Chûn / Difficulty at the Beginning



(If we persevere, things will work out.)

This hexagram is composed of *K'an* (rain) and *Chên* (thunder), two of the most active trigrams. Their interaction describes the "teeming chaotic profusion" that creates multiple possibilities at the beginning of new situations, so that we do not know which way to go. We must not allow ourselves to be intimidated by the storm—the flux and ambiguity of such times—so that we jump to the conclusion that Fate is against us, and that we are left to resolve the situation without any help. Restless action interferes with the creative process unfolding. If we can persevere in non-action and disengagement, the Creative will resolve everything correctly.

Often we receive this hexagram when we have allowed the stress of the situation to prevent us from gaining a true perspective. Feeling unable to wait for the perspective to become clear, we virtually jump to any solution that offers itself, or we fall back into old ways of doing things and abandon the slow, step-by-step way of the Sage to 'go with the flow' and allow the correct way to show itself. A true perspective is possible only when we disperse the pressures that urge us to act, and when we relinquish seeing the situation as a problem requiring intervention. It is also important to ask help of the Higher Power to gain the insight that makes progress possible.

During the difficult times at the beginning we need to realize that everything that happens has good purposes that will be understood later. We are at the dynamic moment in which an inner-world change is beginning to precipitate into an outer-world change; whether the change is carried to completion depends on our not interfering, and on our seeking guidance from the Sage of the *I Ching*, and following it.

3. Difficulty at the Beginning

First Line: Hesitation and hindrance. It furthers one to remain persevering. It furthers one to appoint helpers. When we are confronted with difficulties at the beginning of situations, we should resist giving up. We may be on the correct path, or only slightly off it. Help comes through being careful not to force matters. Frequently, help comes as a relieving insight.

Second Line: The maiden is chaste. Ten years—then she pledges herself. The "turn of affairs" mentioned in the commentary refers to an idea that presents itself as a solution to the difficulty. This, however, is the wrong solution. Although we look forward enthusiastically to relief from the situation, taking action based on this idea would commit us to embarrassing obligations. We should remain "chaste," or uncommitted, and avoid trying to free the stuck Wheel of Fate through contrived solutions.

Third Line: Whoever hunts deer without the forester [the Sage] only loses his way in the forest. The superior man...prefers to desist. To go on brings humiliation. This line means that the difficulties of our situation are such that we cannot overcome them without the aid of the Higher Power, whose help we may obtain only if we cultivate a humble and open mind.

We receive this line when we wish to be out of a situation to the extent that we consider taking action. We are advised to wait until a "real influence" shows itself. This means we wait until we attain the help of the Creative to understand what we must do. In the meantime we need to remain in the situation, free of resistance. It is as if we are participants in Act I (or even Act II) of the drama, and it is not yet time for the denouement of Act III.

Fourth Line: Horse and wagon part. Strive for union. To go brings good fortune. Everything acts to further. In our enthusiasm to solve the matter, we thrust it aside; we cease trusting the Unknown, and take comfort in comprehensive solutions, or we give up altogether. It is our duty to pick the burden back up and carry on, however humiliating this might be. This means we submit to being guided, without knowing any answers in advance; we allow the correct way to show itself as if we were watching oncoming moving picture frames. In trusting the Unknown to show the way, we return to the correct path.

This line may either refer to our relationship with another person, or to our relationship with the Sage. If we have departed from the way of the Sage through mistrust, then we need only ask for help to "hitch up" our wagon again. If we have given up on others, then we need to realize that the difficulties that push us toward feeling that the task is hopeless are only part of the general difficulties that occur during new beginnings.

When the "Wheel of Fate" gets stuck in the mud, to revolve in its own vicious circle, a hopeless attitude holds it in that pattern. Only when we stop doubting the power of truth and the power of the Creative can the Wheel of Fate become unstuck and start rolling forward in real progress. So long as our ego insists on visible progress, so long as we condition our effort at doing what is right by saying to God, in effect, "I will work only if I can see that you are doing your part," the Cosmos cannot come to our aid.

We cannot make demands on the Higher Power. Only when we unconditionally follow the truth and do what is correct can things work out. Certainly, giving up insures failure. We must allow that people can, and will, find the way if we will allow them to discover it by themselves.

Fifth Line: Difficulties in blessing. A little perseverance brings good fortune. Great perseverance brings misfortune. Here, the dark force prevails and everything one does meets with suspicion. We must remain firmly centered within. This brings about the confidence necessary to succeed. To regain objectivity, we should persevere quietly, allowing ourselves to be led out of the danger of doubt.

Sometimes this line is related to the fifth line of *Peace* (Hex. 11). Both lines refer to the need to be patient with people who feel a sense of inferiority; envy and feelings of inferiority create tension. What helps most is to be steady, independent, and detached.

Sixth Line: *Horse and wagon part. Bloody tears flow.* Desire and fear prevail. The child within us rules. Despairing that the Sage will ever come to our aid, or that things can work out, we give up our path. *One should not persist in this.*