

How to Gain Freedom from Birth and Death?

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如何獲得



生死自由？

我們人生在這個世界上，多數不知道在做什麼，糊裏糊塗地生出來，又糊裏糊塗地死去。在生和死的期間，為名而顛倒，為利而顛倒，為色而顛倒，為要吃好東西而顛倒，為享受而顛倒。為什麼會顛倒？就因為沒有認識做人的本分，所以忽天忽地，由生到死總不想求一個真正的明白，瞭解做人的根本意義是什麼。整天追聲逐色，在聲色名利上用功打轉，只知道天天去找錢，維持生活，可是不知道到底為了什麼而生活。我們單單為了吃飯、穿衣服、睡覺，這樣活著有什麼價值？人人都不把這個問題弄清楚，所以糊塗生，又糊塗死，到死的時候，還是掛東掛西，掛子掛女，掛著財產放不下。可是，放不下也沒有辦法，到死的時候就得死！

學佛就是要明白生死，進而修行解脫生死。生死的事情如果未明瞭，做什麼事都沒有意義。所以各位學佛的人，首先要把根本問題認清楚，要明白怎麼樣活的，怎麼樣死去，要明白做人的任務是什麼。你若明白這個任務，就不至於那麼糊塗了。

古人說：「來時歡喜去時悲，空在人間走一回，不如不來亦不去，亦無歡喜亦無悲。」「來時歡喜」，生的時候，無論哪一個家庭生了一個小孩子，大家都很高興。「去時悲」，到死的時候，大家都很悲哀，哭哭啼啼。來的時候笑，去的時候哭。可是小孩子來的時候就是哭，去的時候也不忘了哭。我們見到人生下來

We, like most people in this world, don't know what we are doing. We come into the world confused, and leave confused; things are mixed up and turned upside down. In between birth and death, we are confused and chase after fame, material gains, sex, food, and other enjoyments. Why are we so confused? It is because we do not understand the fundamental duties of being a human. From the beginning of time, from birth to death, we never thought to seek the real understanding and meaning of being human. All we know is to chase after luxuries and spend time searching for these delights and material gains. Every day we seek money to sustain our lives; however, we do not really know what we live for; we merely live for eating, wearing clothes, and sleeping. What is valuable in this kind of living? People do not question this, so they are confused when they are born and when they die. At the time of death, we would still think of this and that, think of sons and daughters, think of possessions, not being able to let them go. However, we still have to die at the time of death!

Learning Buddhism is to understand life and death, then advance through cultivation to attain liberation within life and death. If the matter of life and death is not understood, there is no meaning in doing anything. So for all of us learning Buddhism, we must first see the main question clearly and understand how to live, and how to die. We need to understand what our duty as people are. If you understand this duty, you will not be so very confused.

The ancients said, "Happiness greets our arrival, and grief accompanies our departure; the trip to the human realm is in vain. It's better off not to come and not to go, then there is neither happiness nor sorrow." **Happiness greets our arrival:** When there is a birth, no matter which family the child is born to, everybody is happy. **Grief accompanies our departure:** At the time of death,

時就歡喜，見到人死的時候就哭，小孩死了也哭，老年人死了也哭，中年人死了更哭，太太死了丈夫也哭，丈夫死了太太也哭，到底哭有什麼用？這就叫糊塗。

「空在人間走一回」，這一生什麼事情也沒有明白，來時無，去也無，一點也沒有賺，甚至還虧本。虧什麼本呢？人生在這個世界，做善功德就往上昇，造惡業就往下降。沒有做過善功德，也沒有做過惡業，不昇也不降，不會上天堂，也不會下地獄，還是在人間這化學工廠打轉。

我們人是個小化學工廠，在你的思想裏加上點什麼東西，就變成一點資料。你加上善功德，就往上昇一昇，昇到天上去做天人，或做人間的人，或者做阿修羅。你做惡業就墮落到地獄，做餓鬼或畜生。你若沒有上天，也沒有下地獄，就在人間度平平常常的一生。這一生吃得也不少，穿得也不少，睡得也不少，到底你得到了什麼？還是空手而來，空手而去，所以說「空在人間走一回」。

「不如不來亦不去」，像這一類的生命，我們活著到底有什麼意義呢？沒有什麼大的意思，還不如不來亦不去。「亦無歡喜亦無悲」，不來就沒有一個歡喜，也沒有一個悲哀，這不是很平靜嗎？可是人都不甘寂寞，沒事情要找一點事來幹，所以在六道輪迴裏轉來轉去，生了又死，死了又生，在那兒做糊塗人。你說那個人明白，他明白什麼？我不相信他明白。他明白的只是世間上虛妄無常的相，所以心裏常常有煩惱，常常不快樂。你說人活著到底有什麼用？我們若能明白做人沒有意義，就要找出做人的真正意義在那裏。

先由我身上說起，我覺得「人命無常在呼吸間」。古來有三個老年人，一個九十歲，一個八十歲，一個七十歲，三個老翁在一起聚餐聯歡。七十歲的那位說：「今年酒席筵前會，不知明年又少誰？」今年我們三個人很高興地在一起喝酒、吃飯，可是不知明年我們三個人之中誰會不在。

八十歲的說：「你說得太遠了！今天脫了鞋和襪，不知明天提不提？」今晚間我把鞋和襪子脫了，明天我不一定還能穿鞋和襪。九十歲的老翁說：「你說的也太遠了。我這口氣出去，那口氣回來、不回來，我都不知道呢！」因為他九十歲了。我們各人想一想這三位老翁的言論，我們能有把握不死嗎？

everybody grieves. At the time of arrival there is laughter; at the time of leaving there are tears. However, children cry when they are born and cry when they leave. People are happy when they see birth and sad when they see death. Children cry when they die, and old people cry when it's their time to go. When the wife dies, the husband mourns, and vice versa. So what is the use of crying? This is called confusion.

The trip to the human realm is in vain: In this life nothing is understood, not at the start of life and not at the end. It's really a loss. What is lost? Human beings who do good deeds after being born in this world will ascend; those who do evil will descend. When they create actions that are neither good nor evil, they neither rise nor sink; the person goes neither to heaven nor to hell but continues turning in this "chemical factory" of the human realm.

People are analogous to a small chemical factory. If you add a little something in your thoughts, that would become data. If you add good deeds, you will ascend to the heavens to become a *deva*, or become a human, or become an *asura*. If you do evil, you will fall in the realms of the hells, hungry ghosts, or animals. If you are in between, you will gain life in the human realm. In the human realm, if you sleep a bit, eat a bit, and wear some clothes, what do you get out of it? That's why the ancients say that "the trip to the human realm is in vain."

It's better off not to come and not to go: What is the real meaning in living this kind of life? There isn't much. You would be better off not to come and not to go. "Then there is neither happiness nor sorrow." If no one arrived, there would be no joy and no grief. Wouldn't that be peaceful? However, people can't stand loneliness. When they have nothing to do, they will occupy themselves with something. Hence, in the six realms of transmigration, people go around and around through birth and death being confused. If you say that a person understands, what does he understand? I don't believe he understands. What he knows is only the false, impermanent appearances of this world. There are always things that worry him and make him unhappy. What is the use of living then? If we cannot understand the meaning of being a person, then we need to search for the answers.

Let's start with me. I believe that impermanence exists between breaths. Long ago, there were three elders, one ninety-year-old, another one eighty-year-old, and the third seventy-year-old. The three elders gathered for a meal. The seventy-year-old said, "We meet together for this year's feast, but who will be missing next year?" This year the three of us happily drink wine and eat together, but we don't know which among the three of us will be gone next year.

The eighty-year-old said, "You are way off! After I take off my shoes and socks tonight, I don't know if I will be here to put them on tomorrow." Tonight, I will remove my shoes and socks, but who

有一個中年人死了，到閻羅王那兒說：「我年輕少壯，這麼健康，你叫我來幹什麼？我還可以做很多事情。你要叫我來，你也不預先通知我一聲，給我打個電報或者寫封信，好讓我有個準備，你就把我叫來了，這太不講道理了！」

閻羅王說：「我給你捎了好幾次信，你都忽略不注意。」中年人說：「你什麼時候給我捎信？」

「我捎給你的第一封信，是當你的鄰居生了個孩子，第二天就死了，你有沒有想到你也會死？」中年人說：「啊！這封信是給我的？我不識這個字，也不會讀這封信。第二封信？」

閻羅王說：「你看和你差不多年紀的人也死了，這就是第二封信。」「但我沒想到我也會死。第三封信呢？」

閻羅王說：「第三封，你看看老年人耳也聾了，牙也掉了，你為什麼不小心一點，想想將來會輪到你呢？」中年人聽了垂頭喪氣，無話可說。

我們每個人都會收到這些信，可是也都不注意。注意又有什麼用呢？有什麼辦法？我們要好好學佛，要學了生脫死，要對生死有把握，能生死自由。一般人講的自由是假的，生死自由就是你願意活著，活多大年紀都可以；願意死，隨意死，隨時就死。說來說去，從什麼地方來的，我們知道了，到什麼地方去，我們也知道，學佛法就為了來去自由，生死由我，閻羅王也管不著，他打什麼電報、捎什麼信，我也不需要理他。

想要生死自由，從何做起呢？這很簡單，並不玄妙，也不需要每天念個什麼咒給閻羅王。我這兒有六個宗旨，你以這六大宗旨為基礎，再鍛鍊你的身心，生死就會自由。六大宗旨是什麼呢？

(一) 不爭，不爭就是包括不發脾氣，要一點脾氣也沒有，和誰也不發脾氣。不發脾氣，無明煩惱也就減輕了；煩惱斷了，就會生出智慧來，用慈悲心來待人。

(二) 不貪，不貪財，也不貪色，不貪名，也不貪利，什麼都不要了，你所要的，我都給你。

(三) 不求，不向外馳求，不應得的東西，絕對不要。

(四) 不自私，我們不能成佛，而墮落到三

knows if I will be able to wear them tomorrow. The ninety-year-old said, "You are still way off! When I inhale this breath, I don't know whether I will be able to exhale it." His answer was closer because he was ninety-years-old. We should all think about their observations. Can we be certain that we won't die?

There was a middle-aged person who died. Arriving at King Yama's place, he said, "I am still young, strong, and healthy. Why are you calling me here? I can still do a lot of things. You didn't even give me a forewarning. You should have sent me a telegram or letter so I would have time to prepare. You just called me here. That's too unreasonable!"

King Yama said, "I sent you several letters. You just ignored them and didn't pay any attention." The middle-aged person said, "When did you send me letters?"

"The first letter I sent you was when your neighbor gave birth to a child who died the next day. Did you not think that you would die too?" The middle-aged person said, "Oh! Was that letter for me? I didn't recognize the words and couldn't read the letter. What was the second letter?"

King Yama said, "You saw someone about your age who also died. This was the second letter."

"But I did not think I would die too. And the third letter?"

King Yama said, "The third letter was when you saw an old person who was deaf and toothless. Why didn't you reflect that it would be your turn in the future?" The middle-aged person heard this, and lowering his head, had nothing more to say.

Each one of us will receive these letters, and we also will not pay attention. Why should we pay attention, and how can we do that? We need to learn from the Buddha, and learn how to liberate ourselves and attain freedom from birth and death. The freedom that most people pursue is false. Freedom from birth and death is the ability to live as long as we want and to die whenever we wish; we can come and go when we please and know where we will go. King Yama will not be able to control us. Even if he sends us telegrams or letters, you, at that point, will no longer need to heed him.

How can you gain this freedom? The answer is simple; there is nothing mysterious about it. You don't even need to recite mantras to King Yama. Simply follow the six guidelines. **Use these six great guidelines as a foundation. Then train your body and mind. If you cultivate in this way, you will be free of birth and death.** What are these six guidelines?

(1) *Do not fight.* No fighting includes not getting angry. There should not be even a hint of anger towards anyone. With no explosion of temper, irritations will also diminish and wisdom will shine forth. One should not get angry and instead be compassionate when dealing with people.

(2) *Do not be greedy.* Do not be greedy for money, sex, fame, or material gains. Don't be greedy for anything. If you want anything, I will give it to you.

惡道的原因，就是自私；若沒有自私心，什麼罪業都沒有了。

（五）不自利，不要為了利益自己，不擇手段去做種種非法或傷害他人的事情。

（六）不打妄語，就是說真話，絕對不欺騙他人，說些似是而非的假話。

這是萬佛城的六大宗旨，我是為三步一拜所講的，可是三步一拜到今天為止，還是沒有做到多少。在萬佛城裏，所有的人就是講這六大宗旨，誰能做得圓滿，誰就出三界，成佛。自己做不到的，也不能怨旁人沒有幫助自己，我所懂的就是這六大宗旨。無論做什麼，你若能守住這六大宗旨，就不會造業。這是成佛的最基本條件，你能做到，世界就太平了。人與人都不爭了，這個世界不就和平了嗎？

人與人之間不貪，你的我不要，不貪意外之財，大家和平共處，人人都不爭、不貪、不求、不自私、不自利、不打妄語，世界自然會和平，永無紛爭。你們各位學佛的人應該先把這基本的條件認識清楚，對學佛才有大的幫助。

(3) *Do not seek.* Do not seek outwards for things that should not be gained. Do not seek after them.

(4) *Do not be selfish.* The reason why we cannot accomplish Buddhahood and instead fall into the three evil realms is because of selfishness. Once we rid ourselves of selfishness, our karma will cease.

(5) *Do not pursue personal gain.* Don't strive to benefit oneself and harm people or commit violations.

(6) *Do not lie.* Always tell the truth. Do not trick others with lies.

These are the six guidelines of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. I spoke them for the monks who did the Three Steps One Bow pilgrimage. However, even they couldn't fully follow them. We recite the six guidelines at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas daily. Whoever can perfect them can leave the Triple Realm and become a Buddha. If you can't follow them, you can't blame anyone. All I know is these six guidelines. If you can uphold these guidelines, you will cease creating karma. These are the fundamental conditions for becoming a Buddha. If you can uphold them, there will be peace in the world.

If people no longer fight, wouldn't there be peace? If people are no longer greedy and don't want each other's things, everyone will live peacefully together. If everyone stops fighting, being greedy, seeking, lying, being selfish, and pursuing personal gain, the world will naturally be peaceful. There will no longer be conflicts. All of you students of Buddhism should first understand these fundamental rules as they are crucial and beneficial in learning Buddhism.