

The surface of our planet is covered chiefly by water. Plant and animal life forms, including our own, are composed mostly of water. We continually confirm the importance of water in our references to it:

- “That’s water over the bridge.”
- “Still waters run deep.”
- the River Jordan
- the River Styx
- holy water
- “Wash your sins away in the water.”

It’s praised in poetry, as in Thomas Moore’s *Hymn for Water*: 1780-1852 Irish, *Last Rose of Summer*

“Water has sunk more grievances than wine
And will continue to. Turn the water on;
Stick your hand in the stream; water will run
And kiss it like a dog, or it will shake
It like a friend, or it will tremble there
Like a woman sobbing with her hair
Falling in her face.”

In theater, as in Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd’s play *Ion*: 17795-1854 British judge

“’Tis a little thing
To give a cup of water; yet its draught
Of cool refreshment, drained by fevered lips,
May give a shock of pleasure to the frame
More exquisite than when nectarean juice
Renews the life of joy in happiest hours.”

Water is used physically and symbolically in many religions and philosophies.

(This, from *Change Your Thoughts – Change Your Life*, by Dr. Wayne W. Dyer)

Be like water seems to be repeated throughout the Tao Te Ching. This element is closer to being Tao-like than anything else in this world, so it a perfectly suitable symbol for teaching about the Great Way....

[In the 78th verse of the Tao Te Ching, Lao Tzu says,]

“Nothing in the world is softer
and weaker than water.

But for attacking the hard, the unyielding,
Nothing can surpass it.”

...picture yourself as having the same qualities as water. Allow your soft, weak, yielding, fluid self to enter places where you previously were excluded because of your inclination to be solid and hard. Flow softly into the lives of those with whom you feel conflicted. Picture your self entering their private inner selves, seeing perhaps for the first time what they’re experiencing. Keep this image of yourself as gently coursing water, and watch how your relationships change.

(And this, adapted from a sermon by the Rev. Morris Hudgins, of the Northwest UU Congregation, using ‘water’ for ‘river’ in many places.)

Water is Shiva God as described in Hinduism, creator, sustainer, and destroyer. Water is in each of us, and we are part of the water.

Water is creator. It brings new life into being. In many religions, the river is a symbol of the creative power of nature and time. It is a symbol of fertility. And it is a symbol of the irreversible passage of time. All life comes from the sea. In the end all life returns to the sea. Lao-Tzu wrote that “Water never rests, neither by day nor by night.” It is always flowing. So it is with life. Water never stops. If it does, it becomes stagnant. The water of life is ever flowing, around us, in us, and through us.

Water, like life, is ever changing. The Greek philosopher Heraclites said, “You cannot step twice into the same river.” Creativity, energy, beauty, peace, enters my life through flowing waters.

Second, water can be a destroyer. What was once a quiet stream can be a roaring river, taking everything in its path, no matter how sturdy it seems, and moving it out of the way.

Third, water is preserver. It not only creates. It also preserves what has been created. We can go to water for peace and solace. We go to the water for healing, for peace, and for new life. Yes, water can bring us peace. But, peace can only be found when we stop to let it come over us.... The river of life can preserve us and heal us....

May we flow like the water, ever changing, ever creating, finding peace and wholeness.