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BEWARE: THERE IS JANUARY AFTER DECEMBER

The Book of Genesis tells us that Pharaoh had a dream about seven fat and sleek cows coming out of the Nile River. From the same Nile, seven very ugly and lean cows emerged and ate up the fat cows. If he thought this message was not serious, a second dream visited him in the night. He also dreamed of full and good seven heads of grain, after which other thin and dry seven heads of grain grew up and swallowed up the full and good ones.

Ironically, this dream is by an Afrikan King standing at the banks of the great Afrikan Nile River. One Joseph is called to interpret the meaning of the dream to the King. “Seven years of abundance are coming throughout the land of Egypt, but seven years of famine will ravage the land”, says Joseph to the King of the land who was puzzled by the lean eating up the fat, and the worthless swallowing up the good.

All Joseph was saying to the King was that the rich and wasteful December would be swallowed by the poor and miserable January such that there would be no traces left of that rich December. This reality is true for Black people. While the year of white people is dominated by the rich and pompous December, the poor and miserable January is all there is in the Black Calendar.

The December month is the beginning of the festive season. It doesn't matter how penniless you are, you just have to find a way and join the mood of the festive season. This is when a Black person who was poor and miserable the whole year feels compelled to join in the expensive but brief festive mood. Because the majority of Black people are either labourers or jobless, December is the time of bonuses. It is also the time of the stokvels sharing the money that was saved throughout the year. To save that little meant serious belt-tightening and self-denial of any possible niceties by the Black families. Unfortunately, the bonuses and stokvel money will be earned to be spent in this short festive time.

The predominantly white businesses know that this is the right time to increase prices because there will be explosive Black demand that has been chained in the past eleven months. The increase in the prices is a legal (demand and supply dynamics) way to rob the poor of the little money they saved in the past eleven months.

It is Black people who usually spend money to paint their homes to look new in December. Because Black children don't have clothes to wear during the year, every child has to be bought Xmas clothes. Mind you, a Black family might be having anything between 5 and 10 children. While the rich races don't need expensive clothes to affirm themselves, Black people find themselves having to buy over-priced branded clothes to hide their poverty and misery. Driven by their cultural generosity, it is Blacks who would go and buy groceries to include even people that will be visiting during the festive period. Unfortunately, the anti-Black loadshedding will be on stand-by to decay and destroy those food items.

The races that own the wealth and the instruments of its creation, seldom use the over-crowded December for travelling. They travel during the off-peak period when everything is cheaper. Black people don't have a readily available income to take advantage of these off-peak bargains. While clothes and household items will be very expensive in December, the January sale will come when Black people have no money left in their pockets. Of course, Black people's money is kept in the pockets, and seldom in the banks. That January sale is the time for wealthy races to go and do their shopping. They do so knowing that they would be subsidised by the poor people.

Some poor families will rush and buy cars just to show-off during the festive season. Those cars will be confiscated by the dealers because their possessors would not be able to pay the instalments by January. The rich races will then move quickly and buy those cars in the auction markets. Again, the poor shall have subsidised the wealthy races.

Come January, the schools will be reopening. There will be a need for money to buy uniforms and stationary. There will be registration monies demanded by both the schools and the universities. There will be some percentage of the debt that the universities will demand that the students must pay for them to qualify to register to continue their studies. Unfortunately for the poor people, the only items on which there will be sale are the school uniforms and stationery. The businesses of the wealthy races will be waiting to lend money to the poor people at a very high interest. While the poor people might be grappling the whole year to settle IFM-like debt, some university students might be financially excluded because their parents can't afford to borrow money from the loan sharks.

These few lines represent a desperate attempt by AZAPO to remind Black people that the system is on stand-by to take advantage of their systems-created want and miseries. In the past, there used to be a term called "Black Xmas". It was an attempt to alert Black people not to find themselves getting carried away by the compulsion to spend the money they don't have. We should be careful not to be overly excited by the emergence from the Nile River of fat and beautiful cows this festive season. We should be alert enough to know that the lean and ugly cows will appear and eat up our fat and beautiful ones. The poor and ugly January will come and swallow our rich and beautiful December, and our miseries will be the benefit to others.

The fact of the matter is that Black people are not happy. And this unhappiness is by design. The unhappiness of 11 months cannot be rectified by one month of pretense. If we can, let us keep our hard-earned money for a rainy day. We should never let our poverty to enrich those who are responsible for that very same poverty of ours. There is no need to change the colour of our homes on a yearly basis. Cleanliness is not the change of colour. There is no need to buy "Xmas clothes" for our children. Children need to be fed and decently clothed throughout the year. Within our means, it is possible that we don't need the luxuries we survived without throughout the year. There is no need to pretend to be rich when

we are poor. There is no need to pretend to be happy when we are miserable. Fake happiness and fake riches will reduce us to fake people.

We know that these things are easier said than done. They say it is folly to be wise when ignorance is bliss. It is therefore difficult to resist the momentum of the magnitudes. You will not make sense to your child to not buy her "Xmas clothes" when the rest of the children in the street are clad in their new ones. It will take a critical number of the Black folks to adopt this positive attitude for this call to gain traction.