

Hexagram 51 – The Shock of Ignorance



The shock.

Harmony.

The shock comes: fear, fear.

Joyful words, confused clamor.

The shock of the sacred terrifies all.

Not losing the sacred ways and sacredness.

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

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

An unexpected shock, like a clap of thunder, 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 shock of an accident. Fear breaks through living our ordinary life, one fear connecting to myriad fears, persisting like resounding thunder. Depending upon the severity of an accident, we experience an abrupt change in conditions and loss. We can never undo an accident or avoid its consequences. The consequences unfold persistently over time.

Accidents differ from the abrupt changes caused by Earth conditions, such as earthquakes or floods, as we have no control over them happening. Other people have accidents which may affect us harmfully, but we do not consider their accidents as our own. While we may have influenced their choice, we did not have the power over the choices they made. When others use power over us to force us to do something that harms us, our capacities to choose what we do dwindle.

When we do have the freedom to choose what to do, we directly experience the consequence of what we choose to do. Self-caused accidents result from an ignorant choice, a mistake. Self-caused accidents happen when we do not have the capacities equal to the task we try to do. We believe we know more than we do, overestimate our physical capacities to do something, or ignore limiting conditions. Ignorantly, we choose to save time by not doing the harder but right thing to do. Tools that extend our power to do something give us the confidence that we can overpower a situation, but this confidence encourages us to take risks beyond our abilities and capacities to use the technology. Accidents reveal our ignorance.

When we have an accident, we have two choices. We may hold ourselves blameless and blame others and external conditions for the accident, which only compounds our ignorance. Or we can recognize that we have a large responsibility for the accident and make the connections between the accident and our ignorance.

On the path, we learn from accidents the depths of our ignorance. We focus on what we can learn and strongly resist emotional turmoil sweeping us away or not taking responsibility for what we self-caused. We recognize the conditional limits imposed upon us by our well-being and age. Misperceiving our capacities for knowing what to do and abilities to do whatever we want did not serve us well and reflected arrogance. Believing that we have the right and the power to forcefully impose what we will upon experience induced us into risky behavior and expressed our willingness to harm others for self-benefit. We refrain from using technology to soar above all obstacles to get what we want done quickly.

Comprehending the depths of our ignorance, we humbly ask the sacred oracle what our ignorance blocks us from what we need to know about ourselves. Accidents remind us to respond in the small ways of caring and

kindness to the needs of the moment. We submit to that sacred knowing and make the effort to overcome the harmful ways and views our willful ignorance protects. We accept that doing sacred work takes time.

Learning from our accidents and mistakes changes our ways of living and views empowers us to take another step in living the ways of sacredness to avoid making the same mistakes again.¹ In these ways we remediate the cause of the accident and recover what we thought we had lost. We let go of what we viewed as important and gain the immeasurable value of knowing how to better further life on Earth and to interbe.

Self-caused accidents happen and point to what we willfully ignore. By learning from our mistakes, we persevere in furthering life on Earth and responding to the suffering of others in kind and caring ways. We come to know the dangers of ourselves as a causal condition and humbly vow to become a cause that furthers life on Earth within our limitations. We view our life as a sacred ceremony and ourselves as an offering.

Line 1: An accident causes the line to fear and tremble. It turns inward to discern how its misfortunate choice caused the accident and how its harmful ways and views conditioned that choice. Upon knowing how it can learn from its mistake, the line gladly remedies what caused accident. The fear caused by the accident moves the line to nurture and cultivate its capacities to interbe and further life on Earth.

Line 2: Accidents incur the hardships of loss and increased danger. Efforts to avoid danger and to recover the loss to bring life back to what it was like before the accident will not succeed. Instead, the line retreats inward to understand its responsibility for the accident and how to learn from its mistakes. The line finds that what it has come to know has greater value than what it lost.

Line 3: The line resists focusing on its fears and emotional turmoil, which would cause it to miss the opportunity to learn from its mistake. Instead, the line has the courage to revive from its fear and perseveres in learning its lesson, thus strengthening its capacities to further life on Earth.

Line 4: The does not take responsibility for its mistake which caused the accident. Thus, it learns nothing and remains vulnerable to its ignorance causing another but harsher accident. The line remains entangled with what harms and loses the opportunity to learn from its mistake.

Line 5: The shock of the accident causes the line's feelings and thoughts to move wildly. Yet even within the turmoil, the line remains centered on the sacred and its sacredness. By learning from its mistakes, the line does not lose anything of value.

Line 6: Upon having an accident, we may make desperate but ignorant attempts to remedy the accident, which cause accidents after the accident and even greater hardships. The line has the strength to resist its compulsions to react ignorantly. The line now must choose how to wisely respond to the accident to learn from it. The line sees the sacred unfolding the experience and feels awe. If we have not already lost centering on the sacred, we can move through our fears and fulfill our spiritual duty.

¹ **Ways of sacredness:** worshipping the sacred through how we live within an interdependent reality to further life on Earth; living the sacredness and moral interdependence of life and Earth; fulfilling our moral obligation to respond to the suffering of others and all life; surrendering to the sacred will to learn from our mistakes; the equality of mutually beneficial and harmonious interactions; the equality of equitable sharing of Earth's abundance; keeping still when ignorant; willingness to make the effort to do the harder but right thing to do.