

## Chapter 1 : The Door Of Liberation by Tenzin Wangyal

*The Door of Liberation: Essential Teachings of the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition - Kindle edition by Dalai Lama, Wangyal. Download it once and read it on your Kindle device, PC, phones or tablets.*

Posted on October 23, Views: Meditating on the three doors of liberation helps us throw away these notions. The three doors of liberation, which are taught in every Buddhist tradition, are emptiness, signlessness, and aimlessness. Contemplating these three profound truths can help liberate us from fear and suffering. They are our doorways to freedom. Living mindfully and with concentration, we see a deeper reality and are able to witness impermanence without fear, anger, or despair. Nirvana is not a place to get to. Nirvana is available to us right now. Emptiness, signlessness, and aimlessness are called the three doors of liberation because if we meditate on them, they will liberate us from all kinds of discriminative thinking so we can touch our true nature. The three doors of liberation are emptiness, signlessness, and aimlessness. The Perfect Communication

The first door of liberation is emptiness. Emptiness is not a philosophy; it is a description of reality. Suppose you have two glasses, one full of tea and one without any tea. You would describe the glass without tea as empty, but empty of what? And the glass itself still exists, whether or not it contains any tea. Emptiness does not mean non-being. There is a big difference between emptiness and non-existence. In order to be empty, you have to be there. Emptiness is always emptiness of something, just as consciousness is always consciousness of something. When we look into a beautiful chrysanthemum, we see that everything in the cosmos is present in that flower—clouds, sunshine, soil, minerals, space, and time. The glass, the flower, everything inside us and around us, and we ourselves are only empty of one thing: The simplest description of emptiness in the Buddhist teachings is this sentence: This is because that is. A flower cannot exist by itself alone. To be can only mean to inter-be. To be by oneself alone is impossible. Everything else is present in the flower; the only thing the flower is empty of is itself. Looking in this way, we begin to see that everything has the nature of emptiness. Sometimes that nature of emptiness is called non-self. When we look at an action, we believe there needs to be a separate actor existing behind it. The wind blows, yet really there is no blower. As we cannot find a blower outside of the wind, nor a rainer outside of the rain, in the same way, there is no thinker existing outside of a thought. When we think something, we are those thoughts. We and our thoughts are not separate. When we do something, our action is us. The one who bows and the one who is bowed to are both by nature empty. Therefore the communication between us is inexpressibly perfect. A buddha is made only of non-buddha elements, just as I am made only of non-me elements. Communication is perfect when we can understand that the one who bows and the one who is bowed to are both empty. If we look at a child, we can see that we are fully present in every cell of that child. When he walks and talks, they walk and talk as well. When we can see those around us with this understanding, instead of with anger and attachment, we enjoy the fruit of the contemplation on emptiness. The Wonderful Journey of Singleness

The second door of liberation is signlessness. A sign marks the appearance of something, its form. We recognize things based on their sign, but we are often fooled by the outer form of things. But if we look long enough, it seems the cloud we are looking at disappears. Just yesterday your friend was still alive. Now it seems that she has passed from being into non-being. Your beloved one is still somewhere there. If you have the wisdom of signlessness, you can still recognize your beloved one in her new forms. Imagine that I pour some tea from a teapot into an empty glass. When I drink the tea, it changes form. If I give a talk soon after drinking that tea, the talk will have a little bit of tea in it. So the tea is not just in the pot. It has a journey. It travels and has many forms. This is true for us as well. We are not only the body, thoughts, and feelings we have right now. Every thought, word, and action we produce continues after our bodies have disintegrated. Our forms change, but nothing is lost. Whether the cloud has the form of a cloud, the rain, the river, or the tea, it continues on its wonderful journey. Whether the cloud has the form of a cloud, the rain, or the tea, it continues on its journey. The Happiness of Aimlessness

The third door of liberation is aimlessness. What you are looking for is not outside of you; it is already here. You already are what you want to become. Concentrating on aimlessness releases your longing and craving for something in the future and elsewhere. You may be running all your life instead

of living it. You may be running after happiness, love, romance, success, or enlightenment. Concentrating on aimlessness consists of removing the object of your pursuit, your goal. If you are running after nirvana, you should know that nirvana is already there in yourself and in everything. If you are running after the Buddha, be aware that the Buddha is already in you. If you are seeking happiness, be aware that happiness is available in the here and now. This insight helps you stop running. Only when you stop running can you get the fulfillment and happiness you have been looking for. It is water right in the here and now. You are the manifestation of the cosmos. You are wonderful just like that. Only when you stop running can you get fulfillment and happiness. But where are we going? We think we are born and we have to achieve something before we die. Suppose we draw a line from left to right, representing the course of time. We pick one point—call it Point B—and we call it birth. Someone is born in this moment. We make a birth certificate for this baby, thinking that person exists starting at Point B. But in fact, the child was already there. Even before the moment of conception, the seeds of the child existed in other forms. Point B is a moment of continuation. There is no beginning. We think there will be a moment when we stop being. We believe that at birth we passed from non-being into being, and we believe that at death we will pass from being back into non-being. Looking deeply into our notions of being and non-being, aware of the emptiness and signlessness of all things, we touch the reality of the birthless and deathless nature of all things. When we walk through the doors of liberation, we extinguish all notions. There is no longer any need for fear. If the wave knows how to rest in the water, she enjoys going up and she enjoys going down. She is capable of touching the ocean in herself. The three doors of liberation remind us that we are no different than the wave:

Chapter 2 : Liberation of Saint Peter - Wikipedia

*The three doors of liberation, which are taught in every Buddhist tradition, are emptiness, signlessness, and aimlessness. Contemplating these three profound truths can help liberate us from fear and suffering.*

As we reminisced long-forgotten memories we also had to talk about faith and unfaith. Both of us grew up in a fundamentalist faith community and it was during that time that we had met. We lost touch, but over the years, at different times and in different ways, both of us distanced ourselves from the faith we once belonged to. Unlike my friend, though, I decided not to become an atheist, though the option is always open to me as a genuine possibility. Maniacal Masochistic Deity My friend narrated how his becoming an atheist had been an absolutely necessary component to his mental survival. As he explained this, I remembered the rather extreme mentally abusive circumstances of his upbringing. In order to cast off the demons of the past, I had to get rid of god. My friend had to pass through the impassable door of non-faith into the freedom of no longer being haunted by the specter of eternal damnation. His decision for atheism was nothing short of salvation. I genuinely believe that salvation is the proper nomenclature here. What helps, transforms, liberates, or saves us very much depends on the context we find ourselves in. If this context is a fear mongering faith that basically exploits people and forces them to conform to a random standard of behavior the violation of which is punishable by death, liberation will come in the form of its subversion. This subversion consists of a radical denial of the god who empowered that system and a flagrant disobedience of its suffocating ethics. I could for instance say “and that is what I, in fact, do” that in the liberation of atheism, my friend found the freedom of God. That it takes the form of atheism is simply because the god my friend had learned to worship was a maniacal masochistic deity who desired nothing more than to put innocent children in hell. It is no wonder, then, that the form freedom takes is that of atheism. As a Christian, I believe God “if God is real” is present to such atheism, even when this is never acknowledged. I would like to take this one step further though. Or rather, understanding atheism as salvation from my admittedly way too liberal Christian viewpoint, points to a deeper reality. Salvation is not so much an object. Neither does it consist of a definable set of tenets. It is precisely because such liberation cannot be defined and can take such a variety of forms, that we need to look elsewhere to identify that which constitutes salvation. It is the door that my friend had to walk through to the unknown in direct defiance of the damning god. That door hinges on the decision to let go, the willingness to let everything you have to be taken from you, the preparedness to lose all certainties that formed your previous world as meaningful, well-ordered, safe, and predictable. That is because that world was also a constriction frame of mind. Such a stifling relationship with the past can sometimes be a prison, if not, at times, a suffocating trap. Pudding The door I speak of has many names. Some call it deconstruction because if you take it all apart carefully reasoning your way from the top to bottom, you have pieced to reassemble something new. Some call that door a hell because the very thing that cuts you loose hurt like hell. I personally like to call it subversion, because old paradigms are upended, a safe world is turned upside-down. Subversion is the art of taking something that is familiar to the old world and use it to change literally e-v-e-r-y-t-h-i-n-g! Just as my friend took his atheism that position of godlessness in his old world and redescribed it as salvation. As a Christian, I go quite far in affirming the wildly open-ended-ness of what comes after. Yes, it is true that often people go through hardship and only end up in more trouble than they were before. What lies behind the door is not always good. I will not say that every deconstruction or subversion is always healthy. There is a risk and even danger involved. Indeed, it is at times experienced as hell! The proof is in the pudding. Kierkegaard There was one person who called this door, this process, the leap of faith. In the leap of faith, one jumps into the unknown, uncertain of something or somebody will catch you. Kierkegaard made it very clear that the only way to reach a higher form of existence is not by ascending the ladder of ethical behavior within the known constructs of the world that is. Such self-improvement often leads to ethical hubris, which in many ways is the very opposite of what ethical people try to achieve in their lives. Kierkegaard pointed to the moment of decision in which we let go of ourselves, our paradigms, and ethical ascendancy in order to abandon ourselves in the leap of faith. This is because wherever true transformation takes place and genuine truth and freedom

emerge. Yes, subverting it, but also corresponding to it! The more it gets locked up in dogmatic structures and confessions that demand absolute allegiance, the more it becomes dated human hubris. This is not to say that structures, paradigms, or diligent ethical efforts are useless. The opposites of construction and deconstruction, structure and subversion, ethical living and the leap of faith need to be kept in a sort of dualistic balance. However, if you look for salvation, go for the door and walk right through it. That is what Jesus teaching was all about. In the end, all genuine transformation, deconstruction, and subversionâ€™precisely through its break with the oldâ€™opens up to the voice from outside. Anything that requires us to let go of our self-sufficiency, makes us receptive to that which truly liberates. It is not the content of what we believe but the passion with which we embrace it that counts. In that sense, atheism can be salvation. Jonas Lee at unsplash.

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