

## Hexagram 51 – The Calling



*The calling.*  
*Spiritual influence nourishing all.*  
*The calling coming: frightening, frightening.*  
*Laughing words, shrieking, shrieking.*  
*The calling terrifies a hundred miles.*  
*The sage not losing the ways of the spirit.*

**Ideogram:** Excite and rain; outburst, shaking, and startling.

**Structure:** Two thunders ☳☳ combine, thunder after thunder. One strong line under two weak ones presses upward so violently that it arouses terror.

**Time:** The trigram ☳☳ marks the spring equinox and the beginning of a new cycle of growth.

The unexpected shock of thunder or an earthquake causes fear and trembling. From this action, comes that action. From that action, comes this action – a thousand actions all come from the first action. In the same way, we experience the sudden presence of spiritual creative energy within our being as a shock.

The unexpected, overwhelming shock that comes from the depths of our being manifests the divine, a spiritual calling. Just as near thunder startles, so we experience the unexpected command of the spirit within us. Feelings and thoughts arise wildly, one action leading to myriad reactions, persisting like resounding thunder.

The spirit has only one command for people and all life -- to care for the Earth and living beings in ways that benefit all. This experience of a calling inspires a fearful awe for the sacred, which confronts us with the power of the cosmos. The spirit leaves us no choice but to respond as it inescapably stands before us and demands we come to terms with it. The wise do not resist, ignore, nor flee from their spiritual obligations to care for the Earth Interbeing, which gives purpose and meaning to life.

When fearful divine shock calls for a response, the wise stay devotedly on the path, persistently caring for the Earth Interbeing and teaching others to do the same. Filled with reverence for the sacred, sages search their hearts lest they harbor any doubts or opposition to the ways of the spirit. The wise use the experience of fear and trembling to shape and explore what the spirit calls them to do. They do not resist its great power nor avoid it, but remain balanced and mindful of the greater whole.

Fear might cause our resolve to fulfill our obligation to Creation to fade, causing us to sink back into entangled complicity with what harms. We may fear that we cannot bear the difficulties of bringing the ways of the spirit into the world. We fear what might happen to us if we do nothing, or we fear the reactions of others to our actions should we act. If fear overwhelms us, then we cannot do what the spirit calls us to do. If we only fear, we then fully expose ourselves to the brute forces of cause and effect.

Those dependent upon changing external concerns for their life's meaning easily lose their bearings and mutely let what harms overwhelm them. The wise, however, do not resist a sudden spiritual experience and rest within it with an inner calm. Filled with the creative energy of the spirit, they

remain tranquil and open to what they cannot see, what they cannot hear, sensitive and effective in responding to the spiritual presence and calling.

The wise devote themselves to fulfilling the sacred call to care for the Earth Interbeing and allow the creative energy to move them into acting for care of Earth Interbeing. However, as soon as we act, everything changes. We must stay alert and quickly adapt to an unfolding, dynamic process while persistently preserving a loving presence and abiding with the ways of the spirit. Sages ride on the fierce and perilous forces of the sacred calling, facing their fears and moving through them.

Our behavior manifests our feelings and beliefs that we have for what arises in experience. The wise have learned within their hearts how to resist and transform their conditioned willingness to harm others and the Earth. They have a profound inner resolve to live the ways of the spirit within a world dominated by self-cherishing and hostility for others.

Whenever we get overwhelmed by our fears, we remain present to that. We reconnect with our spiritual being, deepening our confidence, our well-being, and sense of basic trust. And then we courageously respond to the ever-present invitation to open to experience.

Neither do the wise despair. They overcome their harmful feelings, beliefs, and sense of powerlessness by transforming themselves. Maneuvering a landscape of difficult circumstances requires a firm will to adhere to the ways of the spirit. Sages keep the greater whole in mind while gently managing the self and responding to what they experience in ways that benefit all. Thus, fear or despair do not cause the sage's resolve to waver, but rather they find great joy in caring for Earth Interbeing.

Even when the path leads through great danger, the sage follows its chosen path cheerfully and obediently. Faith in the path gives us the willingness to overcome what harms within ourselves and in the world and the confidence to achieve our purpose to care for the Earth Interbeing. Our resolve to live the ways of the spirit triumphs over our harmful conditioning and complicity, giving us the freedom to creatively manifest the sacred within the world.

Once we act, we cannot undo our actions. Yet in the time that calls for action, we must act. The wise have faith in the path and the skills to move on it. They cooperate with partners to transform what harms and give generously of their resources. Sages accept the consequences of their actions, learning from their mistakes so they can act more effectively next time. Action tests our practice.

All spiritual growth occurs in the midst of activity. Blessings flow from even the smallest acts to care for the Earth Interbeing as changes first occur in the smallest parts. Sages experience their inspired care for the Earth Interbeing as a blessing. They respect their opportunity to serve the sacred and have the willingness to explore where their service carries them.

When we follow our spiritual calling, it guides us. While we always remain subject to the realm of cause and effect, we have the freedom to embrace and move beyond these mechanistic forces by choosing to respond to whatever arises in the ways of the spirit, bringing the spirit into life.

**Line 1:** This line, the source of the powerful shock, causes all to fear and tremble. The sage moves through the shock within presence, keeping the greater whole in mind while managing its fear. Our behavior in a fearful situation reflects our inner attainment. Action tests our practice.

**Line 2:** Just as a near clap of thunder causes a momentary shock, a spiritual calling causes the weak line to anxiously worry how the shock will affect it and what it might lose. The line wisely retreats inwardly to heights inaccessible to its self-cherishing. The line accepts that it need not chase after imagined loss. When the times change, it will have what it wants as it did not allow its fears to keep it from what needed doing.

**Line 3:** The line overcomes its weakness and fear by recognizing how they stop it from acting when it should act, keeping it entangled in what harms. The line seeks spiritual wisdom to strengthen its resolve to overcome its complicity with what harms and do what it could not do before.

**Line 4:** The strong line, caught fast in the mire of conditioning, does not respond energetically to the moving times. When shaken and frightened, people like this cannot rouse themselves to responsibly act on their own. They remain entangled with what harms and lose the creative opportunity.

**Line 5:** Sages overcome the danger of repeated shocks by holding fast to the spirit, avoiding inner turmoil and acting out of fear. Adapting to changing conditions requires balance, which depends upon an inner discipline of self-control and a firm will to adhere to the ways of the spirit. Fear does not cause the sage's resolve to fade.

**Line 6:** The height of inner shock robs the those of weak will of their clarity, making it impossible to act with presence of mind. Fear overwhelms their being, which causes agitated movement and unsteady observation, weakness and incapacity. The line, yet unaffected by the shock, observes the fearful reactions of others and takes warning not to act out its fear. Instead, the line feels awe for the shock. As long as we have not already lost ourselves in harm, we can move through our fears and fulfill our spiritual duty.