
Cause and Effect; The Signs of our Time.

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This past week I witnessed a series of events unfold and the consequences of these events for many of us who are on spiritual paths is substantial.

Usually I delve into deep secrets of Kabbalah and spirituality revealed through the gematria of the Torah verses, but there's a more critical issue facing all of us and deeper secrets to be revealed by the unfolding events in our daily lives. Previously, I've warned about how as we approach the *geula* (final redemption), the cycle of cause and effect is greatly speeding up and how this manifests as both curses and blessings depending on how we view them and whether we've understood their messages. And I've also explained briefly what every kabbalist knows that the spiritual path is the most difficult one as it's fraught with ever more present obstacles (tests) and if you're not reading the messages, these potholes in your path become pits.

One of the secrets that the Arizal reveals about Joseph's tribulation with being thrown in the pit, is that the Hebrew word for pit has the gematria value of 208, the same as Isaac, which represents the side of *Gevura* and judgment. Our task is to read the signs, realize when we're facing a karmic (*tikun*) punishment (or judgment), accept that it's being meted out with mercy (*chesed*), love deep into ourselves for the spiritual root (cause) of our situation, correct it, and move on to a higher spiritual level. Because, if we fail these tests, they will only get worse, more intense, and as we get closer to the arrival of *Mashiach*, more destructive, devastating and frequent.

This past week I witnessed a series of events unfold. Because of the dreams that immediately preceded them I was clued in and almost waiting to see how they would unfold in the physical world, which brings up the point of parsha Miketz, in case you missed it, spiritual dreams precede physical actions, the spiritual precedes the physical, which tells us nothing happens that's not for a preordained reason and that everything happens (whether we see it for good or bad) with divine intent in it. And that means with mercy in it, no matter how terrible and dark it may look to us, even as bad as being thrown into a pit of vipers and scorpions by our own brothers.

Before I get into the incidents, which not coincidentally happened during parsha *Miketz*, when Joseph became ruler over Egypt and reunited with Jacob and his brothers, it's interesting and relevant to note that Joseph was born in the year 2200 HC, and that Joseph (*yesod of zeir anpin*), as a reflection and as the central column continuation of his father Jacob (*tiferet*) each experienced their own personal exiles of **21** years for a total of **42** years. Jacob toiled for **21** years with Laban and Joseph in Egypt separated from his Dad. Each of the two **21**-year intervals was a tithing to the **210** years of exile in Egypt, but together the **42** years presents the *Shem Mem-Bet* (**42**-Letter Name of G-d) associated with all the significant Biblical journeys and according to *chazal* with the coming of *Moshiach*. It was also in chapter **42** of *Bereshit* that Joseph was reunited with his brothers, bringing an end to his isolation.

The other significant connection to the incidents lies in the timing of Joseph's birth, **248** years before the end of the Egyptian exile and the reception of the Torah at Sinai, because **248** is the numerical value of Abraham. And as an aside, at the time of their reuniting, Jacob was **130**, as in the numerical value of Sinai, and Joseph was **38**, the age that the *Arizal* passed on, but

seeing as the events of the past week occurred during Chanukah, it is very relevant that Joseph's birth in **2200** HC was exactly **44** jubilee (the Biblical **50**-year interval) years after the birth of Adam, as in the **44** candles light during Chanukah. Moreover, **2200** HC is the year **1560** BCE and **156** is both the numerical value of Joseph and the collective number of candles we light over Chanukah, when taking into account the spiritual aspect that every candle we light stays lit for the full **8** days (see our blog on the Chanukah meditations of the Ari for details). And just to complete the scenario, Joseph's birth in **2200** HC is **71.56** jubilee years before *chazal's* prophesied date for *Moshiach*, **5778** HC, which is also **66.6** jubilee years from the reception of the Torah on Sinai, and since Chanukah (of numerical value **89**) is all about lighting the candles to bring *H'Moshiach* to the world, it's not surprising that $89 \times 40.2 = 3,577.8$, the exact number of years from Joseph's birth in **2200** HC to the final redemption in **5778** HC, and that **2200** is **38.0%** of **5778**, alluding to the *Arizal* again, and also to Egypt (of numerical value **380**), a kabbalistic code word for darkness, and as explained in the *Zohar*, its true meaning is *Meitzer Yam* (Constriction of the sea, which is significant because the constricted flow of light into Egypt was relieved while Joseph was alive as he (his energetic archetype) controls the *sefira* (dimension) of *yesod of zeir anpin*, the choke point (or funnel point) of light into our world from the upper reservoirs. And it's this very point that we open up for the world when we light the **156** Chanukah candles and the holy river of divine sustenance, *Nachal (L'hadlik Ner C hanukah)* flows through.

This past week, during *Chanukah* and the period of time influence by the energy of *Miketz*, I witnessed a series of events that while having serious consequences for those involved, has even greater value for the lessons it teaches all of us. Now, it must be said that none of the people directly involved to my knowledge knew each other in this lifetime and many of them are very high level souls, and all of which were Orthodox Jews, most of whom were from Chabad. I also want to preface this by saying that as been told to us time and again by *chazal* and as has been related in so many stories of the Baal Shem Tov and other *Tzaddikim*, the higher our spiritual level the less leeway we have for transgressions, and even minor transgressions need correction, but in these days, with only 10 years to go until **5778**, everyone on the spiritual path will be forced to correct their transgressions, and to see the results of them first hand and nearly immediately.

While attending a Chanukah craft and activities festival in a Chasidic storefront last Wednesday afternoon, a mother had overstayed the patience of her rambunctious very young boy and while she was checking out, he almost inexplicably veered off his course and dashed toward the window display, reached in, and accidentally knocked over the Lucite dreidel vessel that was holding all the little colorful dreidels of which people were supposed to guess their quantity. The Chasidic Rabbi overseeing the event and witnessing the situation promptly demanded \$175 for the the broken Lucite and asked no questions. The woman said she'd be back with a check the next day.

As this was a Chasidic event, representing *chesed* and as **175** was the lifespan of Abraham Avinu, who always represents *chesed*, she instinctively knew and was further counseled to pay the asked for amount, in the same way that Abraham paid the 400 shekels for Machpelah without negotiating. *Bli ayn hara*, the family accepted that they were forced by divine light to make this sacrifice in order to ameliorate some unknown heavenly decree of judgment with possibly worse consequences. And so with a full heart they returned the next day, Thursday afternoon, and sought out the rabbi.

He refused to interrupt what he was doing to attend to them, even though it was the moment's inattention that opened the window for the incident to occur on his watch the day before, then when he was ready he took the check coldly and dismissed the mother and child rather coldly

without speaking with the boy and seeing who he really was.

There is a spiritual tenet that anyone who comes into our life does so for a divine reason; they are there for us. There was a time when we could ignore them, but not now. Now, all of us who have taken on the spiritual mantle are all being looked upon as *tzaddiks* and accordingly held to much higher standards.

The boy couldn't have cared less if the rabbi spoke to him and he received a just punishment from his parents for his physical actions, and from the family's perspective, the transaction was done whether the Rabbi saw the spiritual significance or not.

But as a witness to these events, it's my opportunity and indeed job to seek out the holy sparks in the events as I point out the lessons to be learned. I can't speak for what was in the rabbi's head, and maybe he did do some serious self-reflection, but I can relate what unfolded thereafter, as today, even the slightest lapse is going to have serious, sometimes grave consequences and we must come to understand that.

We must understand and live our lives with the understanding that every physical action is preceded by spiritual ones and that every physical challenge is an opportunity to overcome a *tikune* before it really manifests, and that all events in our universe are connected, just like our souls.

Had the events unfolded differently it would have been revealed that the family was so poor that they didn't even have rent money and that the boy was a special needs child. It is our individual duty to bring in as much light into a situation as possible, and the date was the 5th day of Chanukah, December 25th, *erev Rosh Chodesh*; what more powerful time for channeling the divine light of chasidim (mercy, loving-kindness) was there? The opportunity was missed.

A short hour later, a **BMW** SUV almost inexplicably veered off the road, and drove right through the Lucite display of another Chasidic Chanukah event storefront and didn't stop until it reached the back of the shop and several children and adults were seriously injured.

We cannot know our *tikun*, but more than ever we are our brother's keepers. More than ever we have to make every effort, go the extra mile to treat everyone with human dignity, compassion, and love. If we don't take every advantage of every situation to look inside ourselves, there will be unfortunate consequences. How can I be sure I've connected the dots correctly here, because the very next day, I witnessed yet another car inexplicably go through a store front window and I knew it was my job to get the word out. As with His codes in the Torah, G-d can be very redundant. Things will be repeated over and over until the message gets across.

This event happened almost exactly one month after the devastating attack on Chabad house in **Mumbai**. Chabad does so much good, so why them? Because G-d has always held his righteous to higher standards, and just as Noach was no Abraham, the Torah tells us he was a righteous man for his times. We are certainly no Noach's, and for the most part not *tzaddikim*, but for our times, we are the new righteous, and it's up to all of us to uphold the world.

The root word for glass in Hebrew is Zach (Zayin, Caf = 27). it relates to purity and clear, as in without blemish (that is the reason to why clear glass items are Kosher for Meat and Dairy), but a broken glass is sign for us to break something inside to let the light in and out. In prior times it was enough to remove the opaque veils of *klippot*, now, in these end times, we must remove the transparent ones as well, for even as Zach (glass) has a numerical value of **3 x3x3**, "the darkness" has a value of **333**, and thus even transparent blockages can keep us separated. Moreover, the shattering of the glass and the the Lucite vessel reflects the shattering of the vessels in *Tohu*, and reminds us all of our duty to pick-up and collect the holy sparks of this world of *tikun*. As the letters on the dreidel (H,SH, G,N) add up to **358**, the value of *Moshiach*, the message is emphasized that picking up the smaller individual dreidels (*Moshiachs*) is what's necessary, not one big showy one.

Glass windows are coming down everywhere, veils being pulled back. We were all witnesses to

the price thousands of Orthodox Jews and Jewish institutions and charities paid because of their dealings with **Bernie Madoff**. There was a \$50 billion veil there that no one saw. We know from *chazal* that it is the understanding of the *Shem Mem-bet* (the **42**-letter name of G-d, the *Ana B'Koach*) that will bring about the *geula*, so just as Noach's flood, **Malbul**, was a sign of G-d displeasure with Man, we can trace the signs of the *Mem-Bet* to see where we have to work harder. The first line of the *Shem Mem-Bet* has the same numerical value as unconditional love; it's also the same complete numerical value as *Mashiach Ben David*. Five years ago, this very week, December **26th**, there was an earthquake in **BaM** Iran where 50,000 people died. And exactly one year later, also on December **26th**, an earthquake off the coast of **MeulaBoh**, caused a tsunami that killed 225,000. The attack of 9/11 hit at the financial center of America in downtown **Manhattan Borough**, the same place the financial crisis hit again in earnest that same week 7 years later. G-d is nothing if not redundant. And the messages will keep coming. We all need to listen, but listening is not enough; we all need to take the initiative to change ourselves and bring loving kindness to the world. We need to look on our messengers with compassion, look into ourselves for correction, and then reach out to the needy. We revere our Rav's, now we must emulate them. From here on out, it's vitally important for all of us to treat one another with human dignity and to extend to them our love. Eliyahu Hanavi does not reveal himself to you when he greets you; your actions after greeting him must merit that. We must treat everyone we meet as if they might be Eliyahu Hanavi, or even *H'Mashiach*. B"H, May all our actions, merit the revelation of *H'Moshiach*.