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TOPIC: SHAME

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There are many things that can bring shame to a person. One common example of this is say I lied to a person about something or I promised to bring him something, but I did not do it as he was expecting it from me. I feel fuiltly about it and this is what that is going to bring shame to me because I lied to him. I avoid him wherever I go and I hardly talk to him during those days that follow.

There is another form of shame that can occurs between two villages, or between two families, and it can affect the whole village itself. This is one of the serious things which when done can bring shame to all it's people. This one happens when there is a marriage between two people. There is a young girl in our family and someone from another family comes to us to perfrom the ceremony of TABAILAGO TAKI this is when they ask if they could have this girl to become the wife of a young man from their family. It can be five years in between before the actual wedding takes place. They are going to do everything for the girl and the girl is going to be restricted from doing certain things. The day came when they have the actual wedding, everything is ready, the magiti from boths sideds are being prepared and presented to the people concern. The girls side does all they are expected to do, so it is for the boy's side too. They are going to do

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everything perfectly. Everything that is done during a wedding in the Fijian way of course is going on smoothly and well. Then comes the time when the most serious case of all shame affects the people concern.

The two people who got married are going to spend the first night and the other threes to follow together. In the house where they are going to sleep there are going to be some ladies inside the house too watching them. There could be three or more than that and when morning comes of the next day, then they are going to learn whether this young girl was still a virgin when she got married or not. But if the morning when they go to the house and they are revealed that she has already been sleeping around with some other man rather than her first husband, this is when the shame is going to hover all the people from the girl's side, the people who came to her wedding, and those who are going to hear from the others as to how the wedding went, are going to really feel ashamed of themselves. As soon as they learnt that this is not the first time for her to sleep with a man, then they are going to make something to tell the rest of the people that she wasn't a virgin when she came to husband. It is alright if just a few people knows about the fact, but when everyone knows about it, it is going to be a real embarrassment and a real heavy shame for the people concern. This is what they are going to do, they are going to get a pig, kill it and then they tie the nose, ears removed, the rear end exposed and some other things which the Fijian people know of it's meaning. In the olden days, when they do this sort of thing, they often

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close the rear end up which they opened with leaves, but this time, there is nothing to close it up, it is all exposed. You can see the other side of the pig because of the big hole which they made at the rear end, and this means that the girl had already slept with a man before she came to live with her husband. She was not a virgin. The big shame is going to be on the girl's side, they are not going to stay any minute longer at the place where they have the wedding, they do not even ask permission to leave, they leave immediately as soon as the truth about their daughter is revealed. They do not let the other people know that they are leaving, they just slip away unnoticed. This is because they do not like what they have learnt about their girl who got married to this boy. They say that all the things they did is useless because of the condition of the girl when she married the man. They say that they present to the men's side something that already been used by someone else and it is not worth of all the hard work which they did to make the wedding a success. This is shown by the pig which the boy's side is going to present to the girl's side after four or the first night itself. The food which is presented to show this, is for the two people's breakfast and when they see this, they know that this is all for nothing. This is one of the greatest of all shame that can affect a large group of people, it could be the whole village, it could be a mataqali and also it could mean separation between two families and all that unless they do not want to take it seriously and just forget it after a short period. But the people from the girl's side, is going to feel awful all the time and there is always this guilty conscious on the parents mind that they

did not do their part well in the marriage of their daughter to this man who arranged everything in the first place. This is one of the shame that has ~~ggt~~ a large effect on marriage life. In the olden days, it is very hard for you to see a girl being spoiled from another man before she goes to her real husband, this is a ~~very~~^{rar} rare thing to come across. When they get married, it is going to be the first time for her when ~~she~~ is going to sleep with her husband and on the night ~~when~~ they got married. It is a time of happiness, joy and rejoicing between all the people concern. Also there is a time when the two families are going to get together and they talk about the time of their wedding and all that. Then comes the time when she gets married and gives birth either to a baby girl or to a baby boy. They are also going to do all they can for the new baby because they know that when they had that wedding, the mother was a very honest thing and also she was the first woman or the husband was the first man to spoil her virginity. They do all the things to spoil her on the night of her giving birth to her baby, the ladies are going prepare mats for the place where she is going to sleep and also they have some other mats which they are going to use for carrying the baby and it is going to be this way for the next eight days. ~~The~~ The baby is not going to be laid on the floor they keep holding the baby until the eighth night is over. There would be quite a crowd of women inside the house, closely related to the man and the women of course, they are going to help each other in the carrying of the baby during those nights. On the tenth night, then they are going to have this things of taking the mother to have her bath and all that. They have

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all the things done in a way of spoiling this new mother. When the time comes for her to give birth, they have already prepared the things for her and also there is a time when they are going to do other sort of things like games to make her feel accepted and happy of this marriage, so that she does not have any regrets because they only have arranged marriage, in the olden days. There is a game which they play and that is they are going to take the skins of the taro stems and they spill it at the house where the young unmarried men used to sleep, and then they are going to try and catch these ladies who brought all these and they pretend to hit them hard with it, it is all in the game of respecting the women and the baby and the father also. This is like to keep them itchy all the time, because the taro leaves and the stems are two itchy things when it touches the skin. This are all that they do when a baby is born and it goes on for ten whole days and nights. They spread out mats like the COCO for the baby's bed and also the same thing is done for the mother. They carry the baby and some women might decide to perform a meke some time later, and this is to show how happy it is for the women to give birth soon to the man whom she married. Once she gives birth, the people are going to wait and listen as to whether it is a baby girl or baby boy, but both are accepted in the family as long as she gives birth to a child, this is something to the boy's family. They all expect their sons to marry women who are able to provide children for the men. There is something which they refer to as VEIDREVULA, and only our ancestors knows of these things. But today, people are not observing

these things which our ancestors did during their time and age.

- You were telling me a form of shame which can affect a lot of people and this works out only if the girl is not as perfect as expected from the boy's side. Could you tell me some other forms of shame that can befall a person or a lot of people are involved in it?

These are some of the common things that can bring about shame to a person only. One is if I lie to someone, I promised to bring him something or to do something for him but I did not do it. I might promise to bring this to you but I did not bring it to you. Or there is something from the old days which happened, say I go to my neighbour's house and I ask her if she could give me a tabua because I have something important going on at home and I do not have one to present to the people when they come to my house. He is going to give me one and he expects me to repay it after I have done my engagement and when I have it too. But it might take a long time for me to try and repay this other man who helped me out in the first place. When I go out to repay this to him, I am going to say...THIS IS MY DIRIKI for the tabua I gave you gave me the time I had none. But this fellow forgot all about this tabua and it was a long time after before he remembered it again that he had not repaid his debt to his neighbour. When he meets this person anywhere, he is going to avoid his eyes and many times he keeps away from this person's house because he is ashamed of what he did, that is not repaying it on time when she had it with her or with him. If he meets this person anywhere, he might just wish for the soil to swallow him up

because of the guiltiness that swept over him which also brings shame to him. Then when the time comes for him to repay the tabua this young man gave him, he is going to ask him to forgive him for what he has done because he did not do what he promised him he would do after he had use that tabua which he gave him. This is a custom between the people, when you give a tabua to someone, that person is expected to pay you back when she has it and she has to try and make it soon too. They have their own reasons for these things which they do. Like if they are going to ask someone to borrow their boat, after using their boat they are going to take it up to dry land, clean it and make any repairs if it needs repair and then they are going to return it to the owners again. They have their own ways of repaying people for their services and of their help in the olden days, but when someone do not repay the other person ~~ga~~ for all that they've done for that person, than he is going to feel this shame all the time he meets up with the other guy who helped him out. And when they go out to ask for something, it is there on their mind that either they have to return what they asked to use, or try to repay it also. If they do not do these things, then they are going to be filled with shame all the time they remember it.

- There is also another form of shame which I heard that happens to a person when he hears some bad news about something, maybe it concerns himself too. Could you tell me something about this? This is called ROGOVALE. Say there is one of us who stays in a house and I come and try to cause trouble in your family, when I have done this wrong to your family, it is going to

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cause a real disturbance in that family. When this happens, the family whose been spoiled, they can really attack this other people after they've realised of what the other people did. They can destroy some of them and this also goes as far as these people's plantation, they destroy it and everything they own is going to be spoiled by these people. The shame is going on to be on the family of the man who did that something wrong.

- There is also one shame that I heard from some people and they do not know whether it is something that was meant to be done or it is just the way it is. This is when the chief is there and they do not even try to talk to the chief they say that they are ashamed to talk to the chief. What can you say about this?

This is not actually a shame but is a way of their showing their respect to the chief. When the chief is there, they won't try to talk to him to try and gain things from him, they are going to keep quiet unless the chief talks to them. Only when the chief talks to them, could they reply to him and talk with him, it is different if the chief asks them to come and talk with him, but if he doesn't make this sort of move, then the villagers are going to remain silent and sit there waiting for whatever orders the chief might give them. The chief is the beginning of all the things that is going to happen next. The people are not allowed to talk any time they feel like when the chief is there inside their house.

In the olden days, there is a special house which is build on a special place for the chief and the rest of his household. As for anyone who wants anything from the chief, there is a

PERSON here on the village who is going to take up to the chief anything that the people in the village wants or ask the chief to do. This is the custom here in this village, no one is allowed to go straight to the chief's house and tells him of what he or she wants, it has to go through this first person before the chief actually comes to know of it. If we want to go and visit the chief or if we want to see him because of something important, still we have to go to this person and he is the one who is going to take up to the chief's house. He learns of this things first before the chief is notified of what the people wants. It is a real shame if someone just go straight to the chief's house and see the chief, it is not accepted in a Fijian society for people to do this. It has to go through this one person before the chief is informed. No one is allowed to please himself when he is going to see the chief, this is a shame to the person who tries to do it. Also, the chief won't know you or where you come from unless you were accompanied by this one ma, who is going to introduce you to the chief and inform the chief the purpose of your visit. If you do not follow the way that was followed by our ancestors, then it is you yourself who is bringing all the shame to you and your people.

- You were telling me that if someone does something wrong that is not accepted in society, they are going to do this thing called the BULUBULU or something. Could you elaborate more on that and explain everything that is done when people does this act of doing wrong and wants to get things straight again? You were telling me that the serious of all shame that can

man's side have the right to lay their claims on the girl's young sister, one who is younger than her and not yet married. This is a very shameful thing to do and it brings shame both to the parents and the relatives. They did not expect that thing to happen, since they cannot do anything now, all they have to do is to sacrifice their other daughter to go and be that man's wife. This is all due to the girl's fault and it can also be laid on the parents for not taking care of their daughter. The man does not want anything that has been used by someone else to be his, he wants the whole thing to belong to him, so the only thing to do to remove that shame is for them to give their other daughter to be the man's wife, when they do this, then the past is forgotten and all is well again.

- You were telling me that another thing that causes shame to befall on a person when he lies to someone or he didn't fulfill his promise. Is he going to stay the same way all throughout the rest of his life, or is he going to do something to try to get rid of the shame that befalls him.

When I do something wrong, that is I lied to my friend or one of my relatives, I am going to feel ashamed of it afterwards. The other person might not remember it after sometimes, but as for me it is always there haunting me and later on it can destroy the relationship which is between me and the other fellow. I won't forget what I did to him and I am going to avoid him at all times which can create a gap between his contact with me. The only thing that I can do is for me to approach that person and tell him of what actually happened that made me forget all about the things that I was supposed to do.

Let's say that I asked him if he could lend me that thing or something for me to use in times of trouble. But I did not try to pay him back in time, the only thing that I could do now is for me to go to his house and tell him as to why I am not able to pay him back on time because of this trouble at home maybe. I had a lot of things on mind and the thing that I borrowed from him which I was suppose to repay just slipped my mind. After saying all these things to him or making this confession, I am going to feel a bit easy now that he knows why I am not giving him the things that I promised him to repay as soon as I have another one. But maybe, the other person might just say for him to forget the whole thing and when he needs it anytime in the future he can just come across to him and ask him for his help. This time they have both decided to do and they have come up with an agreement, now that they have both said their piece, there is no need for the other person to feel that shame in him all the time he meets this other person. But still when you meet up with this other person and you know that you haven't repaid the debt you owe him, you would feel guilty a little bit although you have both promised to be of help to one another. When this thing happen they try to do something to get it over with and done also. But in the olden days, when someone goes to someone else's house to ask them for some help, they are going to try to repay it at a very short time from the moment they ask for the other person's help. They call this thing as VEIDIRIKI.

- There is something else that occupies my mind and it is about

the shame that befalls a person who might refuse to do anything that deals or concern the welfare of the village. When they are told to do something, they refuse to do it and they say that sometimes, the people does something to him to make him realise that it is a real big shame for him to be avoiding all the things that are done in the village. Can you tell me precisely as to what are they going to do to make that person feel ashamed of what he is going?

I have been a turaga ni koro at Serau for quite a long time too and I know of these things although I do not let the people know that what they are doing is wrong until the time comes when I know that they've been doing this thing quite often. This is what I do, I am going to approach this person and I tell him straight that what ever thing he is doing is wrong and should be stopped immediately. If not, I can take his name up to the chief and the chief knows how to punish such people who do not follow the chief's orders or what they are expected to do for the village. But there is another way of punishing this people, and that is they are going to have a meeting and in this meeting they are going to call out all the names of the people who had not been doing their part in the village. The men or the chiefs concerned for the correcting of these people, they are going to come out and they are going to say all they have to say, and whatever things they are going to say to these people, it is going to bring real shame over them and they wish that they did not attend the meeting. We have people in the village who takes care of such delicate matters, because some people do not know what to do when it

is time for them to go out and do something for their village. When they do not do such things, they are told off because they are not doing their duty and also when people look at them and they say these and that, they feel ashamed of themselves so they start carrying out their duties again as expected of them. There is another way of punishing such people if they do not carry out their role in the village and that is they are being strapped or given whacks maybe four to five strokes and if they keep doing it, the number of strokes is going to be increased. But for some people as soon as they are told that this is wrong they stop immediately and they changed themselves. That is how the village deals with such people is they do not want to obey the chiefs command and this is done in front of everyone in the village and there are times when the chief does the telling off himself and the giving of the strokes to those people who are the nuisance in the village. The turaga ni koro can also be the person who is going to give them a hding when the time comes for them to be stroked. The turaga ni koro is the sole person who is going to keep an eye on the people to see that they are doing the right thing. If he sees someone doing this wrong, he is going to blow the davui and the meeting is held where this people are going to receive their punishment inflicted on them. But as soon as they go out from the place where they had the meeting again they go and do the same mistake again, and again the turaga ni koro is going to blow the davui, another meeting is held and the same people are going to be given the treatment they deserved. It is a very bad thing, when you do something

wrong and you try and run away from your punishments. You should learn to accept them like everyone else. Once you first taste what the punishment is like, you won't do the same wrong again, because you know how bad it is for you to do that because of the inflicted punishment.

- You have told me all the things that you know about this topic shame and what can be done to either remove that shame or to lessen the feeling of it. Could you tell me something more about this topic shame and where can we feel it and when? There are a lot of ways in which shame can be felt by some one. This is one of them, if say that the girl's parents are told that their daughter is going to marry this particular man from the other family. They are going to let the other people know of what is going to happen to this two people when they grow up. When they meet, these two people meet somewhere, they are going to feel ashamed of each other and they are going to try to avoid the other because of this shame feeling they had for one another.

The other one is say all the men or all the young boys staying in this house have had their penis or sex organs circumcised and I am only the one left that should have mine operated on. This is going to be a time when I am going to feel a big shame coming over me because of all the people in my age group the men I am talking about have had their sex organs circumcised but not me. They are going to tease me and say all sorts of things about me. This is one shame that an individual boy can experience while he is growing up. So the only thing to do now to get rid of this shyness and

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shamefulness which he had when the other men teased him of not beingg cicumcised. There must be other thiggs which can people can feel when they are growing up. There are some others but I do not know of them because I might have forgotten but those are some of the acta and commitments that can bring shame to some people. That is all.
Thank you very much.

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