

Liberation from Suffering

By Romana 07/29/2015

It's been some time since I took my Bodhisattva Vow. I am supposed to liberate all beings, but I have failed to help anyone yet. I need volunteers. There will be no warranty; none of this process is guaranteed. I can't do much, since you have to do all the work. Life is short; I have to help somehow. Don't just do something; sit.

Liberation is not the same as being *saved*. I don't think anyone has ever been saved. There's nowhere to be saved to, since everything is impermanent. No matter what kind of a secure refuge we might construct, it will eventually fall apart. It is depressing. Worse, we will all die before the results of our labors disintegrate. This has been the outcome for all eternity. No one has ever beaten the odds and won.

There is no hope for overcoming this dilemma. All we can do is meditate and contemplate. We need to recognize how frail our situation is. Anger and resistance will not make things better. These are the rules of existence, which exist because of karma, which is the lesson of all existences that came before. Karma has been churning out realities and beings forever. Always, beings have tried to go against the system, but lost. This is why there is no real hope.

Materialism is an empty promise. Possession and attachment bring pain and grief, not happiness. Happiness arises when one understands the nature of reality, which is not *real* in the first place. All that we see and feel is a projection in our minds. There is nothing that is solid or substantial, so we can't base our lives on material things and concepts.

There are endless dreams of going to heaven, or other celestial realms, after we die. The story is always about going, as if we were on a trip. There

are visions of entering, with our bodies intact and our suitcases packed. Detractors, and the other hand, say only they get to go to heaven, while the rest of us will go to hell.



The *Far Side* cartoon shows people with bags and bodies. Buddhism describes many hells, but none of them are accommodating as in the picture. In fact, hells are said to be abodes of incredible suffering, devoid of any scenic vistas whatsoever. If one lives a life of integrity and ethics, one does not have to worry about rebirth in any hell, no matter what anyone else says.

Celestial paradises are the opposite of hells, but they are not places of rest and relaxation, and certainly not places devoid of tension, strife, and suffering. There is also an ethical problem about going to paradise, since any idea of abandoning the Earth, when it can be repaired, ends up being a form of escapism. I have looked throughout the internet without finding any description of what paradise looks like visually. The only way to find out is to be reborn in one.

No one enters any hell or paradise just walking in with a body. This is fantasy. The dead do not rise as zombies and walk to other realms. There may be zombies in hell, but they did not walk there. Are zombies living in Paradise? Forget that idea!

Each hell and paradise has its own rules, so one has to be born into these places to be there. When we die, our bodies disintegrate. They are in no shape to go anywhere. Our karma gets a new body, which is not a good deal for anyone.

In the end, intangibles such as love, integrity, ethics, discipline, and wisdom are all we actually received at birth, and all we will leave behind when we die. If we make these the focus of our lives, our contribution will be considerable, and it will live on after we die. When we die, we will see reality as it actually is, but we will be confused and long for the material world and all its lures. This is the eternal cycle, and the reason for rebirth and all of existence.

Meditation and contemplation bring precision and mindfulness to our lives. It is a lot of work, but it is worth the effort; otherwise, the world will try to eat us alive. All the doom and gloom is nothing but delusion. Hey ho, the happy yogi partakes of the nectar of wisdom, immune to the threat of death and destruction.