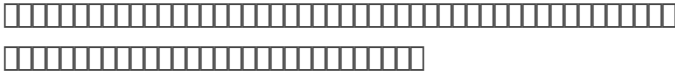


Chapter 49



Translation

The Sage has no fixed heart —
he takes the heart of the hundred families as his own.

Those who are good, I meet with goodness.
Those who are not good, I also meet with goodness.
Thus De perfects itself as goodness.

Those who are trustworthy, I meet with trust.
Those who are not trustworthy, I also meet with trust.
Thus De perfects itself as trust.

The worthy one moves through the world watchful and apprehensive,
gathering all hearts into his own.
The hundred families fix their eyes and ears upon him —
and he cherishes them all as his children.

Word Notes

- 卍 — "**all caution and concern**": Fearful, apprehensive.

Chapter Explanation

The Sage has no fixed heart — he takes the heart of the hundred families as his own heart. Among the hundred families, those who are good, he treats well, guiding them onward. Those who are not good, he also treats well, coaxing and shepherding them along. In this way, one can bring goodness to all under Heaven and perfect one's great De of goodness. Among the hundred families, those who are trustworthy, he meets with trust. Those who are not trustworthy, he also meets with trust. In this way, when those above value trust, the people will all become trustworthy, and one perfects one's great De of trust. The Sage, in the world, is all caution and apprehension, fearing that the divisions between self and other among the people run too deep for harmony. Therefore, for all the world, he merges his heart with theirs, eliminating the marks of distinction. The hundred families all fix their eyes and ears on scrutinizing who is good and who is not, who is trustworthy and who is not. But the Sage treats all the people of the world as children — no matter

what, he delights in them.

Discourse

The world knows more times of strife than of peace. On the small scale, this person cannot get along with that person. On the large scale, this nation contends with that nation. If we trace this disease to its root, it is always because ego-attachment runs too deep — knowing only the self, not knowing others — so that people cannot live in harmony. At first they wage war with tongues and pens. In the end it comes to guns and cannons. And once they contend with guns and cannons, the cruelty becomes extreme. By that point, even binding them with public law and governing them with penal statutes can only treat the exterior but not the interior, and can rescue the moment but not the future.

Therefore the Sage resolves the matter at the root.

Confucius said: "No presuppositions, no certainties, no rigidities, no self."

The Buddha said: "No mark of person, no mark of self, no mark of being, no mark of life-span."

Jesus said: "Love those who are your enemies; treat with goodness those who assail you."

All of these share the same purport as this chapter of Laozi.

As for the Patriarch of Islam, who said that the Lord practices goodness and forgiveness — this too accords with the meaning of this chapter, which teaches us to cherish all people of the world as children. When children are well-behaved, of course one delights in them. When children cause mischief, one delights in them just the same. Raise them up, educate them gradually, and in time they will turn out well. When this is so, what boundary between self and other remains? Is this not all under Heaven as one family, ten thousand states as one person?

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