material world is to submit and subscribe to the spiritual world, which controls everything in life, hence the need for man to secure spiritual power in which the use of Power-Words is one of such means. Biblical worldview emphasises both the material world and the spiritual world, where the Bible looks at the matter as good and man being made in the image of God. It points out that all creation is to glorify God since God is the controller of the universe who established both physical and moral laws by which he operates and to which man must respond willingly. Here spirit beings do influence life, with Satan being a deceiver and destroyer out to usurp human dominion and authority.

Some of the phenomenological features of the practice of animism are the exercise of controlling both physical and spiritual realms, especially in handling stressful life challenges to the "known meaningful" worldview. This can be done by the use of the following: words, symbolism, magic, charms, fetishes, witchcraft and sorcery. The phenomena of Power- Words have significant power to exert control of both the physical and spiritual or invisible realm. Power-Words have power beyond the ordinary speech of communicating ideas. It is direct and does not need meditation. Power-Words are said to have inherent power to deal with all realms of life.

3.0 RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Power-Words in Tugen Animistic Worldview

Use of ritual language

According to an interview with Elder Wilson Chebii, Cheberen Location –Katabwa village, Words have magic power, especially when they are used in the right way, which will produce the desired results. Using the words of invocation, the specialist commands the malevolent spirit of illness and destruction to leave the sick person. This will create an exchange of the life of the animal for the life of the patient implying the impact of innate power words:

According to an interview with Elder Chebii (2022), Cheberen Location–Katabwa village says that when there is drought, men will go to a hilly place belonging to a particular elder, then a sheep is strangled, and a special kind of tree is identified for the making of fire. The skin is then put into the fire, which will generate a lot of fire that will illuminate covering a wide area to be seen by the village, then the elders will sing a foreign song, "wooeYaahaahaya...", then followed by "we are in a holy alter" three times. The fourth time is repeated but is ended with a response of "hoo...." After this, it alleged that rain would fall immediately.

Our observation here is that the use of repetitive singing will ascribe words magical properties, and it must follow prescribed intonations, certain formulas coupled with employing the holy names of the deity will compel the deity to respond by giving the rain away. This agrees with the findings of Musk that when certain formulas are probably followed with the involvement of the deity, then the evil spirit will be driven away (Musk, 1979). The words are intoned with a strong, melodious cadence (rhythm) and are repeated over and over again with a persuasive voice so as to exert magical power. It is unnecessary to know what the words mean (Steyne, 1989:106).

Using the Names of the Deity

For successful travel, one will bless the other person using the names of God by saying, "be blessed by Chepkojor or Chebokipkoyo or Cheptalel". On successful arrival, "Thanks, Chepkojor or Chebokipkoyo or Cheptalel". In times of drought, women do assemble in a particular special tree and pour milk, millet and wild fruits and thereafter, with a loud voice, call the names of God, "Please Chepkojor, please Chebokipkoyo, please Cheptalel, please release for us KorikabBeei (house full of water)". It is alleged that rain will fall immediately.

In Case of Curses

Power-Words have special efficacy in producing the desired results within or without a person to bring wholeness of life or adverse effects as asserted by elder Wilson Chebii, "I curse you for going down the cliff and not to come back again to this world". To reverse such a curse, the cursed victim has to offer the following: traditional honey brew is to be poured into a special calabash. The person who pronounced the curse would take the drink into his mouth and then spill out all over the body of the victim while mentioning the following words: Sere Kutinyu (receive blessing from my mouth); Sere Kutitapmwau (receive blessing from my mouth of oil), sere Kutitapkosomnyon (receive blessing from my honey- mouth) while the old men present and one elderly woman will respond by noting their heads and saying, "uuu". In this ritual language, no payment is made. This will make the sick person get back to the wholeness of life or well.

In the Case of Sickness

A specialist is invited in the presence of 10 relatives come to perform a special ritual: a small pyramid constructed comprising of several sticks. After completion, the specialist, in a loud voice, will pronounce the following words, "We know that you have come to bring destruction in the life of so and so (Kigen), so disappear from this person (Kigen) and miss your way."

When a newborn child is born with certain deformities like unusual cries and deformed scars, then the elders will examine the child's body, then place tobacco at the nose of the child as well as calling the names (Taprantich, Tabunei, Kimoi, ArapTuitoock 'we have to identify you) of the relatives that have such marks twice and if the child stops crying or sneezes, then the child is given the responding to the one the child has responded to. In case of a deep hole in the child's body, it is believed it will get healed after between three and seven days.

In Case of Impotency or Barrenness

For impotency that is related to nerve issues, a specialist will instruct the killing of a sacrificial animal with the skin of the animal inserted into the left hand of the victim with the taking of certain herbs. But if the

impotency is from a powerful spirit, the victim is to lie on the skin of the sacrificial animal then he is carried to a nearby river. Reaching the river, the elders will use sticks to beat the waters and thereafter throw away the sticks shouting, "You evil spirit be carried away by the waters and never come back again". After this, the person is removed from the skin. The barren woman brings traditional brew, and one elder will spill over her stomach, and the men will pronounce foreign words, BoietMoise; ois ale ois, and all will respond, KiingKoleKiing as the women make melodious sounds by rubbing their metal instruments in their forearms. Then another elder will say, Jijo, Jijo, and all the women will spread their hands together with the barren woman.

On identification of the Owner of the Child

If the child is suspected of having been given the wrong clan name while he belongs to another clan, then the clan elders are called. A ritual is conducted with milk being poured on cow dung, and the uncle will say the following words twice: "KosorekKetKabkelien, Kasorkanaoloo" (Let there be a hole in this 'particular family tree'). It is alleged that within three to seven days, the identification of the child will be known by either the mother getting sick or the child, which will make the mother confess to the elders the right clan of the child.

In Cases of Curses

Curses are binding and should be reversed to nullify their effects. If a daughter disobeys the parents in case of marriage and the father pronounces the following words, "Go forever and do not come back to my home again". It is alleged that such words have great effects. If the daughter comes back in need of blessing, then the clan elders are called, and the father will bless her by saying certain foreign words, "usig ne kuis".

Blessings for Long Life

Preparation of the traditional brew and milk. The uncle will spill the milk around the neck and the head and then say the following words, "KobitKatit or Kibokat, (may your neck grow) Iyobtoi (will grow), Iwekeny (long life), sere (blessings) and the participants will respond in a foreign language, "NgabuWowu, ais, Kiing". After three days, the age set will take the person to the river to bathe. He or she will then return to the homestead.

Power Words in the Bible

The spoken words or proclamations have power. Proclamation is a Latin word meaning "to shout forth or, in other words, to confess or say the same as". The Bible approves the direct attribute of the Godhead to have powerful words, who, by the power of His Word, created the universe out of nothing (nihilum). God is the initiator of power-Words as in creation, "then God said, let be light, let be space between the waters, let water beneath the sky, let the earth sprout with vegetation, let the light appear in the sky, let the waters swarm with fish and other life, and let the earth produce every sort of animals and it was so (Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24). Here we see that God says or speaks and things happen.

King Barak had faith in Power-Words and sought Balaam to curse the people of Israel (Numbers 22:23ff). Balaam sought to speak evil on God's own people, but God controlled his speech, but Balaam was full of covetousness and greed against God's will. In signing one's death sentence, care needs to be observed in the use Power-Words.

In the Tugen World view of where spiritual warfare is everywhere, it's imperative for Christians to raise the shield of faith found in the person of Christ and fight the demonic forces at work in this world (Eph. 6:10-19). Jesus defeated and disarmed the demonic powers on the cross (Col.2:14-15; Eph. 1:20-21; Ro. 8:38-39). The reason for Christ's coming was to destroy the work of the devil (1 John 3:8). Christ's triumph and His Lordship over the powers is key to understanding the powers. Jesus has authority over Satan and his demons as well as Satan's attack (Matt. 4:1-11; 16:21-23; 12:26, 38).

The Effects of Curses or Blessings in the Bible

Curses are considered to be Power-Words when directed towards people or things. Pronouncing cursing words was employed by Jesus. Jesus cursed the fig tree, "May you never bear fruit again!" (Matthew 21:18-22). But why did Jesus curse the tree to wither? He reveals the reason in his response: Truly I say to you if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you what I did to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea', it will happen. And all the things you ask in prayer, having faith, you will receive (Matthew 21:21, 22). Here Jesus is repeating the point he made earlier about being able to move a mountain (difficult situation). This is possible when we have a covenant relationship with God.

In the Case of Sickness

Jesus commanded the centurion for such great faith in the power of words. But the officer said, "Lord, I am I am not worthy to have you come into my home. Just say the word from where you are, and my servant will be healed" (Matthew 8:8). One may say to the mountain (difficult problem), "May you be lifted up and be thrown to the sea and it will happen...." This will depend on one's faith in God. Power-Words are in our mouths (Mark 11:23). Jesus assured his disciples that if his word abides in them, then they will get whatsoever they ask in Jesus' name (John 15:7).

This implies total commitment and relationship of an individual with God is required. No obstacle will stand before an individual who confides his faith in God. In Christianity, believers are instructed to say what God has said in his word, which will release the Power-Words in a supernatural manner because it is the Word of God proclaimed by believers which effects a victorious living in the life of the believers as well as those who need deliverance from a difficult situation, circumstance or in a particular crisis in life. The blessing of God comes with our mouths' confession, as this will release the authority found in the name of Jesus.

Use of Repetitive Words in Singing

God's words are Power-Words as believers praise God in their mouths with singing bringing victory, which is the glorious privilege of God's faithful children (Psalms 149:1-9). Power-Words to God bring joy and peace (Psalms 4:1-9). The power-Words of God accomplish the targeted problem: the problem of sickness and death ((Psalms 107:20; Isaiah 55:11). The Power-Words of God will defeat the powers and principalities of the devil. Believers in God will open their mouths and will achieve their desired results.

Using the names of God in Power-Words

David used Power-Words in defeating the giant Goliath, "...But I come to you in the name of the Lord of heaven...." These Power-Words, in the name of the Lord of heaven, ended the life of Goliath (Sam. 17:45). In Christianity, a prayer addressed to God is done in an intelligent manner like the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9-

13). In Christianity, the names of God are used, like using the names of Jesus, to produce a powerful effect. Probably the greatest mistake the seven sons of Sceva made was their failure to realise that Paul was not doing the exorcisms (Acts 19:13-16). Jesus Christ was doing the exorcisms through Paul, and more so, they had no relationship with God of Jesus Christ. They mistook the authority God gave to his servant Paul for power inherent in his servant's word. Demons recognise valid authority, and they fear God. The authority over demons, in this case, belongs only to Jesus. The sons of Sceva were not believers in Christ. The seven sons of Sceva (from a Jewish Chief priest parentage) used to practice divination but were not of God but controlled by powerful forces of Satan. They use their own formula or incantation, which they cooked up by observing Paul (Ingram, 2015).

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

Power-Words are present in the animistic Tugen worldview. They are used for protection, provision and treatment against the exigencies of life experienced in the physical and spiritual world. There is a need to avoid the syncretistic attitude that enters a biblical worldview from an animistic Tugen world view which presupposes the sovereignty of man where he plans what is desired for him in his environment; hence he becomes God of himself or becomes co-equal with God begin putting faith in means which will facilitate and enable the achievement of his own desired goals. The Bible calls this approach a false authority to handle and work out one's own destiny apart from God. God cannot be manipulated in any form or any means, as seen by the disastrous effects on the seven sons of Sceva as well as Balaam. God is the imitator of Power-Words, as indicated in the book of Genesis and not man. Power-Words used by man without acknowledging the sovereignty of God are contrary to the character and nature of God.

God will not share his glory with man. Jesus came to provide life in fullness (John 10:10). Throughout the Bible, God reveals Himself to man as the God who moves powerfully in the history of mankind. He empowers man for life and goodness in the person of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:3). This involves power encounters which makes Christianity objectively true in Tugen's worldview as he lives a life of goodness and victory over all principalities and powers. Jesus Christ has triumphed over Satan in his death, resurrection and ascension, and he is Lord over all principalities and powers who alone is the Lamb of God slain for his people's sin and redemption of all people and nations and he alone is worthy to open the scroll and to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honour, glory and blessings (Revelation 5:9-13; Luke 4:18; Colossians 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8).

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