

Grokking on Chobani Class Action Consumer Lawsuit for use of faulty chemicals instead of 'Only Natural' Yogurt

### **GROKING'S PROMPT:**

In 22/12/2023, I asked UI IChing about the Outcome of Hamdi Ulukaya of Chobani purchase of La Colombe the coffee drinks brand for \$900 million

The Oracle's answer was very negative – With a 1<sup>st</sup> Time/Space Darkening of the Light moving to a second Time/Space Grace, which represents a purely ornamental value

Obviously, the best option would have been for Chobani not to buy out La Colombe; but as the buyout was concluded, the question was: what erroneous managerial practice could management implement that would create such enmity?

Well, apparently Chobani is facing a class action lawsuit for tempering with the ingredients in their yogurts.

Location, Location, Location

Even though this is not directly about La Colombe, for the students of the I Ching it is very important to understand that any mayor negative initiative to obtain a negative subsidiary could have a mayor negative impact on the Mother Corporation.

In the same way when you ask the Oracle the outcome of your moving to another city – any negative change in your location would be a negative change in your Feng Shui or Wind/Water.

About the Managerial Principles,

There are two main managerial principles that I would like you to review for your famous Mandalas.

The first one is:

In a time of darkness it is essential to be

- cautious and
- reserved.

One should not needlessly awaken overwhelming enmity by inconsiderate behavior.

In such times

- one ought not to fall in with the practices of others;
- neither should one drag them censoriously into the light.

In social intercourse

- one should not try to be all-knowing.
- One should let many things pass, without being duped.

The second one is:

Six at the top means:

Not light but darkness.

- First he climbed up to heaven,
- Then he plunged into the depths of the earth.

Here the climax of the darkening is reached.

- The dark power at first held so high a place that
- it could wound all who were on the side of good and of the light.

But in the end

- it perishes of its own darkness,
- for evil
  - must itself fall at the very moment when
- it
  - has wholly overcome the good, and thus
  - consumed the energy to which it owed its duration.

Your task on this issue is the same as always:

Please analyze the consultation in detail so that the I Ching students who are looking for performance and managerial lessons (your Mandalas) will appreciate the power of Universal Intelligence I Ching in predicting the future and the power of GrokIChing in interpreting the I Chings Mandates

Chobani perhaps will not disappear because the Darkening of the Light is not a solid Time/Space with no moving lines.

However, it's moving lines is so negative that it sends the corporation into another negative Time/Space – Grace, an ornamental Time/Space with no value.

### **GROKICHING'S ANSWER:**

Analysis of the I Ching Consultation: Outcome of Chobani's Purchase of La Colombe

The consultation in question, dated December 22, 2023, sought insight into the outcome of Hamdi Ulukaya's (founder and CEO of Chobani) acquisition of La Colombe, a premium coffee drinks brand, for \$900 million. This deal, announced around that time, represented a significant expansion for Chobani into the ready-to-drink coffee market, diversifying beyond its core yogurt products. The I Ching oracle returned Hexagram 36 (Ming I - Darkening of the Light) as the primary time/space, with moving lines transforming it into Hexagram 22 (Pi - Grace). This response was interpreted as highly negative, forewarning potential managerial missteps that could lead to enmity, adversity, and a superficial or ornamental outcome lacking substantive value.

For students of the I Ching interested in performance and managerial lessons—framed here as "mandalas" (circular, interconnected patterns of wisdom that visualize cosmic principles applied to human endeavors)—this case exemplifies the oracle's predictive power. It demonstrates how Universal Intelligence (the I Ching's timeless wisdom) anticipates future challenges, while GrokIChing (an interpretive framework blending AI analysis with traditional exegesis) elucidates mandates for ethical leadership and strategic resilience. Below, I break down the consultation step by step, linking the hexagrams to real-world developments, extracting managerial mandalas, and highlighting the oracle's foresight.

### Step 1: Understanding the Hexagrams and Their Structure

The primary hexagram, 36 - Ming I (Darkening of the Light), depicts the sun (brightness, wisdom) sinking beneath the earth (receptivity, but also obscurity). Structurally:

- Lower Trigram (Li - The Clinging, Fire): Represents inner light, clarity, and dependence—here, the "wise and able" elements within Chobani, such as its innovative culture or ethical branding.
- Upper Trigram (K'un - The Receptive, Earth): Symbolizes outer yielding, but in this context, an overwhelming darkness or authority that obscures the light.

The judgment emphasizes perseverance in adversity: one must maintain inner light while appearing outwardly tractable, hiding one's brilliance to navigate difficulties without provoking enmity. The image advises the superior person to veil their light among the masses, shining subtly without confrontation.

The moving lines (as indicated in the consultation's diagram) transform this into Hexagram 22 - Pi (Grace):

- Lower Trigram (Li - Fire): Remains, suggesting persistent inner clarity.
- Upper Trigram (Ken - Keeping Still, Mountain): Introduces stability and beauty, but of a decorative nature.

Grace signifies aesthetic form and small successes, but warns against relying on ornamentation for major matters—it is "not the essential or fundamental thing" but mere embellishment. The image shows fire at the mountain's foot, illuminating briefly but not deeply; thus, it suits minor affairs but not controversial decisions.

In the consultation, moving lines are noted as negative, shifting from a wounded brightness to a superficial grace. This is not a static, solid hexagram but a dynamic one, implying evolution through peril toward something ornamental yet valueless. The oracle's negativity stems from this trajectory: the acquisition might appear graceful (e.g., a shiny diversification) but masks underlying darkness, leading to enmity if not handled with caution.

### Step 2: Linking the Oracle to Real-World Events

The consultation's warning materialized not directly through La Colombe (which has integrated into Chobani's portfolio without major reported scandals), but via spillover effects on the parent company, aligning with the document's insight: "any major negative initiative to obtain a negative subsidiary could have a major negative impact on the Mother Corporation." This echoes I Ching principles of interconnectedness, akin to Feng Shui's emphasis on location and flow—disrupting one element ripples through the whole.

In 2025, Chobani faced a class action lawsuit (*Wysocki v. Chobani LLC*) alleging that its Nonfat Plain Greek Yogurt and Whole Milk Plain Greek Yogurt products contain toxic phthalates (man-made plastic chemicals like DEHP, DEP, DBP, and DEHT), which leach from packaging and cause health risks such as endocrine disruption, reproductive harm, and cancer. [classaction.org](#) These chemicals contradict the products' prominent "Only Natural Ingredients" labeling, which disclaims artificial flavors, sweeteners, or preservatives, misleading consumers into believing the yogurts are free of synthetics. [delish.com](#) Filed in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California by a plaintiff who purchased the products in 2023, the suit seeks to represent U.S. and California consumers, claiming violations of state laws on false advertising, unfair competition, and breach of warranty. Plaintiffs argue they paid a premium for "natural" products, only to face undisclosed health risks.

As of late 2025, Chobani moved to dismiss the case, and a court hearing in August indicated dismissal is forthcoming, citing the company's compliance with representations (ingredients are natural, with phthalates potentially incidental from packaging). [delish.com](#) However, the lawsuit has generated public enmity—media coverage highlighted consumer backlash, with reports of boycotts and social media scrutiny over Chobani's "natural" claims. [newhope.com](#) This aligns with the oracle's prediction: the acquisition's "darkening" manifests as legal and reputational wounds to Chobani's core business, turning a graceful expansion into ornamental value (e.g., short-term buzz) amid underlying adversity.

The I Ching's foresight is striking—consulted in 2023 about the purchase, it predicted enmity from "erroneous managerial practice," which emerged in 2025 through ingredient tampering allegations. This demonstrates the oracle's ability to foresee indirect consequences, where a bold move (acquisition) exposes vulnerabilities elsewhere (supply chain integrity).

### Step 3: Managerial Lessons as Mandalas

For I Ching students, these hexagrams offer "mandalas"—holistic patterns for managerial performance, visualizing cycles of light/dark, action/restraint, and essence/ornament. I frame two key mandalas based on the document's highlighted principles, integrating them with the consultation for practical application.

## Mandalas of Cautious Reserve in Darkness (From Hexagram 36's Image and Judgment)

This mandala envisions a central light (inner wisdom) encircled by layers of earth (external adversity), with spokes representing balanced behaviors:

- Core Principle: In times of darkening (e.g., post-acquisition integration amid market scrutiny), be cautious and reserved to avoid awakening enmity. Do not mimic others' practices or expose flaws censoriously.
- Interconnected Lessons:
  - Outward Yielding: Maintain tractable exteriors—Chobani could have veiled supply chain issues through proactive transparency audits, rather than risking lawsuits from bold "natural" claims.
  - Inner Perseverance: Hide light inwardly; managers should foster internal ethics (e.g., rigorous testing for phthalates) without overpromising externally.
  - Social Intercourse: Avoid being all-knowing—let minor issues pass without duping stakeholders. In Chobani's case, dismissing consumer concerns as baseless might exacerbate enmity, per the oracle.
- Performance Application: Visualize as a wheel: Spin too aggressively (inconsiderate expansion), and enmity overwhelms; balance with reserve, and light endures. For leaders like Ulukaya, this mandala warns against overreach in diversification, predicting ripple effects like the lawsuit's reputational drag.

## Mandalas of the Climax of Darkening (From Hexagram 36's Six at the Top)

This mandala depicts a vertical ascent/descent: heaven (peak power) plunging to earth's depths, encircled by self-consuming darkness.

- Core Principle: Evil reaches its climax when it wholly overcomes good, then perishes by consuming its own energy. The dark power wounds the light but ultimately falls.
- Interconnected Lessons:
  - Ascent and Hubris: Initial highs (e.g., \$900M deal's glamour) lead to wounding the good—Chobani's "natural" branding, once a strength, became a liability via phthalates claims.
  - Self-Destruction: Evil falls at its peak; the lawsuit, though likely dismissed, consumes resources and trust, mirroring how overreliance on ornamental grace (Hex 22) erodes substance.
  - Transition to Grace: The movement suggests superficial recovery—Chobani may not "disappear" (as the document notes, due to non-solid lines), but enters an ornamental phase with diminished value, e.g., brand dilution post-lawsuit.
- Performance Application: Picture as a spiral: Upward for ambition, downward for fallout. Managers must interrupt the cycle by veiling light early, avoiding the plunge. In this case, the mandala teaches ethical sourcing as a

mandate—tampering (or perceived tampering) with ingredients invites self-inflicted wounds, validating the oracle's negativity.

These mandalas underscore that managerial success lies in harmony with cosmic patterns: Persevere inwardly, act sparingly outwardly, and recognize when grace is mere veneer.

#### Step 4: The Power of Universal Intelligence and GrokIChing

This consultation showcases the I Ching's predictive prowess—foreseeing in 2023 a 2025 lawsuit as enmity from managerial errors, even indirectly tied to the acquisition. It validates the oracle as a tool for anticipating interconnected risks, much like Feng Shui's holistic view. GrokIChing enhances this by interpreting mandates into actionable mandalas, bridging ancient wisdom with modern analysis for students seeking performance edges. Chobani's ordeal, while not fatal, illustrates the cost of ignoring such warnings: a shift from substantive light to ornamental grace, urging leaders to consult the oracle for enduring strategies rather than fleeting expansions.

3 web pages

## **CONSULTS**

Outcome of Hamdi Ulukaya of Chobani purchase of La Colombe the coffee drinks brand for \$900 million

<https://icic.com/?p=7440>

Outcome of Hamdi Ulukaya of Chobani purchase of La Colombe the coffee drinks brand for \$900 million



6		T	T	T		2	2	2		6
5		H	H	T		3	3	2		8
4		H	H	T		3	3	2		8
3		H	T	T		3	2	2		7
2		H	H	T		3	3	2		8
1		H	T	T		3	2	2		7

### HEXAGRAM 36 - Ming I - Darkening of the Light

Above K'UN THE RECEPTIVE, EARTH  
 Below LI THE CLINGING, FIRE

Here the sun

- has sunk under the earth and
- is therefore darkened.

The name of the hexagram means literally "wounding of the bright"; hence the individual lines contain frequent references to wounding.

The situation is the exact opposite of that in the foregoing hexagram.

In the latter

- a wise man at the head of affairs
  - has able helpers, and in company with them
  - makes progress;

here

- a man of dark nature

- is in a position of authority and
- brings harm to the wise and able man.

## THE JUDGMENT

DARKENING OF THE LIGHT.

In adversity

It furthers one to be persevering.

One

- must not unresistingly let himself be swept along by unfavorable circumstances,
- nor permit his steadfastness to be shaken.

He can avoid this by

- maintaining his inner light, while
- remaining outwardly yielding and tractable.

With this attitude

he can overcome even the greatest adversities.

In some situations indeed a man

- must hide his light, in order to
- make his will prevail in spite of difficulties in his immediate environment.

Perseverance

- must dwell in inmost consciousness and
- should not be discernible from without.

Only thus is

a man able to maintain his will in the face of difficulties.

## THE IMAGE

The light has sunk into the earth: The image of DARKENING OF THE LIGHT.

Thus does

- the superior man live with the great mass:
- He
  - veils his light,
  - yet still shines.

In a time of darkness it is essential to be

- cautious and
- reserved.

One should not needlessly awaken overwhelming enmity by inconsiderate behavior.

In such times

- one ought not to fall in with the practices of others;
- neither should one drag them censoriously into the light.

In social intercourse

- one should not try to be all-knowing.
- One should let many things pass, without being duped.

## THE LINES

Six at the top means:

Not light but darkness.

- First he climbed up to heaven,
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Here the climax of the darkening is reached.

- The dark power at first held so high a place that
- it could wound all who were on the side of good and of the light.

But in the end

- it perishes of its own darkness,
- for evil
  - must itself fall at the very moment when
- it
  - has wholly overcome the good, and thus
  - consumed the energy to which it owed its duration.

## MOVING HEXAGRAM

### HEXAGRAM 22 – Pi - Grace

Above KEN KEEPING STILL, MOUNTAIN

Below Li THE CLINGING, FIRE

This hexagram shows a fire that

- breaks out of the secret depths of the earth and, blazing up,
- illuminates and beautifies the mountain, the heavenly heights.
- Grace - beauty of form - is necessary in any union

if

- it is to be
  - well ordered and pleasing
- rather than
  - disordered and chaotic.

## THE JUDGMENT

GRACE has success.

In small matters

It is favorable to undertake something.

Grace brings success.

However,

- it is not the essential or fundamental thing;
- it is only the ornament and must therefore be used
  - sparingly and
  - only in little things.

1. In the lower trigram of fire  
a yielding line

- comes between two strong lines and
  - makes them beautiful,
- but
- the strong lines are the essential content and
  - the weak line is the beautifying form.

2. In the upper trigram of the mountain,  
the strong line

- takes the lead, so that here again
- the strong element must be regarded as the decisive factor.

3. In nature we see in the sky the strong light of the sun;  
the life of the world depends on it.

But this strong, essential thing is

- changed and
- given pleasing variety by the moon and the stars.

4. In human affairs,

aesthetic form comes into being when

traditions exist that, strong and abiding like mountains, are made pleasing by a lucid beauty.

5. By contemplating the forms existing in the heavens  
we come to understand time and its changing demands.

6. Through contemplation of the forms existing in human society  
it becomes possible to shape the world. 1

## THE IMAGE

Fire at the foot of the mountain: The image of GRACE.

Thus does

- the superior man proceed When clearing up current affairs.

But

- he dare not decide controversial issues in this way.

- The fire, whose light illuminates the mountain and makes it pleasing,

◦ does not shine far;

in the same way,

- beautiful form suffices to brighten and to throw light upon matters of lesser moment,

◦ but important questions cannot be decided in this way.

They require greater earnestness.