

In the *Tao-te ching*, *wu-wei* seems to imply a nearly invisible, hands-off, small-scale government. The job of the wise ruler is to shield the people from excessive regulation, overbearing laws and decrees, and unsettling ideas. Such policies may bring people closer to the natural order, but they have also been criticized as a recipe for despotism.

WRITING TO UNDERSTAND:

CRITIQUING PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS

SECTION 2.6

1. The central aim of Buddhism is to quench all desire. What would be the moral implications of a life in which that goal is successfully achieved?
2. What is your opinion of the Buddhist doctrines of karma and rebirth? Do they seem plausible? What is your judgment based on—personal experience, faith, science, or philosophical or logical considerations?
3. Do you agree with some critics of Hinduism that the caste system is inherently unjust? Why or why not?
4. What is the ultimate goal in life according to Daoism?
5. What is the Buddhist view of the self? How does it differ from the Christian view? What evidence or argument can be used to support each view?

Review Notes

2.1 OVERVIEW: GOD AND PHILOSOPHY

- The impact of religion on the world is reason enough to examine its claims critically and dispassionately—that is, philosophically. To judge the worth of any religious claims, we need the objective stance and critical reasoning of philosophical inquiry—to ask whether the claims are supported by good reasons.

2.2 ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

- Cosmological arguments begin with the empirical fact that the universe, or one of its essential properties, exists—and end with the conclusion that only God could be responsible for this fact. For example, in his first-cause argument, Aquinas contends that some things in the universe are caused to exist, and that nothing can cause itself to exist or come into being through an infinite series of causes. So there must be a first uncaused cause of everything—and this first uncaused cause is God. Using the Big Bang as a starting point, Craig defends the Kalam cosmological argument.