





## The Osama and the Mashigo Stone

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**M**any moons ago, there was a beautiful mountainous land called Matibidi. It was found in the heart of Africa. It consisted of many villages in the same region. There was always animosity between the villages, leading to countless wars. As punishment, the Osama, the creator of all, sent the orange Balois, a magical breed of cheetah, to the land of Matibidi. The people feared for their lives.

The orange Balois came to search the hearts of the people. Those with good in their hearts were spared by the orange Balois, whilst those with evil in their hearts were taken to the Mapungubwe caves, a sacred place. Only a few hundred people remained in Matibidi. The survivors prayed to the Osama for forgiveness. In reply, the Osama created a white-noise stone called a Mashigo stone. For as long as the stone was active, the orange Balois would not return to the village.

The Mashigo Stone glowed brightly like the sun every morning. The Mapulana, the villagers of Matibidi, marvelled at this. This level of constancy was unheard of. However, after thirty years, the prophetess, Naledi, emerged with a message from the Osama.

Naledi said: “Here are the Osama’s words: ‘My people, Mapulana, I have given you a clean slate for thirty years. Now, I am displeased that you have not changed. You are still the same evil-doing people. Now I will bring judgement back again to Matibidi.’”

A great wave of fear passed through Matibidi and a dark cloud hung over the Mapulana. Correlating to the mood was the Mashigo Stone. It was glowing like a dying star. The consequences of what could happen were too frightening to contemplate for the Mapulana. Tshegofatso and Mmaphefo were children the last time the orange Balois graced the villages of Matibidi with its presence. Tshegofatso and Mmaphefo remembered a wise old man named Johan-Pitsedisuleyang, who then encouraged the people to pray to the Osama. They thought this wise old man might know what to do now, however, they needed to first find him. It was last heard that he stayed on Phiri Mountain. Their quest began.

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In the morning, Tshegofatso and Mmaphefo made their way to Phiri Mountain. As they were walking, Tshegofatso and Mmaphefo realised that they needed to come up with a way to guess what the intensity of the Mashigo Stone would be the day after. Tshegofatso and Mmaphefo knew that the Mapulana people could not change their bad behaviour immediately.

As they climbed up the mountain, they concluded that it would be their best bet to estimate what pattern the intensity of the Mashigo Stone would follow. Close to the top of the mountain, they found a cave where they found Johan-Pitsedisuleyang in the flesh. He conceded that he might not be of much help. He insinuated that if they stayed the night, perhaps he might be of more help in the morning.

They found out just before they went to sleep that Johan-Pitsedisuleyang was a man of many revelations. He emphasised that the Mashigo Stone’s beauty was its constancy (stationarity).

As such, he made sure they assumed that it was stationary. To Tshegofatso and Mmaphefo, it was amazing to think that the light emission of the Mashigo Stone was not dependent on how long it had been glowing. Such a principle could bind all their theory into something practical. There was more to come in the morning.

Johan-Pitsedisuleyang suggested that the sins of the people of Matibidi were consistent with ecological and environmental changes. When there was enough rainfall and abundant food, the people carried on in lawlessness and committed many evil acts.

During droughts and famine, the people were more compassionate towards one another and abiding by the Osama's laws. Johan-Pitsedisuleyang suggested that people's behaviour was trend-stationary, specifically, a seasonal trend (following trigonometric functions). Tshegofatso and Mmaphefo did not see the people's behaviour as much of a contributing factor to the glow of the Mashigo Stone. As they listened to Johan-Pitsedisuleyang's wisdom, their ignorance became apparent to them. But there was more.

He said that as much as this "guess" strategy could help the people predict what would happen to the Mashigo Stone, it was far from the point. He suggested that if people could find it in their hearts to adopt kindness and love, they could make peace with the Osama. Specifically, he said if, and only if.

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Tshegofatso and Mmaphefo left the cave with enlightenment and with two minds. They remembered that there was a scribe for all the villages of Matibidi who had hand-written accounts of what happened daily in this great land.

The idea circulated between them that if the occurrences could be rated as to how the people behaved (bad to good, preferably from 0 to 1), they would have a measure of behaviour. The scribe also kept account of the light emission intensity of the Mashigo Stone. As such, they now had the past data values, which could be used in a recursive "guess" system to determine future behaviour.

They assumed that these data values were likely more or less the same daily, following Johan-Pitsedisuleyang's constancy claim. Also, they now had past data values giving measurements about the Mashigo Stone. To them, it became apparent that they could now make a full pledged "guess" system. To their surprise, they did not feel fulfilled.

The death of the Mashigo Stone was inevitable. Tshegofatso and Mmaphefo knew that the death of the stone would not change the hearts of the people. They would have to change the heart of the Mapulana, in order to help their people adopt kindness and love.

Birth and death are two contrasting ends. The death of the Mashigo Stone came as no surprise and looked to herald the beginning of the end of the Mapulana. However, lessons of hope and preachings of love and kindness gave birth to new behaviour of the Mapulana. Peace was maintained in all the land thereafter.

