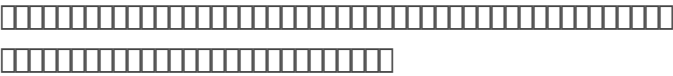


Chapter 73



Translation

Courage in daring leads to killing.
Courage in not-daring leads to life.
Of these two, one benefits, the other harms.
What Heaven finds hateful —
who truly knows the reason?
Even the Sage regards this with care.
The Dao of Heaven does not contend, yet excels at overcoming;
does not speak, yet excels at answering;
does not summon, yet all things arrive of themselves;
is unhurried, yet excels at planning.
The net of Heaven is vast, vast —
wide-meshed, and yet nothing slips through.

Word Notes

- 𠄎 — "**unhurried**": Relaxed, slow.
- 𠄎 — "**vast**": Immense, great.
- 𠄎 — "**wide [mesh]**": Sparse, loose.

Chapter Explanation

One who is courageous in rashness and the desire to prevail kills others. One who is courageous in not-daring, abiding in softness and lowliness, gives life to others. Of these two, one benefits people and the other harms them — this much people can know. But what Heaven finds hateful — the courageous who kill — who truly knows the reason? Even the Sage regards courage and daring with care.

The Dao of Heaven does not contend with people, yet it excels at overcoming. It does not speak, yet there is a response that follows naturally. It does not summon, yet things come of their own accord. Though exceedingly unhurried, it excels at planning. The net of Heaven is vast and immense; though its mesh is exceedingly wide, nothing slips through.

Discourse

The power of life and death is the great prerogative of Heaven. The Sage embodies Heaven and carries out Dao; his rewards and punishments are utterly impartial. This is to act as Heaven's agent in giving life and dealing death.

But if instead one kills to fatten oneself and harms others to benefit oneself, then when Heaven would give life, man goes ahead and kills. How could Heaven not find this utterly hateful?

Those who dare to kill surely believe that "the strong devour the weak" is a universal law of natural evolution. And they think Heaven, being without sound or scent, is incapable of reward or punishment. They do not realize that though Heaven does not speak, retribution arrives of itself. Its retribution may seem lenient, but in truth it is utterly rigorous — not a hair's breadth is out of place. No one has the power to escape it.

For the Dao of Heaven is the natural order. All the natural consequences that arise in human affairs are the workings of the Dao of Heaven. No one makes it so, yet it is as if someone did.

The rewards and punishments of Heaven being so rigorous — what need is there for men to be so eager to kill?

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