



### **About GlobalSOMA:**

In early 2011, a group of community members came together to honor and celebrate Maplewood and South Orange, New Jersey as diverse, international and welcoming communities. That meeting inspired a vision for the future, and the community members founded GlobalSOMA to accomplish that vision.

### **The Vision of GlobalSOMA:**

To support the rise of South Orange and Maplewood as the leading global suburbs of New Jersey and the New York metropolitan area.

### **Arts and Culture Committee:**

Arts & Culture is at the heart of GlobalSOMA's mission. At our core, we at GlobalSOMA simply want to improve the quality of life for all residents, and that means bringing interesting and provocative arts and culture events to the community. The Co-Chairs of GlobalSOMA's Arts & Culture Committee are Shirley Matthews and Sangeeta Rao. If you are interested in getting involved or learning more, check out our website at [www.globalsoma.net](http://www.globalsoma.net) or email us at [globalsomanet@gmail.com](mailto:globalsomanet@gmail.com).

# Asia in Three Texts



*Bhagavad Gita*

*Tao Te Ching*

*Genesis*

# *If You Have More Time...*



*China—*

*The Search for Modern China, Jonathan Spence*

*India—*

*India After Gandhi, Ramachandra Guha*

*The Hindus, Wendy Doniger*

*West Asia/The West/Judaism-Christianity-Islam—*

*The Origins of Political Order, Francis Fukuyama*

*The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization, Richard Bulliet*

# The Bhagavad Gita

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।  
दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥  
अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।  
दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ॥  
तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।  
भवन्ति सम्पदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥

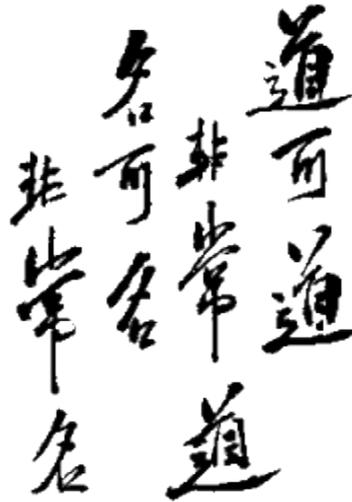
*Krishna: Yield not to unmanliness. It is unworthy of you. Shake off this paltry faintheartedness. Stand up, O scorcher of enemies!*

*Arjuna: How should I fight Bhishma and Drona with arrows on the battlefield, O Madhusudana? Worthy of reverence are they, O slayer of enemies! It is surely better to live even on alms in this world than to slay these noble-minded masters.*

\* \* \*

*Krishna: The unreal has no being; the real never ceases to be. These bodies are known to have an end; the dweller in the body is eternal, imperishable, infinite. Therefore, O Bharata, fight!*

# The Tao Te Ching

The image shows a vertical calligraphic inscription of the first paragraph of the first chapter of the Tao Te Ching. The characters are written in a fluid, expressive style. The text is arranged in two columns, with the right column containing the characters '道可道' and the left column containing '非常名'. The characters are arranged in a way that they are read from right to left, top to bottom.

*First paragraph of the first chapter*

*All in the world know the beauty of the beautiful, and in doing this they have the idea of what ugliness is; they all know the skill of the skilful, and in doing this they have the idea of what the want of skill is. So it is that existence and non-existence give birth the one to the idea of the other.*

*\* \* \**

*Heaven and earth do not act from any wish to be benevolent; they deal with all things as the straw dogs are dealt with. The sages do not act from any wish to be benevolent: they deal with the people as the straw dogs are dealt with.*

# Genesis

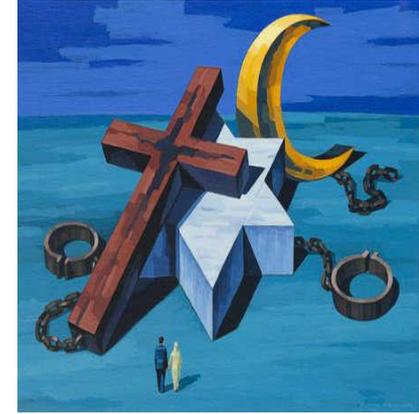
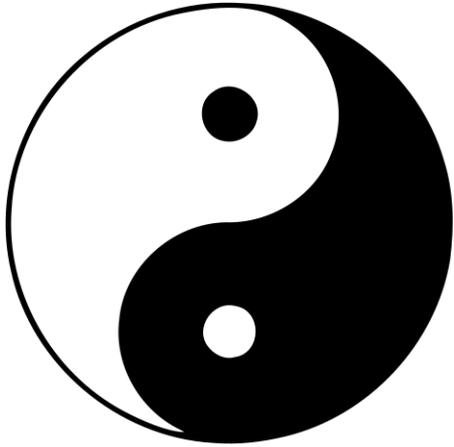
וְאֵיבָהּ אֲשִׁית בֵּינְךָ וּבֵין הָאִשָּׁה  
the woman and between between thee I will put And enmity  
וּבֵין זֶרְעֶךָ וּבֵין זֶרְעָהּ  
her seed and between thy seed and between  
הוּא יִשׁוּפֶךָ רֹאשׁ  
head will crush thy (s)he  
וְאִתָּה תִּשׁוּפְנוּ עָקֵב  
heel will strike at the while thou

God to the man: “Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

The serpent to the woman: “Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil.”

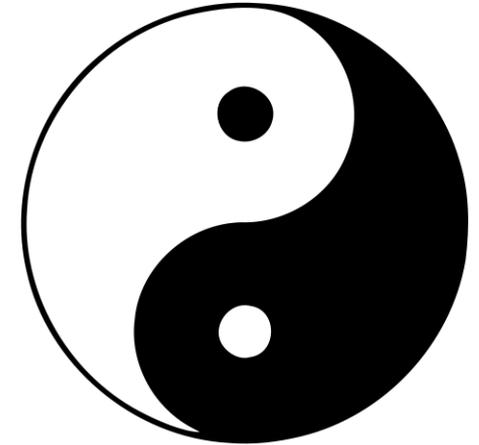
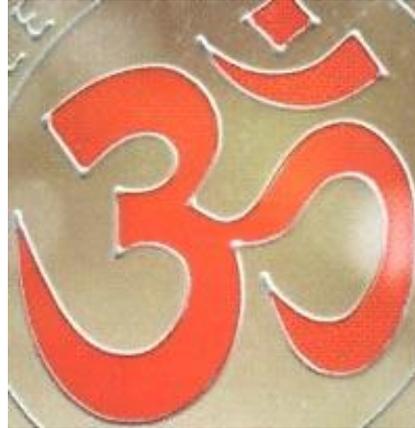
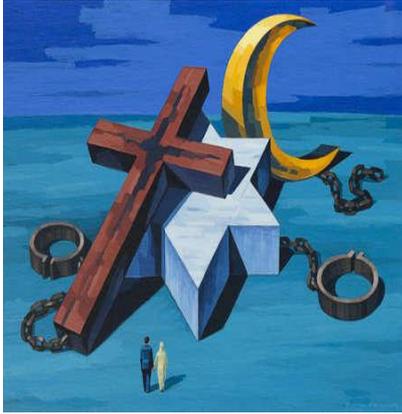
God to the man: “Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying: Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shall thou eat of it all the days of thy life.”

# *Similar Traditions/Different Traditions*



*A key point of similarity: All three texts present an authority figure (Krishna, the Daoist sage, God) who is simultaneously worthy of obedience and subject to ethical criticism. Authority is presented as right and also as wrong, in that the three texts are written in a way that allows one to reasonably believe that Krishna is wrong to command Arjuna to fight, that the sage is wrong to treat people like the straw dogs made and thrown away for holiday sacrifices, and that God is wrong to forbid and punish knowledge of good and evil.*

# *Similar Traditions/Different Traditions*



*Some points of difference:*

- 1) The Tao Te Ching is distinctive in its affirmation of duality; it lacks the supernatural element, the narrative drive, and the empathy with recalcitrant, subordinate humans found in the Gita and Genesis.*
- 2) Genesis lacks the concern with transcending attachment that is central to both the Gita and the Tao te Ching.*
- 3) The Gita is unique among the texts by virtue of having the strongest links to both of the other two; it is also distinctive in its preoccupation with violence/non-violence and kinship loyalties.*

# Back to Maplewood and South Orange...



Connections between Asian cultures (and other international cultures) and our communities...

Maplewood and South Orange as global suburbs...

Ideas for future GlobalSOMA arts and culture events...