

## *Tao in Harmony with Christianity - Bill Krause*

Before I start this lecture, please, let me give everyone a short history of myself. I was raised in a Catholic family. We went to Mass every Sunday and kept all the rules dictated to us by the Church. I went to a Catholic grade school taught by a religious order of nuns. For high school I thought I had a calling to the priesthood. I went to a seminary in Niagara Falls, Canada. I had to leave there due to personality faults. However, I was well schooled in the Theology of the Church. I spent the rest of my high school years being taught by a religious order of priests. This is how I may speak with some authority on this following subject.

This lecture will establish a relationship and a harmony in spirit between Tao and the Bible. We hope to show passages in the Bible that reflect the teachings of Tao and how we should to apply them. But first, we must give some simple definitions to the following subjects: Tao; as defined in the Tao Te Ching Chapter 1,

" The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao.

The name that can be named is not the eternal name.

The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth."

This passage means that Tao, or God, was always, is present, and shall never cease to exist. It should also be stated that the author of the Bible is not man

but God speaking through these people whom He gave divine inspiration. They were inspired to write the following verses.

The first discussion is about the creation of all matter and life. This is referenced in Genesis. The first few chapters tell us about how there was nothing. Genesis Chapter 1 states that, " In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth; the earth was waste and void; darkness covered the abyss, and the spirit of God was stirring above the waters." This passage states that God existed before anything else existed. We also know that Tao existed before creation from the teachings of Lao Tsu in his book Tao Te Ching as stated above.

In Genesis 1:26~27 it states "God said, 'let *us* make mankind in our image and likeness; and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the cattle, over all the wild animals and every creature that crawls on the earth.'

"God created man in his image.

In the image of God he created him.

Male and female he created them."

We continue to Genesis 2:7,"Then the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being." These passages allude to two important issues: that the image spoken about is our True Self, our Soul or the life spirit, and that God is more than one Person with using the plural form instead of the singular form.

While still elaborating in Genesis, let us divert slightly. In Chapter 3:18, God said after Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, "Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you, and you shall eat the plants of the field." This was their punishment for eating the forbidden fruit. In this passage God wishes to show the people that to disobey a law is to receive the wrath of God.

These above Biblical passages indicate that God existed before creation; He was the Creator of all things physical. God breathed life into the lump of clay and created man. He instilled life, a soul into man thus giving him a unique position in creation.

Even the wisest of our present theoretical scientists can evaluate the Big Bang back to almost its beginning. However, when asked what was before the Big Bang, Stephen W. Hawking said that physical laws would exist after the Big Bang, but there are no laws that fit the time OF the Big Bang. He states that it was up to God to start the ball rolling. So long as the universe had a beginning, we could suppose it had a Creator. If the universe was completely self contained, having no boundary or edge, it would neither have a beginning nor end; it would simply be. What place, then, for a Creator? To paraphrase Stephen Hawking, consider this; if science does find a complete theory, it should be understandable to all people, not just a few scientists. It would be a time when all may partake in discussions of the question of WHY it is that we and the universe exist. If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason-- for then we would know the mind of GOD.

Looking to the New Testament there are many references to the Tao. In John 1:1~5, "In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the Beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was made nothing that has been made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness grasped it not." This passage reinforces the passage in Genesis 2:7 as stated above. The meaning is that God or Tao has always existed and He will continue to exist after all physical matter ceases to exist for He is the creator of all. In the Tao Te Ching, chapter 25, it partly states,

"Something mysteriously formed,  
Born before heaven and earth.  
In the silence and the void,  
Standing alone and unchanging.  
Ever present and in motion.  
Perhaps it is the mother of ten thousand things.  
I do not know its name.  
Call it Tao. For lack of a better, I call it great."

The essence of human life is called the True Self, the Soul. It is the Spiritual energy of God, Tao. Each of us received from God the True Self through our parents when they gave us life.

During Jesus Christ's life on earth, He revealed many things to us and yet He left many things not necessarily unanswered, but not wholly explained for us. Therefore, some of His words must be interpreted into something that is easily understood. In my interpretation, I will try to show how the Bible and

the teachings of Jesus Christ are in harmony with Tao. We shall inquire from the Tao Te Ching about how we should conduct ourselves in our daily lives. It states that we should have compassion and love for others. In the Bible many passages state this idea. As an example look to St. Mark, Chapter 12, verse 29 through 31 when Jesus was asked what the greatest command was? He replied, "The first commandment of all is 'Hear O Israel! The Lord our God is one God; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength.' This is the first commandment. The second is like it, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

Tao tells us to be compassionate with others as the Bible teaches us also. In Luke 3:11 it states, "and he answered and said to him, 'Let him who has two tunics share with him who has none; and let him who has food do likewise.'" Chapter 77 in the Tao Te Ching states in part the following,

" The Tao of heaven is to take from those who have too much and give to those who do not have enough."

Man's way is different.

He takes from those who do not have enough

to give to those who already have too much.

What man has more than enough and gives it to the world?

Only the man of Tao."

Tao Te Ching teaches about Tao and how we need to focus on our True Nature, our True Self, and not to be centered on the material things of the world. The Bible also acquaints us to this same philosophy of our True

Nature in Luke 18:24~27. Jesus was asked by a certain man asking what good work shall I do to have eternal life? Jesus replied that God is good and that he needs to keep the Commandments, which can be summed up by saying "Do unto others that you would have done to you." Jesus also said that he should not kill, commit adultery, steal, or lie about anyone or anything. Honor your father and mother and family. However this certain man said that he has done all these things. "What else can I do?" So Jesus said to him, "To be perfect go sell all your possessions and give it to the poor and follow me." The man thought about this and he became very sad. He went away because he was very rich and did not want to give up his worldly possessions. Tao teaches us that worldly possessions are not important. Tao Te Ching in chapter 46 also gives us this same advice. In part it says, "No greater misfortune than wanting something for oneself. Therefore he who knows that enough is enough will always have enough."

Tao teaches us that we should forgive others for wrongs done to us. And also in the Bible in Luke 17:3~4, "Take heed to yourselves. If thy brother sin, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. And if seven times in a day he sins against thee, and seven times in the day turn back to thee, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him." And the greatest forgiveness that could be done was when Jesus, hanging on the cross, forgave the very people who put Him there. "Rather, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing." (Luke 23:34). That is true forgiveness!

Tao instructs us to be humble and to have compassion for others, not be so concerned with material goods, but for what reason? To have our True Nature or our soul spend an everlasting existence with God in Heaven. This is

the reward for living that life style. The Tao Te Ching in chapter two shows us that we should follow the right path, doing the work of God and not striving for praise from the work done. In the Bible this is also apparent. In Matt 6:2~4, Jesus states, "Therefore when thou givest alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and streets, in order that they may be honored by men." Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But when thou givest alms, do not let thy left hand know what the right hand is doing, so that thy alms may be given in secret; and thy Father, who sees in secret, will reward thee." The Bible also teaches us from Luke 13:24~29. "Strive to enter by the narrow gate; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. But when the master of the house has entered and shut the door, you will begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, open for us!' And he shall say to you in answer, 'do not know from where you are from.' Then you shall begin to say, 'We ate and drank in thy presence, and thou didst teach in our streets.' And he shall say to you, 'I do not know from where you are from. Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity.' There will be the weeping, and the gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, but you yourselves cast forth outside. And they will come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and will feast in the Kingdom of God." This passage tells us that the door to heaven is narrow and will be closed completely if we do not follow Tao. Jesus had tremendous love of children for wherever he would stop to speak, He would allow the children to come close to Him. In Matt 19:13~15, Mark 10:13~16, and Luke 18:15~17, these passages reveal to us His love. In Mark 7:9~11 He shows us that honoring our parents is a commandment not to be broken. "And

He said to them, Well do you nullify the commandment of God, that you may keep your own tradition! For Moses Said, 'Honor thy father and thy mother'; and, 'Let him who curses his father or mother be put to death.' But you say, 'Let a man say to his father or his mother, "any support thou mightest have had from me is Corban" (that is, given to God).'"

Tao Te Ching chapters 18 and 19 also reflects love for our family. This Filial Piety denotes the love and harmony within the family. The family not just includes father, mother, brother, and sister, but all family members, no matter how far distant they are. We can expand this to include everyone for we are all related through the Tao. God gave us all a soul that is part of Him, therefore, we are all related under God's omnipotence and majesty.

Before Jesus was taken into heaven to be with His Father, He told his disciples that they will be visited by the Holy Spirit. "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in foreign tongues, even as the Holy Spirit prompted them to speak," Acts 2:4. The Holy Spirit is within us and guiding us to fulfill our True Nature. Tao is speaking to us; all we have to do is listen and follow.

As discussions of Tao continue in temples and other places where people congregate, there are references that Jesus said about prayer. It is in Matt 18:19-20 where Jesus said, "I say to you further, that if two of you shall agree on earth about anything at all for which they ask, it shall be done for them by my father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together for my sake, there am I in the midst of them." Search your True Nature, that is where you will find your way, your guidance to your ultimate reward.



A point to ponder. . .The Bible only gives evidence of Jesus at the time of his birth and when He was twelve years old. We then read about His public life at the age of thirty. Question...What happened to Him from the time that He was twelve until He was thirty? Could He have spent time visiting the far east in India and China? Who knows?