

## **Exploring the *Tao Te Ching***

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### **ORDER OF SERVICE/HANDOUT**

#### **Welcome & Introduction**

#### **Opening Words: from the *Tao Te Ching***

*Every being in the universe  
is an expression of the Tao.  
It springs into existence  
unconscious, perfect, free,  
takes on a physical body,  
lets circumstances complete it.*

- Verse 51 (excerpt)

#### **Theme: What is Tao?**

**Video Clip:** The *Tao Te Ching*, read by Wayne Dyer (excerpt) –  
Verses 1 & 2

**Readings:** Several verses or excerpts from the *Tao Te Ching*

*The Tao is always at ease.  
It overcomes without competing,  
answers without speaking a word,  
arrives without being summoned,  
accomplishes without a plan.*

*Its net covers the whole universe.  
And though its meshes are wide,  
it doesn't let a thing slip through.*

- Verse 73

**Theme: Concept of Opposites (Duality)**

*“The YIN and YANG symbol, with white representing Yang and black representing Yin. The symbol is a visual depiction of the intertwined duality of all things in nature, a common theme in Taoism.” - Wikipedia*

**Readings:** Several verses or excerpts from the *Tao Te Ching*

*When people see some things as beautiful,  
other things become ugly.*

*When people see some things as good,  
other things become bad.*

*Being and non-being create each other.*

*Difficult and easy support each other.*

*Long and short define each other.*

*High and low depend on each other.*

*Before and after follow each other.*

- Verse 2 (excerpt)

*The Tao doesn't take sides;*

*It gives birth to both good and evil.*

*The Master doesn't take sides;*

*She welcomes both saints and sinners.*

- Verse 5 (excerpt)

**Theme : The Way – How to Navigate Life as a Taoist**

*In dwelling, live close to the ground.*

*In thinking, keep to the simple.*

*In conflict, be fair and generous.*

*In governing, don't try to control.*

*In work, do what you enjoy.*

*In family life, be completely present.*

*When you are content to be simply yourself,  
and don't compare or compete,  
everybody will respect you.*

- Verse 8 (excerpt)

*Fame or integrity – which is more important?  
Money or happiness – which is more valuable?  
Success or failure – which is more destructive?*

*If you look to others for fulfillment,  
you will never truly be fulfilled.  
If your happiness depends on money,  
you will never be happy with yourself.*

*Be content with what you have.  
Rejoice in the way things are.  
When you realize there is nothing lacking,  
the whole world belongs to you.*

- Verse 44

**Additional Readings from the *Tao Te Ching* for the Themes  
*The Way and Mastery***

**Theme: Mastery, Leadership, Governance**

*If you want to learn how to govern,  
avoid being clever or rich.  
The simplest pattern is the clearest.  
Content with ordinary life,  
you can show all people the way  
back to their own nature.*

- Verse 65 (excerpt)

*Do you want to improve the world?  
I don't think it can be done.*

*The world is sacred.  
It can't be improved.  
If you tamper with it, you'll ruin it.  
If you treat it like an object, you'll lose it.*

*There is a time for being ahead,  
a time for being behind,  
a time for being in motion,  
a time for being at rest,  
a time for being vigorous,  
a time for being exhausted,  
a time for being safe,  
a time for being in danger.*

*The Master sees things as they are,  
without trying to control them.  
She lets them go their own way,  
and resides at the center of her circle.*

- Verse 29

*Governing a large country  
is like frying a small fish.  
You spoil it with too much poking.*

*Center your country in the Tao  
and evil will have no power.  
Not that it isn't there,  
but you'll be able to step out of its way.*

*Give evil nothing to oppose  
and it will disappear by itself.  
- Verse 60*

*When a country is in harmony with the Tao,  
the factories make trucks and tractors.  
When a country goes counter to the Tao,  
warheads are stockpiled outside the cities.*

*There is no greater illusion than fear,  
no greater wrong than preparing to defend yourself,  
no greater misfortune than having an enemy.*

*Whoever can see through all fear  
will always be safe.  
- Verse 46*

*When a country obtains great power,  
it becomes like the sea:  
All streams run downward into it.  
The more powerful it grows,  
the greater the need for humility.  
Humility means trusting the Tao,  
thus never needing to be defensive.  
- Verse 61 (excerpt)*

**Closing Words: from the *Tao Te Ching***

*Let the Tao be present in your life  
and you will become genuine.  
Let it be present in your family  
and your family will flourish.  
Let it be present in your country  
and your country will be an example  
to all countries in the world.  
Let it be present in the universe  
and the universe will sing.  
- Verse 54 (excerpt)*

**Resources:**

**Book:** *The Tao De Ching*, translated and edited by Stephen Mitchell .

**Online version of the Stephen Mitchell translation:**  
[media.oaipdf.com](http://media.oaipdf.com)

**Book:** *What is Tao?* by Alan Watts

**YouTube Video:** *The Tao Te Ching*, read by Wayne Dyer,  
with Music & Nature Sounds

**YouTube video:** *The Art of Effortless Living (A Taoist  
Documentary)* by Jason Gregory