

## Becoming A Brilliant Star General

(Ch 25)

There was something formless and perfect  
before the universe was born.  
It is serene. Empty.  
Solitary. Unchanging.  
Infinite. Eternally present.  
It is the mother of the universe.  
For lack of a better name,  
I call it the Tao.

It flows through all things,  
inside and outside, and returns  
to the origin of all things.

The Tao is great.  
The universe is great.  
Earth is great.  
Man is great.  
These are the four great powers.

Man follows the earth.  
Earth follows the universe.  
The universe follows the Tao.  
The Tao follows only itself.

(Ch 34)

The great Tao flows everywhere.  
All things are born from it,  
yet it doesn't create them.  
It pours itself into its work,  
yet it makes no claim.  
It nourishes infinite worlds,  
yet it doesn't hold on to them.  
Since it is merged with all things  
and hidden in their hearts,  
it can be called humble.  
Since all things vanish into it  
and it alone endures,  
it can be called great.  
It isn't aware of its greatness;  
thus it is truly great.

(From Ch 37)

The Tao never does anything,  
yet through it all things are done.

If powerful men and women  
could venter themselves in it,  
the whole world would be transformed  
by itself, in its natural rhythms.  
People would be content  
with their simple, everyday lives,  
in harmony, and free of desire.

(Ch 5)

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.

The Tao is like a bellows:  
it is empty yet infinitely capable.  
The more you use it, the more it produces;  
the more you talk of it, the less you  
understand.

Hold on to the center.

(Ch 11)

We join spokes together in a wheel,  
but it is the center hole  
that makes the wagon move.

We shape clay into a pot,  
but it is the emptiness inside  
that holds whatever we want.

We hammer wood for a house,  
but it is the inner space  
that makes it livable.

We work with being,  
but non-being is what we use.

(Ch 23)

Express yourself completely,  
then keep quiet.

Be like the forces of nature:  
when it blows, there is only wind;  
when it rains, there is only rain;  
when the clouds pass, the sun shines  
through.

If you open yourself to the Tao,  
you are at one with the Tao  
and you can embody it completely.  
If you open yourself to insight,  
you are at one with insight  
and you can use it completely.  
If you open yourself to loss,  
you are at one with loss  
and you can accept it completely.

Open yourself to the Tao,  
then trust your natural responses;  
and everything will fall into place.

(Ch 28)

Know the white,  
yet keep to the black:  
be a pattern for the world.  
If you are a pattern for the world,  
the Tao will be strong inside you  
and there will be nothing you can't do.

Know the personal,  
yet keep to the impersonal:  
accept the world as it is.  
If you accept the world,  
the Tao will be luminous inside you  
and you will return to your primal self.

The world is formed from the void,  
like utensils from a block of wood.  
The Master knows the utensils,  
yet keeps to the the block:  
thus she can use all things.

(Ch 40)

Return is the movement of the Tao.  
Yielding is the way of the Tao.

All things are born of being.  
Being is born of non-being

(Ch 47)

Without opening your door,  
you can open your heart to the world.  
Without looking out your window,  
you can see the essence of the Tao.

The more you know,  
the less you understand.

The Master arrives without leaving,  
sees the light without looking,  
achieves without doing a thing.

(From Ch 64)

Therefore the Master takes action  
by letting things take their course.  
He remains as calm  
at the end as at the beginning.  
He has nothing,  
thus has nothing to lose.  
What he desires is non-desire;  
what he learns is to unlearn.  
He simply reminds people  
of who they have always been.  
He cares about nothing but the Tao.  
Thus he can care for all things.

(Ch 67)

Some say that my teaching is nonsense.  
Others call it lofty but impractical.  
But to those who have looked inside  
themselves,  
this nonsense makes perfect sense.  
And to those who put it into practice,  
this loftiness has roots that go deep.

I have just three things to teach:  
simplicity, patience, compassion.  
These three are your greatest treasures.

Simple in actions and in thoughts,  
you return to the source of being.  
Patient with both friends and enemies,  
you accord with the way things are.  
Compassionate toward yourself,  
you reconcile all beings in the world.

(From Ch 74)  
Trying to control the future  
is like trying to take the master carpenter's  
place.  
When you handle the master carpenter's  
tools,  
chances are that you'll cut your hand.

Compiled by: B. Matthews, July 1999

Source: Lao-Tzu. (1995). Tao Te Ching (Trans. by S. Mitchell). Available online:  
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