

Definitions starting with O: Obeah

Obeah in the Bahamas is not a religion like voodoo in Haiti, but the two do have elements in common. Both involve a belief in magic that a practitioner can use to help his clients or harm their enemies. In fact, Bahamians sometimes consult [HITIANS](#) known to [WORK WITCH](#). Especially on the more remote islands of the Bahamas, the [BUSH DOCTOR](#) or [GRANNY](#) may practise not only [BUSH MEDICINE](#) but also EYAK or Moro.

Often this is nothing more complicated than [DRESSING](#) a fruit tree Or field to protect the crop from thieves. [STUFFS](#) like [CROSS-ROAD DIRT](#) and [FOOT GRASS](#) are used to protect women when they are [BIG](#) or iii [STRAWBED](#). An [OBEAH MAN](#) can also help in affairs of the heart, concocting [CUCKOO SOUP](#) to snare a sweetheart or [FIX](#) an unfaithful husband. Such a [WITCHMAN](#) can [TAME](#) people with [MACASEE](#) or bring misfortune to them by [BURNING BAD-LAMP](#) or calling the [SPERITS](#) for aid. If a person thinks he is being [CARRIED DOWN](#) or [CROSSED](#) by a [DOSE](#), he can go to a [DOCTOR](#) for a [GUARD](#). If it is feared that a [ROOT DOCTOR](#) intends to put a ghost on some-one, it is best to [SPIKE DOWN](#) the coffin of a [DEAD](#) to prevent him from [TRAVELLING](#). If a [SPERIT](#) should [CHANT](#) a house, the rooms can be [SMOKE](#) and the doors and windows protected with [BENNY](#). [HAGS](#) wanting to get in to [RIDE](#) sleeping people must count these before entering, but cannot say "ten" (the Roman numeral X having the protective power of the Christian cross) and will have to start counting over again and again; hence the magic protective force of the chant, '[TEN,TEN,THE BIBLE TEN!](#)

The practice of [OBEAH](#) has always been sup-pressed and was even made illegal at one time, but belief in it persists. With the recent influx of Haitian refugees, its practice may even be growing. See McCartney 1976.

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