

GENERAL VIEW ON THE RITUAL OF “POMANA DE VIU”/ALMS FOR LIVING PERSONS

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There are from the early times many rituals practices bound to the main moments of life if we speak about Romanians or other peoples: birth, marriage, death. We consider those what are bound to death as the most important among all, and they develop according to rules imposed by faith and habitudes.

The cult of dead persons is a result of how the human beings figured a future world or how they considered the immortality of soul, as well as how they believed that death did not mean a total destroying of the being itself.

It was not an isolated issue, it was determined by a certain social and economic context after the first division of work between shepherds and farmers.

The cult of dead persons was all the pre-history time confused with the ancestors' cult. The last ones were those to receive the sacrifices and prayers as the unique thanks they could have in their new existence. The offers were intended to calm the vindictive thoughts of the ancestors and in the same time to obtain a support that the human persons needed on the earth.

The living person could exist without the dead one, they said, and also the dead one without the living one. It was the way to create a strong bound among all the generations of one and the same family, and it was an indissoluble corpus.

That attitude against death of the antique death of the antique peoples is also to be met at the contemporary peoples, with different trends from people to people. And this fact is a result of a lot of economic and social movements affecting the spiritual life, from the change of people's conceptions and practices' disappearing to their action for the reasons of tradition.

As trying to believe in their illusion of life after death, people inserted the rituals to create optimal conditions for the dead persons to go on with their existence in that new world that they always arrive in. So, after the ceremony, a lot practices are developed, and we know them as “pomeni” (alms).

The people's image on death consists, regularly, in a long travelling of the soul and the dead persons must be ready for. Consequently, a simple solution was to be found that one to give to somebody the things, which the dead would

need, and to transfer them into the transcendental area. These objects destined to satisfy the different dead persons' asking are to be transposed into the alms' practice. The alms themselves must be considered as alms for the dead person (after the burial), and the large alms for all the family's ancestors on the occasion of different feasts. But a special category in this field is the ritual of almost for a living person. It could be met all along the country, even as reminiscences of the former cult.

The Romanian peasant at a certain age makes such alms for himself or herself in order to assure his (her), future way after death, as he (she) may be not so very sure on his (her) successors' care for him (her). We may understand that the old persons carry for how the future generations would respect the local traditions and ritual. This special ritual has a similar function with the proper alms, a similar development, and similar effects to the human being's good and reach way after death, as his (her) life on earth used to be.

The ritual according to people's traditional rules is nowadays interesting both for the reminiscences of cult of death and for the spectacular forms it has. It must be taken for a large and brilliant ceremony to integrate the local community and remind the people their duty for the so-called "existence after death", and also to certify this future way of "living" not any when but during their real living time.