

Filling Your Cup: Let Liberation Vibrate

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Sitting in an airport waiting to fly out of town for the July 4th weekend, I realized that this year is the 250th Anniversary of Independence Day (the holiday, not the movie). I reflected upon what freedom is exactly. In general, we think of it as our right to own property, speak freely, practice our faith of choice, and change the television channel when there is something not appealing. As we experience these human journeys, we become free with each revelation. Eastern traditions, such as Buddhism and Hinduism, refer to this as *moksha*, which translates to ultimate liberation.

In life, we adapt ourselves to the physical world. We identify ourselves with a name, gender, ethnicity, and social connections. We learn and develop skills which lead us into a specific career. We receive a paycheck, and subsequently distribute pieces of that paycheck to maintain property we own and the nation where we are citizens. We consume, whether it's food, drinks, media, or material acquisitions. We may connect

with family and friends. We repeat these processes multiple times in one life. What we gain can also be lost, and gained, and lost again. This cycle is called *samsara*, which is similar to being on a Ferris wheel, continuously riding up and down. There are times where we're elated, such as during a wedding, the birth of a child, purchasing a new car, or receiving a raise. Then, we come down to the low point, such as the loss of a family member, a relationship, or a large amount of money.

Hinduism and Buddhism teach that the suffering of humans comes from this *samsara*. We are attached to these amazing people and objects. As these wonderful possessions accumulate, our arms close around them very tightly, as we would hold onto a tree branch hanging off of a mountain. Eventually, some of these items we acquire will drop from our grip, no matter how hard we try to hold onto them. As each item slips away, we feel sad, alone, anxious, afraid. This attachment to the worldly conquests causes suffering, and the *samsara* continues.

The goal is to be free of this attachment to worldly pleasures. This is VERY difficult, and requires steady practice and souls may even be reborn millions of times, according to Hinduism and Buddhism. The ultimate liberation is what we call "moksha". This liberation is from how we identify: a doctor, a Mercedes owner, a man, etc. We start to recognize that we are part of something bigger than what meets the eye. We also become blissful, which is different from happiness. Bliss is a permanent form of joy, when we can see this joy in every life experience. How we can work on our own private Moksha, is by keeping a steady and calm approach to whatever we encounter.

This can come through meditation, reading something uplifting, or volunteering/serving those who lack access to basic needs.

The important thing is remembering we are a collective. Although Western society encourages us to focus on our individual existence, competition, and comparison, we can always help each other. We are all more alike than we are different. Releasing the need to hold onto things that bring us the storm can help us see the rainbow that arrives afterwards.