

Hexagram 41 – Reciprocity



Reciprocity.

Aligned with the ways of Earth Interbeing.

Sacred. Favorable.

Without fault and in harmony with sacred ways.

Benefit from moving toward furthering life on Earth in ways that benefit all.

How do we center on the sacred?

Making an offering for the gifts we have received

restores the harmonious balance of the Earth Interbeing.

Ideogram: Hand and ceremonial vessel, the offering of a sacrifice.

Structure: The lake ☵ decreases its depths to increase the height of the mountain ☶.

Image Tradition

Reciprocity.

The offering of the part benefits the whole.

One's path moves with the whole.

Reciprocity for what we have received accords with interbeing.

Sacred, favorable.

Without fault and in harmony with sacred ways.

Benefit from moving toward furthering life on Earth in ways that benefit all.

How do we center on the sacred?

Making an offering for the gifts we have received restores the harmonious balance of the Earth Interbeing.

Making an offering for the gifts we have received harmonize with the sacred time.

Diminishing the strong and strengthening the weak in harmony with the time.

Diminishing, strengthening: overfilling emptiness.

Mutual care according to the time, harmonious movement.

All the harms people cause others and the Earth come from the willingness to harm for self-benefit and then to ignore the suffering caused. The selfish take more than their share and deprive life and the Earth of what they need. They justify their violence by claiming exceptionalism and exemption from Earth limits and moral boundaries. The selfish take without giving back.

Survival of the Earth Interbeing depends upon reciprocity, the giving back to the Earth Interbeing what we take from it to meet our needs. We take many gifts from the Earth Interbeing: food, shelter, medicines, wisdom, the kindness of others, beauty, our very being. Reciprocating the Earth Interbeing for its gifts restores the balance and harmony of the whole. We give forward in ways that further the Earth Interbeing.¹

¹ **The Ways of the Sacred Earth Interbeing:** We worship the sacred through our care for Creation. We interbe with the Wholeness of the Earth Interbeing, interacting with all through equality, respect, and care so that life continues and thrives on Earth. We know the sacred ways for Creation to continue and thrive and to overcome what keeps us apart. We know and respond to the mutual neediness of life in ways that further the harmony of Earth Interbeing. We know and care for our place as the ground upon which we preserve the balance of Earth Interbeing by reciprocating for what we take through our stewardship of the Earth Interbeing. We live within interbeing's moral boundaries and Earth limits and learn from our life lessons how to overcome what keeps us apart. We live as unique beings in the ways of the Earth Interbeing to preserve Creation's harmony and

Reciprocity preserves the treasured wholeness the Earth Interbeing. Thus, the wise understand reciprocity as forwarding the gifts they have received rather than a sacrifice or diminishment of their being. The interconnectedness of the Earth Interbeing could have it no other way.

In cultures that have long ignored their obligations of reciprocity, people resist the idea that they owe the Earth Interbeing anything. Because they act like thieves, they know that giving back what they have taken would destroy their accumulated wealth. It will take time for such a culture to undo its many harms it has inflicted on Earth Interbeing. It will take great collective wisdom for people to understand the need to rebalance their moral debt to the Earth Interbeing. Yet, if the Earth Interbeing cannot recover its balance, neither can people.

The wise daily decrease their willingness to harm others for self-benefit. They curb their anger and block their appetites. By daily reducing their taking from the Earth Interbeing and giving forward the gifts they have received, they restore their harmony with the sacred whole.

When we can catch ourselves wanting to impose our will upon others to have our way or to take more than enough, we can pause and question our intentions. If they do not match the values of the ways of wholeness, the wise do not follow such urges. We dissolve these dangerous urges by resting with them within a loving spiritual presence and then discerning how to move through compromising situations in ways that benefit all. We use reduction and increase according to the time to fulfill our responsibilities to the Earth Interbeing.

Further, the wise guard against the dangers of excessive or insufficient reciprocity, which would also create an imbalance and reactivate self-cherishing and aversion. Reciprocity finds the middle way between taking and giving, yielding and strength. At first, reciprocity seems difficult as we have yet to free ourselves from our willingness to harm others for self-benefit. When we learn how to interbe, it becomes easier to rebalance our taking from the Earth Interbeing and to live within moral bounds.

When people spinelessly comply with a culture that only takes, they degrade their lives and all lives. Reciprocity involves a sacrifice, a loss of something we value to obtain something of greater value. We diminish our excess to allow other beings to meet their needs and live. The persistent effort to decrease harming life and the Earth finally leads to a change into its opposite: wholeness. When we harmoniously recover our balance with the Earth Interbeing, our wholeness blossoms.

Line 1: If we willingly give too much of ourselves in the service of others, we will not meet our needs. If we give too little, we will not meet the needs of the other. If we take too much from those willing to give, we will do them harm. If we do not take enough, we will not meet our needs. The line remains sensitive to the balance of giving and taking.

Line 2: To render true service to another, the wise line serves without relinquishing itself or compromising the spiritual path. Those who throw themselves away to do the bidding of another diminish themselves without providing lasting benefit to anyone.

Line 3: Three travelers at first have the same journey, but two bond with a different path than the third, who leaves and follows its own path.

Line 4: The line diminishes its faults to heal and recovers its balance with Earth Interbeing. Moving toward wholeness brings joy.

Line 5: The line needs not fear anything because fate has ordained its spiritual blessings.

Line 6: The line obtains in great measure what it wanted. It disperses its blessings to others without diminishing what it has. Sages do not seek private advantage for what they accomplish but offer it as a common good and available to everyone.