

# Synchronicity: The Key of Destiny

Frank Joseph

---

Synchronicity, coined by Carl Jung, is the term parapsychologists use for “meaningful coincidence.” As some measure of the magnitude of synchronous phenomena associated with a particular disaster, no less than 899 persons who initially booked passage for Titanic’s maiden voyage eventually refused to board her because of warnings they experienced in the forms of various omens, premonitions, dreams and precognitive events. An additional 4,066 would-be passengers either missed the boat or canceled their reservations, usually under apparently normal circumstances, but sometimes through unusual coincidences that prevented them from sailing.

---

Going through a half-forgotten collection of old photographs, you’re surprised to find the snap-shot of a friend you lost contact with years ago. Just then the telephone rings and the voice on the other end of the line belongs to the same person in the photo.

You’re desperate to find a parking place because you’ve got to be on time for a crucial appointment. There’s not an open spot as far as the eye can see. Suddenly, a car pulls out in front of you, leaving you a space right in front of the address where you’re expected.

You’ve just finished reading a book about rare birds, when the first humming-bird you’ve ever seen in your back yard is drinking nectar from a nearby flower.

These are typical incidents of synchronicity. And while most people brush them aside as insignificant happenstance, some of the greatest minds in history have grappled with this universal enigma. “Synchronicity” was coined by last century’s leading psychologist, Carl Gustav Jung. Fascinated as he was by it, even Albert Einstein could not understand how it worked.

A synchronous event of my own in 1991 prompted me to interview, over the next six years, eventually 100 persons about their feelings on this elusive enigma. The meaningful coincidences they shared with me proved more illuminating than anything I ever read on the subject.

Collecting them into a loose order, I was somewhat astounded to see that these synchronous events experienced by my friends and acquaintances arranged themselves into repeating categories. Although many of the persons interviewed differed widely in age, spiritual beliefs or education, the meaningful coincidences they recounted all belonged to specific groups of common experience.

Widening my research, I found that persons belonging to other cultures, sometimes long dead — often many hundreds of years ago — fell into the same seventeen categories which emerged from the men and women who told me of their own fortuitous occurrences. Their often dramatic, occasionally funny, always numinous testimony formed the basis for a book I wrote, *Synchronicity & You: Understanding the Role of Meaningful Coincidence in your Life*. Synchronicity is fundamentally a form of guidance that enters into the personal lives of every human being. Even if we knowingly discard it, at least part of its influence enters our subconscious.

Some guiding synchronicities form a category best described as “Warnings.” A representative incidence of admonitory synchronicity not included in my book was recounted by the California poet, Miriam Hohf:

Many years ago, when I was a small child living in the Pennsylvania countryside, I took long walks by myself across the fields and into the forest, listening to the birds and talking to the rabbits and squirrels. I never felt afraid and deeply loved all the trees and animals. But on one otherwise beautiful, sunny day, my surroundings felt different somehow.

Everything was absolutely calm and motionless. Just when I approached the edge of the forest, however, a gust of wind suddenly arose, loudly rustling the leaves. I stopped and listened to them, because I felt they were speaking to me. They seemed to be saying, ‘Go away! Do not come into the woods today! There is danger here! Danger! Not safe to play here today! Go away!’ For the first time, a chill of fear ran through me and I fled, almost in tears. I did not visit the forest again, too afraid to return.

About a week after my experience, mother told me about a terrible story just published in the local paper. It seems that on the same day the leaves spoke to me the body of another little girl was found by the police. She had been brutally raped before being murdered. Did the spirits of the forest warn me in the rustle of their leaves?

Another prominent category of synchronicity falls under the heading of Numbers, which thread together mystical human experience, often with surprising results. The number 57, for example, is an intimate characteristic of the American Revolution, as investigator Arthur Finnessey abundantly demonstrates in his well-researched book, *History Computed*.

Among the outstanding examples he cites is the last time the Liberty Bell rang, in tribute to George Washington, before it cracked on February 22, 1846 — 57 years after his 57th birthday. Together with his titles and signature, the closing paragraph of the US Constitution, following its original seven articles, makes up 57 words. It was ratified by 57 yes-votes from New Hampshire, and all Constitutional law begins with the Constitution’s 57th word — that word being, “All.” On February 6, 1777, 57 weeks to the day after the pivotal Battle of Princeton, another turning-point took place when the French joined the American cause. They fought off 19 British warships, making it possible for Washington to defeat Cornwallis on October 19, 1781, in a war which began on the 19th of April, 1775 — 57 is the sum of these three significant 19s.

Washington’s only two victories over British Commander Cornwallis were 57 days apart. So too, 57 days separated the other decisive battles of the war, at Cowpens and the Guilford Courthouse. The final anniversary of Lexington and Concord celebrated

during the Revolutionary War was precisely 57 months, 57 weeks and 57 days after they were fought. In South Carolina's most famous assault at "Fort Ninety Six", 57 Americans were killed. Interestingly, "96" is the sum total of the number of men who signed the Declaration of Independence (57) and the Constitution (39). The American Revolution's 57th month concluded on 19 January, 1780; the Redcoats took Charleston exactly twice times 57 (114) days later. Twelve times 57 (684) days before, the decisive Battle of Monmouth was fought.

In numerical symbolism, 57 is the combination of two numerals, 5 and 7. Five is associated with male energy (i.e., war), while seven signifies the completion of cycles. Together they form a symbolic concept perfectly reflecting the completion of major military cycles running like inter-linking themes throughout the history of the Revolutionary War. Isodore Kozminsky refers to any number from 55 to 64 as "the Sword," associated with military victory (*Numbers: Their Meaning & Magic*, NY: Samuel Weiser, 1977, page 51).

These ancient interpretations of 57 make its frequent recurrence throughout the War of Independence very appropriate. Yet, we stand in awe of its historical significance: Was it somehow an out-growth or expression of America's violent struggle for freedom, or did it from the beginning (from before the beginning) determine historical events?

The outstanding feature of 57, around which acausal incidents revolved, was a major rift in the fabric of history — the American Revolution. All other, similarly powerful historical events likewise produce extraordinary high levels of meaningful coincidence. In fact, the more dramatic, even traumatic, the event, the greater the intensity and sheer number that appear.

An outstanding example was the Titanic disaster. Hardly any other single occurrence in the 20th century generated such a large collection of impressive examples. So many, in fact, they embraced all 17 categories of synchronicity. The meaningful significance of particular numerals played its part in the Titanic disaster, too — in that classic bad-luck symbol, Number 13.

That this traditionally unfortunate number was factually associated with the most infamous of unlucky ocean liners should come as no surprise. Two, separate examples serve to illustrate. A British journalist, W.T. Stead, demonstrated his contempt for superstition by deliberately concluding a story on the 13th of April, 1912. Further tempting fate, his narration described the discovery of an ancient Egyptian sarcophagus and the curse of violent death alleged to overtake anyone who verbally translated its inscription. The next day, R.M.S. Titanic met the disaster in which Stead perished.

A fellow passenger who lightheartedly challenged the deadly number was from Youngstown, Ohio. George Wick had been traveling with his family through Europe for several months and booked homeward voyage on Titanic. While in transit to Cherbourg, where the doomed ship would make final docking before attempting her transatlantic crossing, he stopped at Paris. There he purchased a Grand Prix sweepstakes ticket, choosing Number 13 on purpose, just to prove to everyone that he was not su-

perstitious. "Watch and see what it does for me!" he exclaimed. Several days later, Wick went down with the vessel.

The "Warnings" cited in Miriam Hohf's childhood experience proliferated around the Titanic before she sailed. A White Star insignia crumbled to pieces in the hands of Mrs. Arthur Lewis while she was pinning it to her husband's cap. He was just about to board R.M.S. Titanic, where he was a steward. At the time, she regarded the incident as a bad "omen," although he dismissed her expressed anxiety as foolishness, until the ship foundered a few days later. Fortunately, Mr. Lewis survived.

In another Titanic-related warning, Colonel John Weir, a mining engineer with a worldwide reputation, almost canceled his first class ticket because of distressful feelings about the voyage. Staying at London's prestigious Waldorf Astoria, he awoke on the morning of April 10th to find that the water pitcher atop his dresser had unaccountably shattered, soaking his clothes. He seriously expressed his premonitory feelings to the hotel manager, who allayed the Colonel's "superstitions" enough for him to reluctantly board the great ocean liner. While at sea, Weir told his secretary about the burst water pitcher, could not shake his sense of foreboding, and said he must get off Titanic at the next opportunity, when it docked in Queenstown, Ireland. Again dissuaded, he remained aboard, only to go down with the ship he intuited was doomed.

As some measure of the magnitude of synchronous phenomena associated with the disaster, no less than 899 persons who initially booked passage for Titanic's maiden voyage eventually refused to board her because of warnings they experienced in the forms of various omens, premonitions, dreams and precognitive events. An additional 4,066 would-be passengers either missed the boat or canceled their reservations, usually under apparently normal circumstances, but sometimes through unusual coincidences that prevented them from sailing.

Blanche Marshall suffered a hysterical outbreak on April 10th, 1912, as she and her family watched the Titanic steam past the Isle of Wight from the roof of their home overlooking the River Solent. In a virtual panic, she said the liner would sink before it reached New York and railed against her husband, daughters and servants for being blind to her vision of masses of people drowning in the freezing waters of the North Atlantic.

While neither Mrs. Marshall nor anyone she knew sailed aboard the Titanic, she was prevented from boarding another doomed liner just three years later by similar precognition. In 1915, her husband had booked tickets for their return trip to England from America aboard the Lusitania. She thought nothing of it until she saw the May 1st date of the tickets. Convinced the ship would be torpedoed and sunk on that passage, Blanche convinced him to change their booking. Interestingly, she felt safe traveling on Lusitania at any other time. It was only the prospect of the May 1st crossing that alarmed her. True to her sense of foreboding, the vessel was torpedoed and sunk with heavy loss of life on the same voyage she refused to take.

A sub-category of "Premonitions" is synchronous literature. Published in 1892, *From the Old World to the New* described the sinking of an ocean liner after colliding with an iceberg in the North Atlantic. The "fictional" name of its captain, E.J. Smith, likewise be-

longed to the man who commanded R.M.S. Titanic, twenty years later. Interestingly, the author of *From the Old World to the New*, W.T. Stead, lost his own life on board the same ship.

While Titanic was being readied for her maiden voyage, the May issue of *Popular Magazine* was coming off the presses with the story of Admiral, an 800 foot-long ocean liner crossing the North Atlantic through calm seas at 22 1/2 knots. She strikes an iceberg and sinks, leaving the survivors among her thousand passengers to be rescued by a steamer. Similarities to the real-life tragedy convinced readers the story was based on Titanic's particulars. But author Mayn Clew Garnett was said to have received the details for his novelette in a dream he had while sailing on the Titanic's sister ship, Olympic. While he may have been influenced by physical parallels noticed during his passage aboard the virtually look-a-like vessel, Garnett's selection of 43 north latitude for Admiral's collision with the iceberg was virtually the same position at which Titanic met her identical fate.

Literature is not alone among the arts which figure into synchronous events. More in black humour than conscious precognition, a crewman and his wife made recordings for each other, the husband singing "Only To See Her Face Again" to her "True Til Death," on April 7, 1912, prior to his service about the world's greatest ocean liner. Three days later, he sailed on the Titanic, never to return.

Animal interaction in human experience forms its own, distinct category of synchronicity, and was not missing in the fate of R.M.S. Titanic. The age-old sailor's belief that rats leave ships long before any apparent danger of sinking was exemplified aboard R.M.S. Titanic, when two crewmen in a forward boiler room saw panic-stricken rodents scampering aft, away from the starboard bow. Next day, an iceberg struck that very spot. Both men escaped the disaster with their lives, because the rats' sudden appearance had made them uneasy enough to station themselves, as often as possible, in the immediate vicinity of the lifeboats.

Another incident of animal synchronicity associated with Titanic concerns Bess, a thorough-bred horse belonging to Isadore Straus, the co-founder of Macy's Department Store. The same night he and his wife were killed in the sinking, six-year-old Bess suddenly died of causes the veterinarian was unable to determine.

Tactile sensations comprise a sub-heading of "Death" in synchronicity. The unaccountable perfume of flowers associated with someone close and recently deceased is not uncommon. Another example belongs to May de Witt Hopkins, who experienced the fragrance of roses in her London home one day after R.M.S. Titanic sank. Although word of the disaster had spread by that time, names of those on board were not yet published. But with the flowery scent filling her room from no apparent source, Hopkins suddenly felt that someone she knew was trying to make her aware of his or her death. She later learned that a friend, who was, unbeknownst to her, a passenger on the ship, had indeed perished when it went down. Interestingly, her own mother, during the late 19th century, had been similarly alerted to the death of a loved one by a mysterious, flowery odour.

“Inanimate Objects,” like the White Star insignia that fatefully disintegrated in the hands of Mrs. Lewis, comprise a wide-ranging group of synchronous experiences. The Managing Director of the White Star Line, Joseph Bruce Ismay, survived the Titanic, but thereafter resigned his post, because he was publicly, although unfairly, blamed for the tragedy. He spent the next 25 years of his life in virtual seclusion, dying on October 17, 1937. That same Sunday afternoon, a framed, oval mirror that hung in Ismay’s office during his tenure at the White Star Line suddenly crashed from its hook, scattering broken pieces across the floor.

Two weeks after Titanic was lost, a large wooden crate left unclaimed at Pier 61, in New York harbour, was opened by port authorities. They were surprised to see that it contained a meticulously detailed model of the sunken vessel. It had originally been sent to the US for promotional purposes on behalf of the White Star Line and was supposed to be returned to the London offices on the doomed ship’s return voyage. But the 30 foot-long representation was accurate in more particulars than anyone could explain. Although it presented a full compliment of 20 davits, there were only a dozen miniature lifeboats. Moreover, the bow was partially ruined and a long crack appeared from the keel toward the upper deck, mimicking the actual damage sustained by Titanic.

As might be expected, “Dreams” are an important category of synchronicity. While traveling in Europe during the spring of 1912, a New York lawyer, Isaac C. Frauenthal, dreamt of being aboard a large ship which collided with some floating object and began to sink. His was a long, vivid nightmare, in which he clearly recalled the sights and sounds of calamity. Several nights later, the identical psycho-drama repeated itself, and he told his brother and sister-in-law that it must be a warning against their upcoming voyage on R.M.S. Titanic.

But they laughed at his dream and convinced him to go through with their return trip to America aboard the doomed White Star liner. All three survived the sinking foretold in Isaac’s recurring nightmare.

Perhaps the most inexplicable aspects of synchronicity are those more infrequent instances of “Parallel Lives.” When Lucien P. Smith narrowly escaped death during the terrible fire on Viking Princess, in 1966, it was his second, major disaster at sea. A survivor of the Titanic, he was in his mother’s womb when that ship sank, just as Mrs. Astor, also aboard, was pregnant with her son, John Jacob. Both children were born eight months after the sinking, in which their fathers perished. Their mothers died in the same year, 1940.

Individual lives and major conflicts are events sometimes so powerful they echo beyond their own time and appear to replay themselves in the future. Such an extraordinary case of parallel history began to unfold when William C. Reeves went aboard the tramp steamer, Titanian, as an ordinary seaman, departing Scotland for New York on April 13, 1935. Ten days later, at 2300 hours, he was ordered into the foc’s’le head to stand watch.

Although the sea was calm, the darkness was moonless and impenetrable. Reeves began to feel increasingly uneasy, not only because of the very poor visibility conditions he now faced as ship’s look-out. He thought, too, of the premonitory novel he had been

reading in his cabin, Morgan Robertson's *Futility*. Reeves was unable to keep his mind from drifting back to a dramatic moment in the book when Titan's look-out missed seeing an iceberg in time to avoid disaster. Also, he could not help but notice the ironic similarity of his ship's name, Titanian, and Robertson's Titan with Titanic.

As his sense of irony deepened into anxiety, he realised that the time was now 23:35, just five minutes before the hour Titanic struck the iceberg. Reeves knew that penalties were severe for raising a false alarm, the darkness ahead showed no sign of danger, and for some moments he hesitated to act. But at last his feelings of imminent collision overwhelmed him and he ordered the bridge to stop engines, "Iceberg ahead!"

No sooner had the ship's speed dropped off, than she smashed into several large fragments of ice, which twisted her bow and disabled her propeller. Slowing to full stop, Titanian's crew were astonished to behold an enormous iceberg looming directly ahead out of the darkness. The floating mountain appeared at 23:40, the same hour of Titanic's collision.

Doubtless, had the Titanian not stopped in time, she would have followed her predecessor to the bottom. An SOS sent to Cape Race, Newfoundland, brought rescue to the stranded crew.

The multiple synchronicities of this parallel event — the similar ships' names, Reeves' powerful premonition, his reading of Robertson's book, precisely the same hour for meeting with a deadly iceberg — far out-strip all considerations on behalf of mere chance. Instead, they clearly define the operative principle of meaningful coincidence as a legitimate phenomenon.

© Copyright New Dawn Magazine, <http://www.newdawnmagazine.com>.

*Permission granted to freely distribute this article for non-commercial purposes if unedited and copied in full, including this notice.*

*Permission to re-send, post and place on web sites for non-commercial purposes, and if shown only in its entirety with no changes or additions. This notice must accompany all re-posting.*