

## Free Fall

*“In Newtonian physics, free fall is any motion of a body where gravity is the only force acting upon it. In the context of general relativity, where gravitation is reduced to a space-time curvature, a body in free fall has no force acting on it.”*

In 2014, I attended the retreat with Adyashanti in the Netherlands. The schedule was more or less sitting, break, sitting, break, sitting, break, and so on, with daily dharma talks. In one of those talks, Adyashanti started to share an old Zen koan, something like this:

*“A man was hanging over the cliff, his hands tied, and he was holding with his teeth to some branches. He was about to lose grip and fall. If he opens his mouth, he will fall, so what he should say to liberate himself?”*

I wouldn't remember the details, and there was a thought about how boring this is, an old piece of Zen folklore. Then Adyashanti started to explain and interpret the koan. The point was about the inevitable death, and the only possibility for the man's salvation that he realizes his true nature during the fall and thus liberates himself.

And at that moment, a strange kind of satori experience set in. Instantly, I became the man hanging over the cliff, and in the next moment, the grip gave up, and I dropped in a free-fall into the abyss. I remember the vividness of this near-death experience, my body was turning around in the air, and during those few seconds of falling, I could watch the rocks on the ground and contemplated whether I would land on my back or my head.

In the next moment, when I was already close to the bottom and about to crash on the rocks, the world stopped and disappeared. Everything was gone, and I was—as consciousness—floating in the vastness of total freedom. I still remember that final release, a radical and spontaneous surrender into the inevitable death, before everything disappeared. The hovering in the vastness of freedom was lasting for quite long, maybe minutes or half an hour, and I would just be there, entirely infused with this quality of unbounded freedom, and profoundly touched to the core of being, and shedding the tears of gratitude.

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Now, many years later, I can still abide in this quality of boundless freedom; it seems like my system knows the taste. As always, the challenge was to integrate and digest the experience into a pearl of lasting wisdom, without clinging to the experiential aspect or preference to any particular state of being.