



Short Quotes

“If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”

- Lilla Watson

“If there is no friendship with [the poor] and no sharing of the life of the poor, then there is no authentic commitment to liberation, because love exists only among equals.”

- Gustavo Gutiérrez

“It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love each other and support each other. We have nothing to lose but our chains.”

- Assata Shakur

“What a liberation to realize that the 'voice in my head' is not who I am. 'Who am I, then?' The one who sees that.”

- Eckhart Tolle

“When I feed the poor, they call me a saint, but when I ask why the poor are hungry, they call me a communist.”

- Dom Helder Camara

“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

- Corinthians 3:17

“Letting go gives us freedom, and freedom is the only condition for happiness. If, in our heart, we still cling to anything – anger, anxiety, or possessions – we cannot be free.”

- Thich Nhat Hanh

“You can’t separate peace from freedom because no one can be at peace unless he has his freedom.”

- Malcolm X

“The true value of a human being can be found in the degree to which he has attained liberation from the self.”

- Albert Einstein

“Without community, there is no liberation... but community must not mean a shedding of our differences, nor the pathetic pretense that these differences do not exist.”

- Audre Lorde

“Revenge only engenders violence, not clarity and true peace. I think liberation must come from within.”

- Sandra Cisneros

“Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred.”

- Martin Luther King Jr.

“For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.”

- Nelson Mandela

“The desire of gold is not for gold. It is for the means of freedom and benefit.”

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

“We have no right to believe that freedom can be won without struggle.”

- Che Guevara

Theory/Philosophy/Theology

“If we are then to talk seriously about the necessity of liberation, we are talking about the destruction of the whole complex of western theories of knowledge and the construction of a new and more comprehensive synthesis of human knowledge and experience. This is no easy task and it cannot be accomplished by people who are encompassed within the traditional Western logic and the resulting analyses such logic provides. If we change the very way that Western peoples think, the way they collect data, which data they gather, and how they arrange that information, then we are speaking truly of liberation.”

- Vine Deloria, Jr., “A Native American Perspective on Liberation”

“...the struggle to end sexist oppression that focuses on destroying the cultural basis for such domination strengthens other liberation struggles. Individuals who fight for the eradication of sexism without struggles to end racism or classism undermine their own efforts. Individuals who fight for the eradication of racism or classism while supporting sexist oppression are helping to maintain the cultural basis of all forms of group oppression.”

— bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*

“The Chinese Communists... in the past made great sacrifices in the struggle for the liberation of their country. But after gaining power, they created political rivalries and now often fight against each other... In this form, Communism has become so destructive that all the energy of the government is directed toward repression rather than liberation... When we look at Karl Marx’s own life and the actual origin of Marxism, we find that Karl Marx underwent great sufferings during his lifetime and advocated constant struggle to topple the bourgeois class. His

outlook was based on confrontation. Because of that primary motive, the entire movement of Communism has failed. If the primary motive had been based on compassion and altruism, then things would have been very different.”

- H.H. The Dalai Lama, *The Way to Freedom*

“Some of us, white and Black, know how great a price has already been paid to bring into existence a new consciousness, a new people, an unprecedented nation. If we know, and do nothing, we are worse than the murderers hired in our name. If we know, then we must fight for your life as though it were our own, which it is, and render impassable with our bodies the corridor to the gas chamber. For if they take you in the morning, they will be coming for us that night.”

- James Baldwin, from “An Open Letter to My Sister: Angela Davis”

“Liberation from prevailing conventions of thought, feeling and behaviour is accomplished most effectively by the practice of disinterested virtues and through direct insight into the real nature of ultimate reality. ...It is difficult to find a single word that will adequately describe the ideal man of the free philosophers, the mystics, the founders of religions. 'Non-attached' is perhaps the best.”

- Aldous Huxley

Poetry and Prayers

If We Jump Up

by Minnie Bruce Pratt

Let new words leap out of our mouths.
Let our hands be astonished at what we have made, and glad.
Let us follow ourselves into a present not ruled by the past.
If we jump now, our far will be near.

The God Who Only Knows Four Words

By Daniel Ladinsky/Hafiz

Every Child has known God,
Not the God of names,
Not the God of don'ts,
Not the God who ever does
Anything weird,
But the God who only knows four words
And keeps repeating them, saying:
"Come dance with Me."
Come
Dance.

Long Road to Freedom

By Nelson Mandela

I have walked that long road to freedom.
I have tried not to falter;
I have made missteps along the way.
But I have discovered the secret that
after climbing a great hill, one only finds
that there are many more hills to climb.
I have taken a moment here to rest,
To steal a view of the glorious vista
that surrounds me, to look back
on the distance I have come.
But I can only rest for a moment,
for with freedom come responsibilities,
and I dare not linger, for my long walk
is not ended.

The name kaur

By Rupri Kaur

the name kaur
makes me a free woman
it removes the shackles that
try to bind me
uplifts me
to remind me i am equal to
any man even though the state
of this world screams to me i am not
that i am my own woman and
i belong wholly to myself
and the universe
it humbles me
calls out and says i have a
universal duty to share with
humanity to nurture
and serve the sisterhood
to raise those that need raising
the name kaur runs in my blood
it was in me before the word itself existed
it is my identity and my liberation
- *kaur, a woman of sikhi*

For the freedom of faith

By Heather K Janules

Our prophets died for the freedom of faith;
We are here in their spirit.
We are here to practice and sustain our living tradition;

To light a chalice, claiming for justice
The heat and power of fire.
In our free faith,
We are here,
Seeking freedom from despair,
The freedom to be loved as ourselves,
And the freedom to grow beyond imagination.
We are here,
Gathered in the name of all that we find holy. Let us give thanks for the gift of gathering here.
Amen.

Imagine the Angels of Bread

By Martín Espada

This is the year that squatters evict landlords,
gazing like admirals from the rail
of the roof deck
or levitating hands in praise
of steam in the shower;
this is the year
that shawled refugees deport judges
who stare at the floor
and their swollen feet
as files are stamped
with their destination;
this is the year that police revolvers,
stove-hot, blister the fingers
of raging cops,
and nightsticks splinter
in their palms;
this is the year
that darkskinned men
lynched a century ago
return to sip coffee quietly
with the apologizing descendants
of their executioners.
This is the year that those
who swim the border's undertow
and shiver in boxcars
are greeted with trumpets and drums
at the first railroad crossing
on the other side;
this is the year that the hands
pulling tomatoes from the vine
uproot the deed to the earth that sprouts the vine,
the hands canning tomatoes
are named in the will

that owns the bedlam of the cannery;
this is the year that the eyes
stinging from the poison that purifies toilets
awaken at last to the sight
of a rooster-loud hillside,
pilgrimage of immigrant birth;
this is the year that cockroaches
become extinct, that no doctor
finds a roach embedded
in the ear of an infant;
this is the year that the food stamps
of adolescent mothers
are auctioned like gold doubloons,
and no coin is given to buy machetes
for the next bouquet of severed heads
in coffee plantation country.
If the abolition of slave-manacles
began as a vision of hands without manacles,
then this is the year;
if the shutdown of extermination camps
began as imagination of a land
without barbed wire or the crematorium,
then this is the year;
if every rebellion begins with the idea
that conquerors on horseback
are not many-legged gods, that they too drown
if plunged in the river,
then this is the year.

So may every humiliated mouth,
teeth like desecrated headstones,
fill with the angels of bread.

Questions for Reflection:

Is liberation more about striving and struggle, or more about non-attachment and letting go?

What is the difference between freedom and liberation?

Can liberation happen individually, or must it be a communal/collective endeavor?
Have you ever felt truly liberated? When do you feel free?

What is the relationship between joy and liberation?