CHAPTER (I)

PRINCIPLES OF BUDDHIST ETHICS

Introduction

The ethical principles of Buddhism are concerned with the way to overcome suffering and the practice to lead a morally, spiritually and intellectually perfect life.

According to Buddhism, suffering applies to everyone in everywhere in every age. From the ancient to modern, everybody, included kings, queens, presidents and prime ministers all over the world, suffered in the past; suffers in the present and will suffer in the future. This is the law of nature. No one is exempt from suffering.

If we contemplate deeply, we have to agree that life is indeed one of eternal suffering. Every moment we are suffering, either physically, emotionally or mentally. Can we ever find a single person in this world who is free from physical, emotional or mental pain? Even those who have attained sainthood are not free from physical pain so long as their physical bodies exist. Life and suffering are inseparable.15

As Buddhism rests on the pivot of sorrow, it should not regard Buddhism as pessimism. Buddhism is neither pessimistic

15 Dr. K Sri Dhammananda, You & Your Problems, p-22.
nor optimistic. On the contrary, Buddhism is realistic because it
gives a realistic view of life and the world. In other words, it
teaches to see things objectively (yathābhūta).

Buddhism does not appease us to live in a fool’s false sense
of life, nor does it frighten or concern us with all kinds of fears and
pains. Buddhism tells us exactly and objectively what we are, what
the world around us is; and shows us the way to perfect freedom,
peace and happiness.

Theragāthā and Therīgāthā, the two Buddhist texts, that are
contained the record of the joyous and pleasant utterances of
Buddhist monks and nuns, who found peace and happiness in life
through the Buddha’s teaching, can testify to this point.

Furthermore, King Kosala once told Lord Buddha that while
disciples who belonging to other sects and denominations looked
emaciated (kisa), coarse (lūkha), discoloured (dubbaṇṇa), pale
(uppaṇḍuppaṇḍukajāta), having veins protruding from the body
(dhamanisanthatagatta), and not attractive to the eyes of men (na
viyā maññe cakkhum bandhante janassa dassanāya), disciples of
the Buddha were joyful and delighted (haṭṭhapahaṭṭha), active and
exuberant (udaggudagga), enjoying the spiritual life (abhiratarūpa),
pleasant to the sight with mental faculties (pīṇindriya), free from
anxiety and stress (appossukka), subdued (pannaloma), and living
on charity abiding with the mind of a gazelle (paradattavutte
migabūtena cetasā viharanta). The king added that he believed that
this healthy disposition of the Buddha’s disciples was due to the
fact that they had certainly realized the great significance of the Buddha’s teaching.\textsuperscript{16}

Thus, it is evident that if we follow Buddhism, we will definitely find happiness and peace in both an individual life and the world.

One physician may gravely exaggerate an illness and give up hope altogether. Another may ignorantly declare that there is no illness and that no treatment is necessary, thus deceiving the patient with a false consolation. We may call the first one pessimistic and the second optimistic. Both are equally dangerous. But a third physician diagnoses the symptoms correctly, understands the cause and the nature of the illness, sees clearly that it can be cured, and courageously administers a course of treatment, thus saving his patient. The Buddha is like the last physician. He is the wise and scientific doctor for the ills of the world (Bhisakka or Bhesajjaguru).\textsuperscript{17}

The Buddha taught realistic and objective teachings. He had not only enunciated that there is suffering, but also revealed its roots and suggested a means to put an end to it. He perceived the universality of sorrow and prescribed a panacea for the universal sickness of humanity. In other words, he made a radical probe into the ways that can be followed for the extinction of suffering after he had found out the roots of suffering. He prescribed an effective and radical moral path for the extinction of suffering.

\textsuperscript{16} Majjhima Nikāya, Majjhimapaṇṇāsa Pāli, p-323.  
\textsuperscript{17} Dr. Walpola Sri Rahula, \textit{What the Buddha Taught}, p-17.
In his last life, Lord Buddha felt deeply pity for human suffering that he saw in the world. So, he determined to search for the Truth (Sacca) that deals with the nature of suffering and the origin of suffering, and also to discover the path to deliverance from suffering.

After his enlightenment, the Buddha realized the Truths—namely:

1. The Truth of Suffering (Dukkha Sacca),
2. The Truth of the Cause of Suffering (Dukkha Samudaya Sacca),
3. The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (Dukkha Nirodha Sacca),
4. The Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering (Dukkha Nirodha Gāmini Paṭipadā Sacca).

These Truths are discovered by the Buddha through his superior penetrative insight, developed by following the Middle Path (Majjhima- Paṭipadā), which avoids the two extreme practices of Indulgence in Sensual Pleasure (Kāmasukhallikānuyoga) and self-mortification (Attakilamathānuyoga), and otherwise called the Noble Eightfold Path (Ariya-aṭṭhaṅgika-magga), that leads to higher knowledge, producing the penetrative insight.

They are the essential teachings of Lord Buddha. The first three represent the philosophical principles of Buddhism and the fourth represents the ethical principles of Buddhism, in accordance with that philosophical principle.
Why they are called Noble Truths? They are eternal truths, Sacca, because they are real and incontrovertible facts in the world. They exist in the universe. Ignorant men cannot see them. It is the Buddhas who reveal them to the mankind. They do not change and cannot change with time and place. Furthermore, they are noble, Ariya, because they were discovered by the Greatest Noble Person, i.e. Lord Buddha who is utterly remote from all defilements (Kilesa). So they are called Noble Truths, Ariya Sacca, for those reasons. Alternatively, they are called Noble Truths because those who have penetrated them are called Noble Ones i.e. ones attain nobleness owing to the discovery and penetration of them.

The Buddha was not indebted to anyone for his realization of Four Noble Truths, as he himself remarked in his first sermon thus: “Me, Bhikkhave, pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṁ udapādi, ṇāṇāṁ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi- Monks, with regard to things unheard before, there arose in me the eye, the knowledge, the wisdom, the insight and the light.”18

These words are very significant because they testify to the originality of His new Teaching. Hence there is no justification in the statement that Buddhism is a natural outgrowth of Hinduism, although it is true that there are some fundamental doctrines common to both systems.19

19Narada Thera, The Buddha and His Teachings, p-82.
The Noble Truth of Suffering

The Buddha says: “Now, o monks, this is the Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha-ariya-sacca); birth is suffering, ageing is suffering, disease is suffering, death is suffering, to be associated with the disliked is suffering, to be separated from the beloved is suffering, not to receive what one craves for is suffering, in brief the five Aggregates of Attachment are suffering. This Noble Truth of Suffering should be perceived.”

Birth is suffering (jātipi dukkhā). According to Buddhism, the duration of each phenomenon consists of three phases, namely: genesis, static or development, and dissolution. The moment of genesis is birth, the moment of dissolution is death and the static phase is ageing.

By the birth of a being is meant the genesis of the new mind and matter after death upon dissolution of the old existence i.e. the first germ of life in the new existence. No suffering or pain as such exists, of course, at the first moment of genesis but since birth serves as the basis for later appearance of physical and mental suffering throughout the whole of the ensuing existence, birth is considered as suffering.

Ageing is suffering (jarāpi dukkhā). Ageing means becoming grey-haired, toothless, wrinkled, bent, deaf and poor in eyesight. In other words, decay has set in, very recognizably, in the aggregates of mind and matter of a particular existence. Ageing of

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the mind is not so apparent and indications of it such as failing memory and senility become noticeable only when one becomes very old and then only to those close to oneself.

Ageing is concerned with just the static moment of the aggregates of mind and matter and has no essence of pain or suffering in it. But because of ageing, there occurs failing of vitality, impairment of the sense faculties, weakening of health, loss of youth, strength and good looks, people are really afraid of growing old. Since it forms the source of physical and mental suffering, ageing is said to be fearful suffering.

There is no doubt about that disease is suffering (byādhipi dukkho). Most people all over the world are facing with health problems. We can see this situation when we go to the hospitals, clinics and health services. Because of suffering disease, people lost physical and intellectual energies, wealth of money and even their lives. Therefore, the Buddha says: “Ārogyaparamā lābhā-Healthiness is the most precious gain.”21

Death is suffering (maraṇampi dukkham). Death is the extinction of the life-principle, which has been in ceaseless operation since the time of birth in a particular existence. All mortals are in constant fear of death. But death is not by itself pain or suffering as it is the moment of dissolution of the life-principle of the aggregates of mind and matter. However, when death comes, one has to abandon the physical body and leave behind one’s

21 Khuddaka Nikāya, Dhammapada Pāli, Sukha Vagga, verse-204.
family and friends together with one’s properties. The thought of leaving the present existence and the uncertainty of the future is very frightening. As death draws near, all mortal beings are subjected to severe attacks of disease and illness, which rack the body with unbearable pain. Death, which is the basis for all such physical and mental agony, has thus been named suffering by the Buddha.

Association with the disliked includes having contacts with disagreeable and hateful ones in work places, offices and schools, etc, living in unpleasant surroundings or meeting with undesirable objects in surroundings. Such unpleasant circumstances are not themselves suffering, but in such situations, mental disturbance and physical discomposure set in at once in the existence. As those situations cause mental and physical distress, the Buddha designates that to be associated with the disliked is suffering (appiyehi sampayogo dukkho).

Contrary to above mentioned suffering, the Buddha stated that to be separated from the beloved ones and desirable objects is dreadful suffering as it promotes various mental afflictions. Separation from the beloved is not itself a painful feeling. However, when one separated, by death or while still alive, from beloved ones or when parted from one’s treasured possessions, mental agony sets in at once. He is overwhelmed by feelings of sorrow, grief and lamentation under such circumstances.

This suffering is recognized by people all over the world. It is possible not to associate with the disliked ones, but it is
impossible not to separate from the beloved ones and to be always together with them throughout the entire life because all human beings are mortal. Therefore, it is true that to be separated from the beloved is suffering (piyehi vippayogo dukkho).

The unfulfilled desire often results in great disappointment, despair, and may even lead to suicide. Suffering also arises out of desire for some unobtainable objects and also when our wish is impeded by something we suffer. Not getting what one wants causes mental anguish. Here the object of one’s desire also includes the worldly gains and wealth that cannot be attained by mere desiring. Not getting them as one desire is also suffering. Our cherished desires are not always gratified. Therefore, the Buddha states that not to receive what one craves for is suffering (yampiccharṁ na labhati, tami dukkham).

According to Buddhism, a sentient being is made up of the Five Aggregates or Groups that form the objects of Clinging or Grasping (Pañca-Upādānakkhandha). They are namely: the Aggregate of Matter or Material Forms (Rūpakkhandha), the Aggregate of Feeling (Vedanākkhandha), the Aggregate of Perception (Saññākkhandha), the Aggregate of Volitional Activities (Sañkharakkhandha), and the Aggregate of Consciousness (Viññānakkhandha).

All sentient beings exist as such only with those five aggregates forming their substantive mass. They cling to their body, which is merely an aggregate of material forms, regarding it as “I, my body, permanent, etc.” Hence, the group of material
forms is called an aggregate of clinging (upādānakkhandha). The mental groups made up of feeling, perception, mental activities and consciousness are also grasped at, taking them to be “I, my mind, it is I who thinks, permanent, etc.” Hence they are also called aggregates of clinging.

Our body is combination of mentality (nāma) and matter (rūpa) which are working together like a machine. Of the Five Aggregates, the Aggregate of Material Form is rūpa and other four Aggregates are nāma. They are all impermanent, painful and soulless.\(^{22}\)

For instant, the Five Aggregates of Clinging at the moment of seeing one person or one thing are like this: the eye and the visible object are the Material Aggregate; feeling pleasant, unpleasant or neutral is the Feeling Aggregate; recognizing or remembering the object is the Perception Aggregate; to will to see and turning the attention on the object is the Volitional Activities Aggregate; and just knowing that an object is seen is the Consciousness Aggregate.

In brief, what we call a ‘being’, or an ‘individual’, or ‘I’, according to Buddhist philosophy, is only a name or a label given to the combination of the five material and mental groups (pañcakkhandha). Those who cling (upādāna) to the Five Aggregates will feel suffering because they are impermanent and

\(^{22}\) “sappaccayaṁ nāmarūpaṁ aniccaṁ dukkhaṁ anattātī, sabbepi pañcakkhandhā sankhepaṁ nāmarūpamattaṁ hoti ”, (Saṁyutta Nikāya, Nidānavagga Saṁyutta Aṭṭhakathā, p-111.)
non-self.\textsuperscript{23} In other words, sufferings, such as, birth, old-age, sickness, and death, etc arise, based on the Five Aggregates. Therefore, the Buddha states that in brief the Five Aggregates of Clinging or Grasping are suffering (saṅkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā).

This is in brief the meaning of the Noble Truth of Suffering what the Buddha delivers. It is important to see suffering in life and the world because the key to free from suffering is to first understand suffering itself. Instead of ignoring it, we should recognize and accept that there is common suffering that all living beings must face in life and the world.

Though the Buddha says there is suffering, he does not deny the fact that happiness exists in an individual life and the world and on the contrary, admits that there are different forms of happiness (sukha), such as the happiness of household life (gihi-sukha) and the happiness of monastic life (pabbajita-sukha), the happiness of sensual pleasures (kāma-sukha) and the happiness of giving up all sensual pleasures (nekkhamma-sukha), mundane happiness (lokiya-sukha) and supramundane happiness (lokuttara-sukha), the happiness of ignoble life (anariya-sukha) and the happiness of noble life (ariya-sukha), physical happiness (kāyika-sukha) and mental happiness (cetasika-sukha), etc. But the Buddha praises the latter ones than former ones.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{23} Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāli, p-290.
\textsuperscript{24} Aṅguttara Nikāya, Dukanipāta, p-79.
According to the Buddha, material happiness is not real happiness. It deceives humanity with illusory pleasures. Ordinarily, worldly pleasures, such as wealth, power, honour and fame may be the highest happiness to an average person (puthujjana-puggala), who is only surface-seer, but sooner or later, they will be a source of unhappiness and sorrow for they are illusory and temporary. All types of material happiness are included in suffering because they are not everlasting and subject to disappear because of their non-firmness.

It is common to see in our lives and surroundings that material pleasure merely appeases one’s hunger for the enjoyment of sensual pleasures and it is impossible to fulfill our desires fully. No sooner have we got one desired thing than we scorn it and we begin to desire another one. It is this desire that never be insatiable and insatiable desire lead to sorrow and grief. It is a fact of life. Relatively speaking, it is like a baby who wants dolls, one after another and cries or be beaten by his mother for his unfulfilled or insatiable desire.

It should not be misunderstood that the Buddha expects his followers to give up all sensual pleasures and spend their entire lives without enjoying the pleasures of life. In fact, the Buddha was not fundamentalist nor pessimist, but realistic and objective. With regard to sensuality (kāma), matter (rūpa) and feeling (vedanā), the Buddha says that one should clearly understand three things: the satisfaction (assāda), the danger (ādīnava) and the escape (nissaraṇa).
To fully understand his explanation regarding this point, it should study one discourse of Majjhima Nikāya, one of the five original Collections in Pāli text containing the Buddha’s discourses. In that discourse, the Buddha states as follows:

“Monks, what is the satisfaction in sensuality? Monks, there are five kinds of sensuality. What are they? They are (1) agreeable, pleasing, enticing forms that are apt to rouse sensual desires, accompanied by lust and perceived by eye-consciousness, (2) agreeable, pleasing, enticing sounds that are apt to rouse sensual desires, accompanied by lust and perceived by ear-consciousness, (3) agreeable, pleasing, enticing smells that are apt to rouse sensual desires, accompanied by lust and perceived by nose-consciousness, (4) agreeable, pleasing, enticing tastes that are apt to rouse sensual desires, accompanied by lust and perceived by tongue-consciousness, and (5) agreeable, pleasing, enticing touches that are apt to rouse sensual desires, accompanied by lust and perceived by body-consciousness. Monks, happiness and delight arise on account of these five kinds of sensuality. This is the satisfaction in sensuality.”

“Monks, what is the danger in sensuality? Monks, in this world, a man of a good family would have to make a living by some craft, either handling money, or counting, or mathematics, or farming, or trading, or rearing cattle, or seeing service, or serving in the government, or doing any other craft, undergoing cold and heat, the sting of gadflies and mosquitoes, the heat of the air, the

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25 Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaññāsa Pāli, Sīhanāda Vagga, Mahādukkhakkhandha Sutta, p-118.
touch of creeping creatures, and bearing hunger and thirst. Monks, this visible mass of unpleasantness arising out of sensuality is the danger of sensuality here and now.”

“Monks, though that man of a good family strives and puts forth effort, if wealth does not accrue to him, then he grieves, exhausts, laments, weep, beating his own breast, and comes to bewilderment of mind, thinking thus: ‘My striving is in vain. My exertion is fruitless.’ Monks, this visible mass of unpleasantness arising out of sensuality is the danger of sensuality here and now.”

“Monks, as that man of a good family strives and puts forth effort, if wealth accrues to him, he comes to unpleasantness and displeasure concerning ways and means to protect his wealth, thinking thus: ‘How can I protect my wealth from being taken by the king? How can I protect my wealth from being taken by thieves? How can I protect my wealth from being burnt by fire? How can I protect my wealth from being carried away by water? How can I protect my wealth from being taken by unwelcome heirs?’ Though he protects his wealth carefully, if his wealth is either taken by the king, or taken by thieves, or burnt by fire, or carried away by water, or taken by unwelcome heirs, then he grieves, exhausts, laments, weep, beating his own breast, and comes to bewilderment of mind, thinking thus: ‘Wealth that have accrued to me is no longer existed.’ Monks, this visible mass of unpleasantness arising out of sensuality is the danger of sensuality here and now.”
“Again, Monks, on account of sensuality, kings dispute with kings, warriors with warriors, Brahmins with Brahmins, householders with householders, mother disputes with the son, the son with the mother, the father with the son, the son with the father, brother with brother, brother with sister, sister with brother, friend with friend. They differ, do battle, quarrel, and fight against each other with hands, stones, sticks, weapons, thereby facing death or deadly unpleasantness. Monks, this visible mass of unpleasantness arising out of sensuality is the danger of sensuality here and now.”

“Again, Monks, on account of sensuality, having taken swords and shields, bows and arrows, and other weapons, the two parties go to the battlefield and try to crush each other with superior force. They shoot arrows at each other; throw spears at each other; and cut each other’s head with swords, thereby facing death or deathly unpleasantness. Monks, this visible mass of unpleasantness arising out of sensuality is the danger of sensuality here and now.”

“Again, Monks, on account of sensuality, having taken swords and shields, bows and arrows, and other weapons, aggressors try to climb wet and slippery city walls. They are shot by arrows, thrown by spears, poured by boiling oil, crushed by rocks and stones, and their heads are cut by swords, thereby facing death or deathly unpleasantness. Monks, this visible mass of unpleasantness arising out of sensuality is the danger of sensuality here and now.”
“Again, Monks, on account of sensuality, robbers burgle houses, plunder, rob, stay in ambush, and go to others’ wives. The king holds them and metes them punishment. They are caned and whipped, flogged with the jungle rope, bashed with the solid stick; either their hands or legs are severed, or both hands and legs are severed; either their ears or nose are severed, or both ears and nose are severed; they are under torture of pouring boiling water or boiling oil into their skulls, of the shell-tonsure, of making their mouths bloody, of setting fire to their bodies and hands, of peeling their skin, of bolting their hands and legs together, of putting hooks in their flesh and capillary, of cutting pieces of flesh from their bodies, of sprinkling salt on their bodies, hit them with spikes, of moving round their bodies, bolted them to posts, of crushing bones to make the body like straw, of pouring boiling oil on them, of being given to dogs to be eaten, of being raised on a spike alive, until death, and of cutting their heads with the sword, thereby facing death or deathly unpleasantness. Monks, this visible mass of unpleasantness arising out of sensuality is the danger of sensuality here and now.”

“Again, Monks, on account of sensuality, misbehaving in bodily, verbal and mental actions, people have to be born in a miserable state or go to the hell, after death. Monks, this mass of unpleasantness arising out of sensuality is the danger of sensuality here after.”
“Monks, what is the escape from sensuality? Monks, subduing interest in sensuality or giving up greed for sensuality is the escape from sensuality.”

“Monks, there is no possibility that whoever, a recluse or a Brahmin, who does not know the satisfaction of sensuality as the satisfaction, the danger of sensuality as the danger and the escape from sensuality as the escape, in its reality, would know sensuality himself accurately or teach others to attain accurate knowledge of sensuality. But, Monks, there is possibility that whoever, a recluse or a Brahmin, who knows the satisfaction of sensuality as the satisfaction, the danger of sensuality as the danger and the escape from sensuality as the escape, in its reality, would know sensuality himself accurately or teach others to attain accurate knowledge of sensuality.”

“Monks, what is the satisfaction of matter? Monks, for example, suppose that there is a young girl of warrior caste, or of Brahmin caste, or of householder caste, in her fifteenth or sixteenth year, who is not too tall nor too short, not very thin nor very fat, not very dark nor very fair- Monks, at that time, that girl’s form has the highest perfection of beauty, does not?” (The Buddha asked.)

“Yes, it does, Sir.” (Monks replied.)

“Monks, happiness and delight arise on account of that form which has the highest perfection of beauty. This is the satisfaction in matter.” (The Buddha said.)
“Monks, what is the danger of matter? Monks, in subsequent time, becoming eighty years old or ninety years old or a hundred years old, that same girl would be seen decayed, bent like a rafter, going in shiver, leant upon a stick, affected with misery and having broken teeth, grey hair, bald head, wrinkled skin and spotted body, as all the youth is gone. How do you think, Monks? All her earlier perfection of beauty has vanished and the danger becomes appeared, isn’t it?” (The Buddha asked.)

“Yes, it does, Sir.” (Monks replied.)

“Monks, this is the danger of matter.” (The Buddha said.)

“Again, Monks, that same girl would be seen badly ill so as to be raised and laid by others, feeling suffering and pain, affected with illness, and immersed in her own urine and excrement. How do you think, Monks? All her earlier perfection of beauty has vanished and the danger becomes appeared, isn’t it?” (The Buddha asked.)

“Yes, it does, Sir.” (Monks replied.)

“Monks, this is the danger of matter.” (The Buddha said.)

“Again, Monks, that same girl would be seen as the corpse that is one day, or two days, or three days long after death, bloated, turned black and blue, and festering, being abandoned in the cemetery. How do you think, Monks? All her earlier perfection of beauty has vanished and the danger becomes appeared, isn’t it?” (The Buddha asked.)
“Yes, it does, Sir.” (Monks replied.)

“Monks, this is the danger of matter.” (The Buddha said.)

“Again, Monks, that same girl would be seen as the corpse that is devoured by crows, hawks, vultures, herons, dogs, tigers, leopards, foxes and various insects and worms, being abandoned in the cemetery. How do you think, Monks? All her earlier perfection of beauty has vanished and the danger becomes appeared, isn’t it?” (The Buddha asked.)

“Yes, it does, Sir.” (Monks replied.)

“Monks, this is the danger of matter.” (The Buddha said.)

“Again, Monks, that same girl would be seen as a skeleton with flesh and blood joined with veins… a skeleton without flesh, but with blood joined with veins… a skeleton without flesh and blood joined with veins… and bones thrown everywhere, in one place a hand bone, in another a foot bone, in another a knee bone, in another a thigh bone, in another a hip bone, in another the rib bone, in another the back bone, in another a shoulder bone, in another the neck bone, in another the jaw bone, in another the teeth bone, and in another the skull, being abandoned in the cemetery. How do you think, Monks? All her earlier perfection of beauty has vanished and the danger becomes appeared, isn’t it?” (The Buddha asked.)

“Yes, it does, Sir.” (Monks replied.)

“Monks, this is the danger of matter.” (The Buddha said.)
“Again, Monks, that same girl would be seen as bones turned white like the colour of a conch shell, bones three or four years old and heaping up, and bones decayed and reduced to powder, being abandoned in the cemetery. How do you think, Monks? All her earlier perfection of beauty has vanished and the danger becomes appeared, isn’t it?” (The Buddha asked.)

“Yes, it does, Sir.” (Monks replied.)

“Monks, this is the danger of matter.” (The Buddha said.)

“Monks, what is the escape from matter? Monks, subduing interest in matter or giving up greed for matter is the escape from matter.”

“Monks, there is no possibility that whoever, a recluse or a Brahmin, who does not know the satisfaction of matter as the satisfaction, the danger of matter as the danger and the escape from matter as the escape, in its reality, would know matter himself accurately or teach others to attain accurate knowledge of matter. But, Monks, there is possibility that whoever, a recluse or a Brahmin, who knows the satisfaction of matter as the satisfaction, the danger of matter as the danger and the escape from matter as the escape, in its reality, would know matter himself accurately or teach others to attain accurate knowledge of matter.”

“Monks, what is the satisfaction in feelings? Monks, here the monk, secluded himself from sensual desires and immoral objects, abides in the first jhāna (trance) accompanied by thoughts and thought processes, and accompanied by joy and happiness born of
seclusion. Monks, when the monk, secluded himself from sensual desires and immoral objects, abides in the first jhāna (trance) accompanied by thoughts and thought processes and by joy and happiness born of seclusion, he does not think to hurt himself, nor does he think to hurt the other, nor does he think to hurt both himself and the other. At such times, he feels non-hurtful feelings only. Monks, I say that the satisfaction in feelings is the highest non-hurtfulness.”

“Again, Monks, when the monk, having inwardly serene and one-pointed mind owing to the suppression of thoughts and thought processes, abides in the second jhāna (trance) not accompanied by thoughts and thought processes, but accompanied by joy and happiness born of concentration; when the monk, living indifferently due to being in the absence of desire for joy and enjoying happiness mindfully and thoughtfully through the body, abides in the third jhāna (trance) regarded as ‘Living at ease, having a sufficiency of indifferent and mindful attitudes’ by Noble Ones; when the monk, dispelling pleasantness and unpleasantness, and earlier having the annihilation of pleasure and displeasure, abides in the fourth jhāna (trance) that is neither pleasantness nor unpleasantness, but with the purification of mindfulness caused by equanimity; he does not think to hurt himself, nor does he think to hurt the other, nor does he think to hurt both himself and the other. At such times, he feels non-hurtful feelings only. Monks, I say that the satisfaction in feelings is the highest non-hurtfulness.”
“Monks, what is the danger in feelings? Monks, those feelings are impermanent, difficult and having the changeable nature. This is the danger in feelings.”

“Monks, what is the escape from feelings? Monks, subduing interest in feelings or giving up greed for feelings is the escape from feelings.”

“Monks, there is no possibility that whoever, a recluse or a Brahmin, who does not know the satisfaction of feelings as the satisfaction, the danger of feelings as the danger and the escape from feelings as the escape, in its reality, would know feelings himself accurately or teach others to attain accurate knowledge of feelings. But, Monks, there is possibility that whoever, a recluse or a Brahmin, who knows the satisfaction of feelings as the satisfaction, the danger of feelings as the danger and the escape from feelings as the escape, in its reality, would know feelings himself accurately or teach others to attain accurate knowledge of feelings.”

Form this discourse, we can see obviously that the Buddha does not forbid the enjoyment of sense-pleasures, but he remind to take sorrows and pains into account when we enjoy the pleasures of life and also to try to free form sorrows and pains. This is a dispassionate view of Lord Buddha.

From Buddhist point of view, even the very pure and high spiritual happiness of jhāna attained by the practice of higher
meditation has also danger since they are impermanent, unpleasant and subject to change.26

In Buddhism, there are two kinds of jhāna; samatha jhāna and vipassanā jhāna. Concentration of mind on a certain object is called samtha jhāna and here it is this samatha jhāna. The Four stages of rūpa jhāna and the Four stages of arūpa jhāna are included in samatha jhāna. This samatha jhāna does not give the practitioner an insight wisdom (magga ūna) which sees things as they truly are and it leads him to only calmness of mind. It also does not last forever and is likely to disappear.

Objectively thinking, it is evident that the enjoyment of sensual pleasures is short-lived, never completely satisfies one’s hunger and produces unpleasant results for its impermanent. We must think of dangers, such as sorrows that are behind the enjoyment of sense-pleasures and liberation such as content beyond it- if not at times what unpleasant reactions and undesirable circumstances become we may suffer terribly, we may act unwisely and we may behave foolishly. Some mentally weak and ignorant people may even commit suicide.

In short, it should be clearly understood that the word ‘dukkha’ in the First Noble Truth, which represents the Buddha’s view of life and the world has a deeper philosophical meaning and wider senses. It is suffering not only because there is “suffering”, but also because there is “impermanence”.

26 Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāli, Sīhanāda Vagga, Mahādukkhakkhandha Sutta, p-125.
For further elucidation, suffering may be classified under three categories: Intrinsic suffering (dukkha-dukkha), Suffering due to change (viparināma-dukkha) and Suffering due to conditioning (saṅkhāra-dukkha).

Sufferings in life, like birth, ageing, disease, death, association with unpleasant persons and conditions, separation from the beloved ones and desirable objects, and not getting what one wants, which are all obvious types of physical and mental suffering, are called dukkha-dukkha or intrinsic suffering. In other words, undesirable physical and mental sufferings, such as bodily pains, aches, discomforts, worry, misery, unhappiness and sadness, etc, are included in dukkha-dukkha or intrinsic suffering. Its nature is suffering and its name is suffering.

Those sufferings above mentioned arise only because there are the Five Aggregates of Clinging; without them, such sufferings will not arise. In short, because there is body or the material aggregate, physical and mental sufferings, dependent on the body arise. Because there are feelings, perception, volitional activities and consciousness aggregates, physical and mental sufferings based on them also arise. Thus the Five Aggregates of Clinging are dukkha-dukkha, intrinsic suffering.

Sufferings that occur as a result of the operation of the Law of Change are called viparināma-dukkha, suffering due to change. Pleasurable physical sensations, arising from agreeable tactile impressions are called pleasant bodily feelings (kāya-sukha).

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27 Sarīyutta Nikāya, Mahāvagga Sarīyutta, Dukkhatā Sutta, p-52.
Joyful states of mind, arising from reviewing pleasurable sense-objects are called pleasant mental feelings (cetasika-sukha). These two forms of happy states please all beings. All beings go after these states all the time, even at the risk of their lives and when these are attained, their happiness knows no bounds.

However, while they are rejoicing with blissful contentment, if the sense-objects that have given them so much happiness and delight disappeared or got destroyed, they would be followed by intense distress. Happy feelings and pleasant conditions in life are not everlasting and they are impermanent. They change sooner or later. When they change, pain, unhappiness and misery bring about in life. Hence, the vicissitude in life is included in suffering due to change (viparināma-dukkha).

For instant, when the wealth which beings have accumulated in the form of money or property suddenly get lost through one reason or another; when death or separation comes to their loved ones; intense grief and distress ensue and these conditions can even cause derangement. Thus, these two forms of happiness; namely pleasant physical feelings and mental feelings are also a type of suffering known as viparināma-dukkha or suffering because of change. When they last, they may appear very enjoyable, but when they vanish, they produce suffering. Hence, happiness arising from physical comfort and mental joy is also called suffering.

Those sufferings also arise dependent on the Five Aggregates and therefore, the Five Aggregates of Clinging are viparināma-dukkha, suffering due to change.
The word saṅkhāra has different meanings and here it means conditioned things. According to Buddhism, everything in mundane sphere is conditioned by causes and every conditioned thing is constantly arising and vanishing, or, in other words, perpetually changing, and subject to suffering. The Buddha says: “sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā, sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā- All conditioned things are impermanent and suffering.”

The ordinary everyday scene which one sees or hears, comes into contact with, indifferent sense-objects, inspires neither a feeling of pleasure nor of unpleasantness. This medium neutral feeling which by its nature is neither pleasurable nor painful is termed equable feeling (upekkhā-vedanā).

This neutral feeling does not exist permanently and it needs constant maintenance of necessary conditionings for the continuity of medium state. It implies that laborious effort which is made for the maintenance of neutral feeling is suffering.

Therefore, the equable feeling which is neither painful nor pleasurable is included in saṅkhāra-dukkha, suffering due to conditioning.

In addition to the equable feeling, all formations of mind (nāma) and matter (rūpa) of the mundane sphere are also called saṅkhāra-dukkha since they need constant conditioning.

The Five Aggregates of Clinging are always in a state of flux, impermanent and none of them are self-existing. They arise

28 Abhidhamma Piṭaka, Vibhanga Pāli Anuṭīkā p-50.
out of various causes. They are conditioned. Their existence depends on certain conditions and when these conditions and causes cease to exist, they too cease to exist. As death awaits constantly, having to rely on the impermanent aggregates of clinging for physical substance or support is dreadful, like living in a building which shows signs of collapsing any moment. The transitory nature of the five Aggregates of Clinging require constant effort at conditioning for the maintenance of the status quo, e.g., the body needs constant feeding in order to survive, feelings of happiness require constant contact with agreeable sense objects.

Summarily, the Five Aggregates of Clinging are intrinsic suffering (dukkha-dukkha), suffering due to change (viparināma-dukkha) and suffering due to conditioning (saṅkhāra-dukkha) as these three types of suffering arise because there are the Five Aggregates of Clinging. Hence, the Five Aggregates of Clinging are the Noble Truth of Suffering (Dukkha Sacca).

The First Noble Truth of Suffering which depends on this composite body (khandha), so-called being and various aspects of life, is to be carefully perceived, analyzed and examined (pariññeyya). This examination leads to a proper understanding of things as they truly are.

This Noble Truth which deals with suffering does not make the life of a man sorrowful or gloomy. In fact, he who perceives sufferings in life and the world, is always calm and serene and never upset or angry by suffering or change since he know that
nothing lasts forever; everything changes; and no one cannot evade suffering in one’s lifetime— that is just a fact of life.

Although there is suffering in life, man should not be gloomy over it or angry at it for being gloomy and angry does not remove one’s suffering and on the contrary, causes miserable states and bad conduct. It adds a little more to one’s troubles and aggravates a situation which is already disagreeable, like it add fuel to the flames. What is necessary is not anger or hatred, but the knowing of the origin of suffering, the seeing of how it comes about, the understanding of how to get rid of it and working accordingly with patience, intelligence and energy are essential to remove suffering.

In Buddhism, sorrowful or gloomy mind is considered as a hindrance to the realization of Truth and delight or joy (pīti) is one of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment (satta-bojjhaṅgas) that are the essential qualities to be cultivated for the realization of Nibbāna.

It is very important to see this First Noble Truth clearly because the Four Noble Truths are interconnected and interrelated. When we see the suffering, we then will come to see its cause, its cessation and the way leading to its cessation. The Buddha states that one, who sees any one of the Four Noble Truths, sees the other three as well.  

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29 Seven Factors of Enlightenment (satta-bojjhaṅgas) are Mindfulness (sati), Investigation of doctrine (dhammavacaya), Energy (vīra), Joy (pīti), Calmness of body and mind (passaddhi), Concentration (samādhi), and Equanimity (upekkhā).

30 Saṁyutta Nikāya, Mahāvagga Saṁyutta, Gavampati Sutta, p-382.
The Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering

To eliminate suffering, it is essential to know the cause of suffering. It is like knowing the cause of disease is important so that it is cured. Suffering can be entirely eradicated by removing its cause. According to the Buddhist philosophy, the cause of suffering is Craving (taṇhā). That is called the Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering. Craving is the culprit which is responsible for all kinds of sufferings.

The Buddha states “Now, o monks, this is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (dukkha samudaya ariya sacca). It is this Craving (taṇhā) which leads from birth to birth, which accompanied by lust and passion, finds ever fresh delight now here, now there, everywhere. There are three kinds of Craving, namely: Kāma-taṇhā, the craving for sensual pleasure, the desire for enjoyment of sensuous pleasures, Bhava-taṇhā, craving for eternal existence, holding the eternity-belief and Vibhava-taṇhā, craving for non-existence, believing that there is nothing after death. These three kinds of Craving are the Truth of the Origin of Suffering. This Noble Truth of the Cause of Suffering should be eradicated.”

Of the three types of cravings, Sensual craving (kāma-taṇhā) is craving for pleasurable sense objects: beautiful visible objects (rūpa) such as appearance, colour, form, body, etc; pleasing sound and sound objects (sadda) such as pleasurable voices, music,

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31 Saṁyutta Nikāya, Mahāvagga Saṁyutta, Dhammacakkapavattana Vagga, Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta pp-369-370.
melody, etc and persons and things, making them; fragrant smell and its source (gandha) such as perfume, body spray, etc and persons using them and objects giving them; delicious taste and objects producing the taste (rasa) such as piquant food, snack, drink, etc; delicate tactile sensations and objects producing (phoṭṭhabba) such sensations such as soft and smooth skin, sheet, sofa, etc. All these objects of pleasure and craving for them are termed Sensual craving (kāma-taṇhā).

In short, thirst or craving for any pleasurable sense objects is called Sensual craving (kāma-taṇhā).

Wishing to be born as a human being or as a celestial being; longing to enjoy the sensual pleasures as a human being or as a celestial being—all these desires are also included in kāma-taṇhā. It literally means that taking delight in any pleasurable thoughts is also sensual craving.

On seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or touching a sense object, if one considers it to be pleasant, liking it, is developed at once. Thus thinking it to be pleasant, according to the Buddha, is owing to ignorance (avijjā) which covers up the true nature of the sense objects and gives rise to false views about them. In actual fact, every sense objects, from Buddhist concept, are transitory (anicca) and unpleasant (dukkha) because of constant arising and vanishing, and anyhow they are mere material and mental forms which are neither soul (atta) nor pleasing (subha).

According to Buddhism, because of ignorance (avijjā) or “not knowing things as they truly are,” one holds the erroneous
perception, thought and view called Illusion of Perception (saññā-vipallāsa), Illusion of Thought (citta-vipallāsa) and Illusion of View (diṭṭhi-vipallāsa) and considers:

- What is impermanent (anicca) as the permanent (nicca);
- What is suffering (dukkha) as happiness (sukha);
- What is mere physical and mental phenomena which is non-self (anatta) as self (atta);
- What is repulsive (asubha) as the beauteous (subha).\(^{32}\)

Thinking what is unpleasant to be pleasant, liking what is unpleasant is developed and wanting it or desiring it leads to craving which drives one into activities in order to fulfill that craving. Such volitional activities (saṅkhāra) are responsible for the formation of new aggregates of mind and matter in the new existence.

Influenced by craving, if the dying clings tenaciously to objects which are seen at death’s door, after the death consciousness (cuti-citta) vanishes, the rebirth consciousness (paṭisandhi-citta) arises holding onto the last seen objects to give rise to new birth in the next existence. Hence, this craving leads to rebirth (ponobhavika).

Rebirth results in the body which is combination of the Five Aggregates. Our body itself is described as suffering in the First Noble of Suffering (dukkha ariya sacca). Therefore, the Buddha

\(^{32}\) Aṅguttara Nikāya, Catukkanipāta, Vipallāsa Sutta, p-361.
says that Kāma-taṇhā, sensual craving, is the Truth of the Origin of Suffering (dukkha samudaya ariya sacca) since it is liable to give rise to new birth or rebirth in any existences.

In the term Bhava-taṇhā, Bhava means eternal becoming or existence, taṇhā means craving, and thus Bhava-taṇhā is defined as Craving for Eternal Existence.

This Bhava-taṇhā is the craving based on the wrong belief in the stability or eternity of existence. This craving is accompanied by the wrong view of eternalism (sassata-diṭṭhi) which holds the wrong view that the soul or living entity does not dissolves away-even when the physical body perish, it does not die. It enters into a new body and remains there. Even if the world crumbles and breaks up, it remains eternal and never perishes.

Religious beliefs outside of the Teachings of the Buddha mostly hold this view of eternalism. Some of religious faiths believe that after man died, he remains permanently in heaven or suffers eternal damnation in hell according to the God’s wish. Others believe that after death, a being transmigrates from one existence to another according to kamma and exists permanently. Others believe that a being exists eternally changing from one life to another on a specified set course. In brief, any belief which holds that soul or living entity moves on without dissolution to new existences is wrong belief of eternalism.

For instance, a bird on a tree flies to another tree when the first tree falls down. When the second tree falls down again, it flies to a third tree. Likewise, the soul or living entity, when a body or
form on which it is dependent, perish, moves on to another body or form and it remains everlasting without dissolution.

Craving for existence accompanied by the wrong view of eternalism (sassata-diṭṭhi) is termed Bhava-taṇhā, Craving for eternal existence. This craving takes delight in the view that the soul or living entity is permanent and enduring. This “self” which has been in permanent existence since eternity, feels the sensations and will go on feeling them. Believing thus, it enjoys sense objects experienced by the six sense bases: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind and also takes delight in sense objects which are hoped-for to enjoy in the future.

Wishes to enjoy a prosperous, comfortable life now and in future; to be born in good, happy states; desires to enjoy the good life of human or celestial being in the coming existence; to be born always a man, some a woman- all these wishes and desires are included in craving for existence (Bhava-taṇhā). In summary, craving for existence with the notion that it is eternal is called Bhava-taṇhā.

Because of this craving, a conditioning influence or potential power is built up for the arising of a new life which gives rise to a body consisting of the five Aggregates of Clinging that are suffering. Thus Bhava-taṇhā, craving for eternal existence, is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.

In the term of Vibhava-taṇhā, the word Vibhava means non-becoming, non-existence or annihilation of existence. Taṇhā means
craving. Hence, Vibhava-tan̄hā is defined as Craving for non-existence.

This craving is based on the belief that there is existence only while alive, there is nothing after death. In other words, this is the craving which is accompanied by the wrong view of annihilation (uccheda-diṭṭhi) which holds that nothing remains after death; existence is completely annihilated.

According to the wrong view of annihilation (uccheda-diṭṭhi), an individual is made up of the Four Great Primary Elements (cattaro mahābhūto), namely: the earth element (pathavī-dhātu), the water element (āpo dhātu), the fire element (tejo dhātu), and the air element (vāyo dhātu).

When he dies, the earth element of his dead body goes into the mass of the earth element that exists in the inanimate external bodies. It means in time, the earth element of his dead body turns into the inanimate external material earth element of trees, plants, stones, etc. The water element of the body flows into the inanimate external mass of water element. What this means is that the wetness of the dead body becomes the moisture of the external mass of water. The fire element of the body merges with the mass of inanimate external heat and likewise the air element of the body merges into the mass of inanimate external air.

All faculties of sense-organs: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind move over into space. Be he a good man or a bad man, a wise man or a fool man, when he dies he completely disappear. Nothing is left after death. The bad or the fool does not have to
suffer for his past misdeeds in a new existence and likewise the good or the wise does not have to enjoy the fruits of his good deeds in a new existence. Everything disappears and nothing exists after death.

This nihilistic view, which holds that after death, existence is annihilated without any special effort, appeals to those who shrink from the practice of good deeds, but do not shrink from the practice of evil deeds. The reason is that if new existence becomes after death, they will have to bear unwholesome fruits of their evil deeds which they cannot relish and thus only if there is no new life after death, their misdeeds will be expunged; they will have to bear no responsibility for their misdeeds and they will escape scot-free from the consequences of their evil actions.

Since, if new life does not occur after death, their evil deeds will not bear unwholesome effects, believers of nihilism crave for cessation of existence or non-existence. This craving which arises accompanied by nihilistic view is termed vibhava-tañhā, craving for non-existence.

As the view of nihilism postulates that there is no life after death, it amounts to the admission that there is life before death. Then, what is it that exists before death? This is the question which may arise. The answer, according to their line of reasoning, could only be that it is self (atta) or being (satta).

Therefore, although the wrong view of annihilation holds that an individual is made up of the four great primary elements, it must be said that according to it, self or being exists before death.
Because of attachment to self, believers of nihilism argue that instead of wasting time in doing good deeds for the forthcoming existence, the fully opportunity of the present life should be taken for the enjoyment of pleasures. They encourage the pursuit of sensual pleasures, advocating sensual gratification at any cost and by any means.

The materialists (uccheda-vādī) argued that soul is only a psycho-physical unit born of parents and does not survive (after) death. Hence, one has to enjoy life through whatever means as long as one lives.33

At the same time, holding that the time for enjoyment is now, the present life before death, they are too eager to go after any desirable objects of pleasure. Consequently, they indulge their passion for sensual pleasures without thinking of the consequences. Such ardent pursuit of sensual pleasures, according to Buddhism, leads to commission of kamma (causes) and saṅkhāra (volitional activities) which constitutes to formation of new life.

Furthermore, every time there is delight in, and enjoyment of pleasures of the present life, the sensual craving imparts an impulse to the stream of consciousness and life-continuum. Even at the time proximate to death, it clings to the objects seen at death’s door, and after death consciousness vanishes, the rebirth consciousness arises, holding on to the last seen objects and gives rise to a new birth.

Thus, the man, who holds the wrong view of annihilation (uccheda diṭṭhi), is certainly reborn in a new existence, whether he likes it or not, because of his craving for sensual pleasurable objects and his new existence is very likely to be in inferior and miserable states because of evil deeds that he had developed in his previous life.

This type of craving, namely vibhava-taṇhā, craving for non-existence, also gives rise to new existence, consisted of the five Aggregates of Clinging, which are suffering. Thus, the Buddha taught that Vibhava-taṇhā, Craving for non-existence, is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering.

Summarily, the true cause of suffering lies in the three cravings namely: craving for sensual pleasure (kāma-taṇhā), craving for eternal existence (bhava-taṇhā), and craving for non-existence (vibhava-taṇhā). All these three types of carving lead to new life and sufferings and are, therefore, termed the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (dukkha samudaya ariya sacca).

It is this craving (taṇhā), manifesting in various ways, that gives rise to all forms of suffering and repeated births in round of existences (saṁsāra). However, according to Buddhism, craving is not the first or the only cause of arising of suffering since there are many other causes that are related and inter-dependent for the arising of suffering.

This craving (taṇhā) considered as the origin of suffering also depends upon the other cause for its arising. From Buddhist point of view, craving arises out of sensation (vedanāsamudayā
taṇhāsamudayo); and consequently, if sensation ceases, craving ceases (vedanānirodhā taṇhānirodho).\footnote{Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāli, Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta, p-63.}

To understand clearly this point, it is necessary to study Dependent Origination (paṭicca samuppāda), in which the process of rebirth is fully explained by the Buddha. Here, paṭicca means “dependent upon” and samuppāda means “arising” or “origination”, and thus the meaning of the term paṭicca samuppāda is “dependent arising or origination”. It has the causal formula which deals with the cause of rebirth and suffering.

According to Dependent Origination, there is no the first or direct cause of arising of phenomenon in the world, for there are links of causes in the same process. A cause by itself cannot stand. For example, people may say that clay is the cause of the pot. Indeed, clay is necessary to produce the pot but alone it is not sufficient. If there were no water, no wheel, no potter, no intention of the potter to make a pot, the pot would not have been produced. All these are pertaining to the production of the pot. If one of them were absent, the pot could not have been produced. Therefore it is not correct to say that the clay is the cause of the pot. The correct expression is ‘Depending on clay, the pot is produced.’

There is law in this process of causal sequence in which cycle it is impossible to point out a First Cause, simply because it forms a circle- the ‘Wheel of Life’ (Bhavacakka). Most people are accustomed to regard time as a line stretching from a finite past to a finite future. Buddhism, however, views life as a circle and life,
reflected as such, is repeated over and over again, an endless continuum. Moreover, the whole series of phases must be taken in their entirety, the conception of the ‘Wheel of Life’ being in relation to space and time.\footnote{H. Saddhatissa, \textit{Buddhist Ethics: Essence of Buddhism}, p-37.}

The principle of the Paṭicca samuppāda should be understood in a short formula as follows:

If this is, that is (Imasmiaṁ sati, idaṁ hoti);

If this is not, that is not (Imasmiaṁ asati, idaṁ na hoti);

This arising, that arises (Imassuppādā, idaṁ uppajjati);

This ceasing, that ceases (Imassa nirodhā, idaṁ nirujjhati).\footnote{Majjhima Nikāya, \textit{Uparipaṇṇāsa Pāli}, Bahudhātuka Sutta, p-109.}

In the modern form, it is as follows: If there is A, there is B; If there is not A, there is not B; Because of A arising, B arises; Because of A ceasing, B ceases.

According to this law of causation, every phenomenon owes its origin to another phenomenon prior to it. It may simply be expressed as “depending on this, this originates.”

An example of Dependent Origination in nature is given as follows: There being clouds in the sky it rains. It having rained, the road becomes slippery. The road becoming slippery, a man falls down. The man having fallen down becomes injured. Here a shower of rain depends on the clouds in the sky. The road becoming slippery depends on the rain. The fall of the man

\footnote{H. Saddhatissa, \textit{Buddhist Ethics: Essence of Buddhism}, p-37.}
depends on the road becoming slippery. The injury of the man depends upon his fall.

Conversely it is as follows: If there were no clouds in the sky, it would not have rained. Then the road would not have become slippery. Then the man would not have fallen. Then he would not have become injured.

In this chain of events, we see one incident depends on one prior to it and gives rise to one after it. Everything that we find in this world can be brought in a chain of dependence like this. Nothing can originate without depending on something else previous to it, and no originated thing which does not give rise to something else in its turn can be conceived of. Thus the process goes on. Anything can be traced upwards to where it originated from and everything can also be traced downwards to that which is produced depending on it.

Here, a question may be raised as to what is the first beginning or origin of life? According to Buddhism, the beginning or origin of life-stream of living beings is inconceivable. Regarding the first beginning of beings, the Buddha says: “Anamataggo kho saṁsāro. Pubbā koṭi na paññāyati avijjāvariṇānaṁ sattānaṁ taṁhāsaṁyojanānaṁ sandhāvataraṁ saṁsarataṁ. - Inconceivable is the beginning of this faring on (saṁsāra). Obstructed by ignorance (avijjā) and fettered by craving (taṁhā), the first beginning of
beings who wander through this round of rebirths (saṁsāra) is not to be perceived.\textsuperscript{37}

Even concerning with ignorance (avijjā) which is the main cause of the continuity of life, the Buddha states: “Purimā, Bhikkhave, koṭi na paññāyati avijjāya ‘Ito pubbe avijjā nāhosi, atha pacchā samabhaviṭṭi- Monks, the first beginning of Ignorance (avijjā) is not to be perceived in such a way as to postulate that; ‘before this, there was no ignorance, it occurred afterwards’.”\textsuperscript{38} Thus, it is not possible to say that “This is the first beginning of life.” or “This is the first cause of the process of causation.”

It should be noted that The Law of Dependent Origination (Paṭicca samuppāda) does not investigate into the first cause as Buddha constantly repeated and definitely declared that an absolute first beginning of existence is something unthinkable; that all such speculation may lead to insanity and that one could never imagine a time when there was no Ignorance and Craving for existence. It merely explains the process of causality which puts the wheel of life in motion again and again. It makes no attempt to solve the question of an absolute origin of life and to show a philosophical theory of the evolutionary process of life and the world.

The Law of Dependent Origination (Paṭicca samuppāda) is only a discourse on the process of birth and death, and not an explanation of the ultimate origin of life and the world. It is only to explain Origin of Suffering, for it is import to know it, in order to

\textsuperscript{37} Sāṃyutta Nikāya, Mahāvagga Sāṃyutta, Jarā Vagga, Āpaṇa Sutta, p-199.
\textsuperscript{38} Aṅguttara Nikāya, Dasakanipāta, Dutiyaṇpanṇāsaka Sutta, Yamaka Vagga, Avijjā Sutta, p-346.
get rid of sufferings in life and the world. It never attempts to explain the evolution of all things from primeval beginning.

Here an objection can be raised that if that so, why then did the Buddha teach the doctrine of Dependent Origination? He taught it to show that through these causes and conditions, suffering comes into being, now and hereafter and it is only possible that suffering to be removed, through knowing the origin or cause of suffering, meditated over the cause of death, decay and misery and traced them upstream in the Law of Dependent Origination.

The causal formula of the Paṭicca samuppāda consists of twelve interdependent factors; Ignorance (avijjā), Volitional Actions (saṅkhāra), Consciousness (viññāṇa), Mental and Physical Phenomena (nāma-rūpa), the Six Faculties (saḷāyatana), Contact (phassa), Sensation (vedanā), Craving (taṇhā), Grasping (upādāna), Becoming (bhava), Birth (jāti) and decay, death, etc (jarā maraṇa, etc). These twelve factors are interdependent causes (paccaya) and effects (paccayuppanna) which is applied to the whole existence and continuity of life and its cessation.

The traditional formula of Dependent Origination (Paṭicca samuppāda) is as follows:

1. Through Ignorance conditioned are the Volitional Activities (avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā).

2. Through the Volitional Activities conditioned is Consciousness (saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇaṁ).

39 Abhidhamma Piṭaka, Dhammasaṅgaṇī Pāli, p-259.
3. Through Consciousness conditioned are Mental and Material phenomena (viññāṇa paccayā nāma-rūpaṁ).

4. Through Mental and Material phenomena conditioned are the Six Sense Bases (nāma-rūpa paccayā saḷāyatanāṁ).

5. Through the Six Sense Bases conditioned is Contact (saḷāyatana paccayā Phasso).

6. Through Contact conditioned is Feeling (phassa paccayā vedanā).

7. Through Feeling conditioned is Craving (vedanā paccayā taṇhā).

8. Through Craving conditioned is Clinging (taṇhā paccayā upādānaṁ).

9. Through Clinging is conditioned Becoming (upādāna paccayā bhavo).

10. Through Becoming conditioned is Rebirth (bhava paccayā jāti).

11. Through Rebirth conditioned are (12) Decay, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief and Despair (jāti paccayā jarā maraṇa soka parideva dukkha domanassupāyāsā sambhavanti).

Thus the entire aggregate of suffering arise (eva metassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti).

This is how life or suffering arises, exists and continues. This process of cause and effect continues ad infinitum. It goes on
without break. All factors are interdependent and interconnected. No single factor in this process is isolated or independent. Hence, a beginning of this process cannot be determined as it is inconceivable that when this life-flux was not encompassed by ignorance and it is impossible to say that thirst (taṇhā) is the first cause of arising of suffering according to Buddhism as it has been stated earlier.

In the Noble Truth of Suffering, it has been stated that birth, old age, death, etc are suffering. Here, how they arise will be explained according to Dependent Origination. In other words, the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering will be explained by the formula of Dependent Origination.

According to the Dependent Origination, Decay (jarā) and Death (marāṇa) arise dependent upon rebirth (jāti). Rebirth literally means the arising of psychological and physical phenomena of a man.40 In other words, it means the arising of the Five Aggregates (pañcakkhandha).

It has been early stated that the Buddha describes the Five Aggregates as suffering. After a person is born, decay (jarā), death (marāṇa) will follow naturally as a consequence. It happens because every ultimate reality has the characteristics of arising (uppāda), existing (ṭhiti) and dissolving (bhaṅga). Whatever it is in the world and life, after arising, existing and dissolving must inevitably follow as it is natural. Here, arising is birth, existing is decay and dissolving is death. So decay and death must inevitably

40“Khandhānam nibbatti jāti.” (Visuddhimagga Pāli, Vol- I, p-193.)
follow rebirth. They are the primary and inevitable effects of rebirth.

As a consequence of rebirth, sorrow (soka), lamentation (parideva), pain (dukkha), grief (domanassa) and despair (upāyāsa) may also arise. During our lifetime, certainly we must meet and face hellish events, unpleasant circumstances, terrible problems and difficulties some time— that is a fact of life. At that time, we must feel absolutely sorrow, grief, etc. These five types of suffering are not primary or inevitable consequences of rebirth. They are secondary effects and may or may not arise depending on conditions in human life. They are absent from the embryo of a human being, which dies in the mother’s womb; and may also be unknown to a newborn baby who dies in the moment of birth or neonatal age and a child who dies in early age.

Rebirth (jāti) arises dependent on Becoming (bhava). Becoming is of two kinds: moral, immoral and imperturbable actions (kamma-bhava), the active side of the process of becoming, which produce existence, and the different states of existence (upapatti-bhava), the passive side of the process of becoming, produced by actions (kamma).\(^{41}\) Here, Becoming (bhava) means kamma-bhava (actions), the active process of becoming that conditions rebirth.

Kamma-bhava is of three types, namely: wholesome actions (puññābhisāṅkhāra), unwholesome actions (apuññābhisāṅkhāra) and imperturbable actions (āneñjābhisāṅkhāra). From Buddhist

\(^{41}\) Visuddhimagga Pāli, Vol- II, p-206.
point of view, wholesome actions (puññābhisaṅkhāra) lead to rebirth in the happy planes (sugati-bhūmi); unwholesome actions (apuññābhisaṅkhāra) lead to rebirth in the woeful states (duggati-bhūmi); and imperturbable actions (āneñjābhisaṅkhāra) lead to rebirth in the material and immaterial planes (rūpa-bhūmi and arūpa-bhūmi). According to Lord Buddha, all beings are born of their own kamma.

The difference between saṅkhāra and kamma-bhava which both are meant kammic activities, is that the former pertains to the actions in the past life and the latter pertains to the actions in the present life. It is saṅkhāra (past actions) that conditions the present birth and it is kamma-bhava (present actions) that conditions the future birth.

Although volition is present whenever there is bodily, verbal or mental action, in the case of Buddhas and Arahantas, their activities completely disappears without leaving any trace and without transforming into kamma which produces rebirth as their volitions is not accompanied by craving (taṇhā) and they have eradicated ignorance (avijjā). Hence, there is no rebirth for Buddhas and Arahantas.

Here, it should be understood that according to Buddhism, it is this kamma-bhava that conditions rebirth and the concept of the creation of life or the world is not accepted by Buddhism. It is actions (kamma) that condition rebirth. Past actions condition the

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42 Saṅkhāra is the second factor of Dependent Origination, which will be mentioned later.
43 Arahanta is the absolute pure one who has destroyed all defilements and has realized the Ultimate Truth of Nibbāna completely.
present birth; and present actions cooperate with past actions to produce the future birth. In other words, the present is the offspring of the past and in turn, it is the parent of the future. Moreover, in the ever-repeated rounds of rebirth (saṃsāra), no ego-entity or soul created by God or emanating from Brahma is to be found except the conditionally arising and passing away of psycho-physical phenomena (khandha).

Becoming (bhava) arises dependent on Clinging (upādāna). All beings except the Arahanta cling to existence and sensual pleasures. There are four kinds of Clinging, namely: Clinging to sensuality (kāmupādāna), Clinging to wrong views (diṭṭhupādāna), Clinging to wrong religious practice or rites and rituals that do not lead to the end of suffering (sīlabbatupādāna) and Clinging to ego-belief (attavādupādāna).\footnote{Abhidhamma Piṭaka, Vibhaṅga Pāli, Paticcasamuppāda Vibhaṅga, p-143.}

Clinging cannot condition the rebirth process directly. It can only condition new kamma-processes of becoming. Clinging is caused by intense desire (taṇhā) and false belief (diṭṭhi). When one clings to something due to strong attachment and hold the false notions of “I” and “mine”, he will act in one way or another to obtain the object. In doing so, new kamma-processes of becoming are performed.

Clinging (upādāna) arises dependent on Craving (taṇhā), which is the other most powerful force, like Ignorance (avijjā)\footnote{Avijjā is the first factor of the Dependent Origination which will be discussed later.}, in the Dependent Origination. There are three kinds of craving,
namely: Craving for sensual pleasures (kāma-tañhā), Craving for existence (bhava-tañhā) and Craving for non-existence (vibhava-tañhā).

The first type of craving (kāma-tañhā) corresponds to five kinds of sensual objects such as form (rūpa), sound (sadda), smell (gañḍha), taste (rasa) and sensation (phoṭṭhabba), and ideas (dhamma). The craving for existence (bhava-tañhā) is craving for sensuous pleasures associated with the wrong view of eternalism (sassata-diṭṭhi) which holds that the soul does not dissolves away and it exists eternally- even when the physical body dies, it does not perish, i.e., craving for enjoying sensual pleasures thinking that soul or self imperishable. The craving for non-existence (vibhava-tañhā) is craving for sensuous pleasures associated with the view of nihilism (uccheda-diṭṭhi) which holds that nothing remains after death, everything is completely annihilated, i.e., craving for enjoying sensual pleasures thinking that everything, both body and soul, perishes after death.

Thus, tañhā refers to the six types of craving, such as craving for the beautiful visible objects (rūpa-tañhā), craving for the pleasant sound (sadda-tañhā), craving for the fragrant smell (gañḍha-tañhā), craving for the delicious taste (rasa-tañhā), craving for the delicate sensation (phoṭṭhabba-tañhā) and craving for the ideas (dhamma-tañhā).46

46 Abhidhamma Piṭaka, Vibhaṅga Pāli, Paṭiccasamuppāda Vibhaṅga, p-143.
It is the fact that an ordinary man develops a craving for the sense-pleasures and the worldly possessions such as wealth, power, success, etc. It is extremely difficult to overcome desires, thirst or craving. It is this craving that makes repeated births in round of rebirths (sāṁsāra), joined up with ignorance.

The desire to get an object is tañhā and the strong attachment or clinging, which develops after getting the object is upādāna. All the four types of clinging arise as a result of craving. Clinging to sense-pleasure arises as a result of craving for sensuous objects. Clinging to wrong view and clinging to theory of a soul arise due to attachment (tañhā) to oneself. Clinging to vain and useless rites and rituals arises from the desire to better oneself out of attachment to the self. Thus, the causal relation of craving and clinging is well justified.

What does craving (tañhā) arise out of? Craving arises out of Feeling (vedanā). It is this feeling that experiences the sense objects which come into contact with the sense organs, along with the consciousness that has arisen. It may be pleasant feeling (sukha-vedanā), or unpleasant feeling (dukkha-vedanā), or neutral feeling (adukkhamasukha-vedanā), depending on the nature of the sense-object and sensation one feels.

When there is pleasant feeling (sukha-vedanā) of an object, there is certainly craving for it. Even unpleasant feeling (dukkha-vedanā) may condition craving, as dependent on unpleasant feeling, there may arise craving either for the disappearing of the unpleasant or for the replacing of the unpleasant with the pleasant
or the neutral. Neutral feeling (adukkhamasukha-vedanā) is neither pleasant nor unpleasant. But it is not an absence of feeling. In fact, it is a kind of feeling that subtly conditions craving for the neutralization of the pain. In some cases, it is defined as the feeling of equanimity or the feeling of indifference to pleasure and pain (upekkhā-vedanā).

What does Feeling (vedanā) arise from? Feeling arises from Contact (phassa). When the six sense objects—form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental object, collide with their respective six sense organs—eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, there arise the six types of consciousness—seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and thinking. The conjunction of the three; sense object, sense organ and consciousness, is Contact (phassa) which gives rise to feeling. In accordance with the six sense-objects, six sense-organs and six types of consciousness, there are six types of contact—eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact and mind-contact; and also there are six types of feeling according to the six types of contact.47

It is this contact that gives rise to feeling (vedanā) that may be pleasant, or unpleasant or neutral depending on the nature of the sense-object and sensation one senses. If the object is agreeable and one like it, there arises the pleasant feeling; if it is disagreeable and one does not like it, the unpleasant feeling arises; if it is neither agreeable nor disagreeable and one feels indifference, the neutral feeling arises.

47Abhidhamma Piṭaka, Vibhaṅga Pāli, Paṭiccasamuppāda Vibhaṅga, p-143.
Contact arises dependent on the Six Sense-bases (saḷāyatana), namely: eye and visual object, ear and sound, nose and odour, tongue and taste, body and tactile object, mind and mind-object, contact. Indeed, contact arises out of the conjunction of the sense-bases, sense-objects and the consciousness that arisen as a result of collision of sense-bases and sense-objects as it has been stated that above. But contact arises chiefly dependent on six sense-organs.  

It is practical since though there are external sense-objects, without internal sense-organs, there would not be any consciousness of the external objects and mental-contact. It is just like though there are some visible external objects, a blind man cannot have visual consciousness and eye-contact as he is absent from the organ of eye or, as some prefer to say, the sense of sight. In connection with a being’s bodily and mental functions, e.g. seeing and feeling, it is evident that the six sense-bases machine operates mechanically without any operator, like a soul to operate it, i.e., all the sense-bases perform their respective functions automatically without any force. That is nature.

The Six Sense-Bases arise dependent on Mental and Material phenomena (nāma-rūpa) that a sentient being must possess inevitably. The Six Sense-Bases are a name for the five pairs of physical sense-organs and sense-objects and one pair of mind and mind-object which are situated in mental and material phenomena of a being. The five physical sense-bases are derived

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48 Abhidhamma Piṭaka, Vibhaṅga Pāli, Paṭiccasamuppāda Vibhaṅga, p-143.
from material phenomena while the mind is born of mental phenomena.

Mental phenomena (nāma) consists of the three aggregates-the aggregate of sensation (vedanākkhandha), the aggregate of perception (saññākkhandha) and the aggregate of volitional activities (saṅkhārakkhandha); and material phenomena contains the four primary elements and corporeality dependent on the four primary elements.\textsuperscript{49}

Mental and Material phenomena (nāma-rūpa) arise dependent on Consciousness (viññāṇa). Here, the term viññāṇa mostly denotes the rebirth-consciousness (paṭissandhi-viññāṇa) which is the initial consciousness one experiences at the moment of the conception in the new birth; and all the resultant consciousness (vipākacitta) that is experienced during lifetime are also implied by the term.

In fact, mind and matter (nāma-rūpa) and rebirth-consciousness (paṭissandhi-viññāṇa) arise simultaneously at the conception of a being in the new birth. However, rebirth-consciousness (paṭissandhi-viññāṇa) is regarded as the cause and mind and matter (nāma-rūpa) is regarded as the effect as the arising of a being contained mind and matter consists in the rebirth consciousness. If this rebirth consciousness were not to arise, mental and material phenomena would not arise in the mother’s womb and as a result, a being would not also arise.

\textsuperscript{49}Abhidhamma Piṭaka, Vibhaṅga Pāli, Paṭiccasamuppāda Vibhaṅga, p-142.
According to Buddhism, in the process of arising of a human being, the human embryo in the mother’s womb is formed by the combination of the rebirth-consciousness with the sperm cell of the father and the ovum cell of the mother and at the embryonic stage, simultaneous with the arising of the rebirth-consciousness there occur mind and matter or, in other words, corporeal organism at the conception of a being. Therefore, there is neither soul nor God who creates a soul to be found except these rebirth consciousness and mental and physical phenomena.

The third and fourth factors of Dependent Origination, viññāṇa and nāma-rūpa which are contemporaneous pertain to the present birth of an individual while the eleventh factor, jāti pertains to the future birth. This is the difference between them.

Consciousness arises depends on Volitional Activities (saṅkhāra). Here, consciousness refers to all classes of consciousness including the rebirth consciousness that are the results of volitional actions done in a former existence. It is very important; on the other hand, hard to understand how Volitional Activities gives rise to rebirth consciousness. According to the Buddha, on the extinction of the last consciousness together with all mind and matter, these Volitional actions (saṅkhāra), both moral and immoral cause the arising of the rebirth consciousness together with the new mind and matter of a being who has not eradicated all the defilements.

Though Buddhism accepts rebirth as a verifiable fact, it should be understood that the Buddhist belief in rebirth is quite
distinct from the belief in rebirth viewed as transmigration or reincarnation of permanent soul which is accepted by other religious systems and philosophers as Buddhism does not recognize the existence of soul, created by God or emanated from Divine Essence.

The term ‘saṅkhāra’ has wide different meanings and it should be understood according to the context. Here, it denotes moral (puñña), immoral (apuñña) and imperturbable (āneñja) volitions (cetanā). Furthermore, the volitions which cause bodily actions, verbal actions and mental actions are also called saṅkhāra here.50

Clearly speaking, all moral, immoral and neither moral nor immoral deeds, speech and thoughts are included in the term saṅkhāra.

Volitional activities are also called kamma-formations. They provide the kammic cause for rebirth, thereby prolonging the cycle of birth and death (samsāra). However, Buddhists believe that puññabhisaṅkhāra, wholesome kamma-formations, lead to rebirth in the happy sensual planes of human (manussa) and deity (deva) and to rebirth in the form planes of Brahmaṇa (rūpa-brahmaṇa); apuññabhisaṅkhāra, unwholesome kamma-formations lead to rebirth in the woeful planes (apāya); and āneñjābhisaṅkhāra, Imperturbable kamma-formations lead to rebirth in the formless planes of Brahmaṇa (arūpa-brahmaṇa).

50 Abhidhamma Piṭaka, Vibhaṅga Pāli, Paṭiccasamuppāda Vibhaṅga, p-142.
Saṅkhāra is the same as kamma-bhava described as the tenth factor of Dependent Origination as both factors condition the rebirth process. The only difference is that saṅkhāra pertains to the past actions while kamma-bhava pertains to the present actions. In other words, saṅkhāra conditions the present life of an individual and kamma-bhava conditions the future life.

From Buddhist point of view, it is this kamma, both past and present (saṅkhāra and kamma-bhava) that conditions the present and future lives of an individual and no Creator or God is not to be found.

Volitional Activities arise dependent upon Ignorance (avijjā). Volitional Activities, either moral or immoral, are rooted in Ignorance. Here, ignorance means unknowing of suffering, the cause of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the way leading to the cessation of suffering.\(^{51}\) In other words, it means the not-knowingness of the Five Aggregates (pañcakkhandha), their cause, their cessation, and the way to their cessation.\(^{52}\) Not-knowingness of the past, the future, both the past and future and even not-knowingness of this Dependent Origination (paṭiccasamuppāda) is also Ignorance.\(^{53}\)

Quite simply speaking, not-knowingness of things as they truly are, or not-knowingness of oneself as one really is, is ignorance.

\(^{51}\) Saṁyutta Nikāya, Mahāvagga Saṁyutta, Sacca Saṁyutta, Dhammacakkapavattana Vagga, Avijjā Sutta, p-376.
\(^{52}\) Saṁyutta Nikāya, Khandhavagga Saṁyutta, Khandha Saṁyutta, Dhammakathika Vagga, Avijjā Sutta, p-132.
\(^{53}\) Abhidhamma Piṭaka, Dhammasaṅgaṇī Pāli, p-222.
According to the Buddha, except Buddhas and Arahantas who have eradicated ignorance and defilements, all persons’ actions whether good or bad are based on ignorance and necessarily produce rebirth and tend to prolong one’s wandering in round of rebirth (saṁsāra). While ignorance is predominant in immoral activities, it is latent in moral activities.

Because of ignorance of kamma and its results, people perform all sorts of unwholesome activities for immediate self-benefit. Because of delusion thinking that sensual pleasures are real forms of happiness, people perform wholesome actions so that they can attain such happiness in this life or in the future lives. Thus people accumulate both moral and immoral volitional activities (saṅkhāra) as a result of ignorance. Hence, both moral and immoral actions of ignorant persons are regarded as saṅkhāra as they have not eradicated ignorance and all defilements.

However, good actions and practices, such as charity (dāna), moral practice (sīla) and meditation (bhāvanā), devoid of greed (lobha), anger (dosa), and delusion (moha), are essential to get rid of the ills of life as the Buddha’s Dhamma is compared to a raft, by which one should cross the ocean of birth and death for the purpose of deliverance of suffering.

This is how the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering arise is explained by the formula of Dependent Origination. According to this formula, Ignorance (avijjā) is the chief cause that sets the wheel of life in motion. Ignorance is like a cloud. One’s eyes of understanding of Truth (sacca) are covered in cloud of avijjā.
When Ignorance is completely eradicated, one sees things as they truly are and comprehend the Truth.

So, it is evident that craving (taṇhā) is not the first or the only cause of arising of suffering. Buddhism denies the first cause as the cause becomes the effect and the effect becomes the cause in a circle of cause and effect. In addition to craving, other defilements (kilesas), immoralities (akusala-dhammas) and even mundane types of virtues connected with the depravities (sāsava-kusala-dhammas) are also included in the definition of the origin of suffering (dukkha-samudaya) in certain places of the original Pāli texts.54

However, Craving is the most powerful factor, like ignorance and the obvious cause of arising of suffering. This craving gives rise to suffering with ignorance.

In the cycle or vortex of becoming (bhava-cakka, samsara) the instability, inveteration, and death of whatever has had a beginning is inevitable; life or becoming is a function of sensibility, sensibility of wanting (tanhā, thirst), and wanting a function of ignorance (avijjā= moha, delusion).55

The life-flame of all living beings will never be extinguished as long as the wick of ignorance and the oil of craving are present. It will be extinguished providing that the wick of ignorance and the oil of craving are absolutely gone off. In other words, the life-stream of all living beings flows ad infinitum as long as it is fed

54 Abhidhamma Piṭaka, Vibhanga Pālī, Khandha Vibhaṅga, Abhidhammabhājanīya, p-112.
with the waters of ignorance and craving. Provided these two are completely cut off, it will cease to flow.

The Buddha says: “Andhakārena onaddhā, taṇhādāsā sanettikā, vaṭḍhenti kaṭasāṁ ghoram, ādiyanti punabhavanti- Shrouded in darkness of ignorance, enslaved to craving and clinging to existences, men increase cemeteries and stretch the rebirths.”

Hence, provided freed from ignorance and craving, we will free from suffering.

It is this craving included not only desire for or attachment to sensual pleasures, but also desire for or attachment to ideas and conceptions produce the ills of life, such as grief, sorrow, fear, etc. The Buddha states: “Taṇhāya jāyatī soko, taṇhāya jāyatī bhayaṁ, taṇhāya vippamuttassa, natthi soko kuto bhayaṁ- Form craving springs grief, from craving spring fear. For him who is wholly free from craving, there is no grief, much less fear.”

Therefore, to remove the ills of life and problems in an individual life, a society and the world it is important to get rid of all kinds of craving.

It is this craving that causes all economic, politic and social troubles and problems in a particular individual life and the world. All fights and strife, form little personal quarrels between people to

56 Aṅguttara Nikāya, Catukkanipāta, Rohitassa Vagga, Upakkilesa Sutta, p-364.
57 Khuddaka Nikāya, Dhammapada Pāli, Piya Vagga, verse-216.
58 Dīgha Nikāya, Pāthikavagga Pāli, p-237.
great wars between countries, arise out of this craving. All the evils in the world are produced by this craving.

Therefore, it is not possible that all the troubles and problems in the world are completely vanished by solving only in economic, politic and social terms, without pulling up the real root of them which is craving. The world must cut craving off to banish evils from the face of the earth. The Buddha says: “Ūno loko atitto taṅhādāso- The world is unfulfilled, unsatisfied and enslaved to thirst.”\(^{59}\)

According to Buddhism, as long as there is craving, the continuous arising of existence (saṁsāra) goes on and thus suffering never ends. It means as long as one is tied to craving, he accumulates volitional activities which necessarily produce rebirth and as a result, he wonders in cycle of birth and death (saṁsāra), thereby undergoing suffering, such as birth, old-age, disease, death, etc.

When craving is completely eradicated, Kammic forces cease to operate and thus one is emancipated from round of rebirths. Suffering can cease only provided its driving force, craving is completely eliminated.

The Buddha states: “Taṅhakkhayo sabbadukkhhaṁ jināti- The Craving-Freed vanquishes all suffering.”\(^{60}\)

Here, it should be noted that the Buddhist aim of deliverance is not merely to escape from sin and hell; it is to be freed from the

\(^{59}\) Majjhima Nikāya, Majjhimapannāsa Pāli, Raṭṭhapāla Sutta, p-259.
\(^{60}\) Khuddaka Nikāya, Dhammapada Pāli, Taṅhā Vagga, verse-354.
cycle of birth and death. In other words, the ultimate goal of Buddhism is to escape from recurrent sufferings of birth, old-age, disease, death, sorrow, grief, etc.

The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering

According to the Buddha, emancipation from craving is emancipation from suffering and the extinction of craving is the extinction of suffering. Indeed, to eliminate suffering, its root, craving must be completely cut off and suffering to be ceased, its origin, craving must be absolutely eliminated. With the extinction of craving, the Five Aggregates of mind and matter regarded as the Noble Truth of Suffering for new life cannot rise and cease to exist. This extinction of craving is called the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (Dukkha nirodha ariya sacca), which is the Third Noble Truth.

The Buddha states as follows:

“Now, o monks, this is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (dukkha nirodha ariya sacca). It is the complete extinction of that craving, giving it up, renouncing it, emancipation from it, detachment from it. This Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering should be realized (sacchikātabba).”

The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering is also known as Nibbāna. The Pāli word Nibbāna is defined as “It is called

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61 Sarīyutta Nikāya, Mahāvagga Samyutta, Dhammacakkapavattana Vagga, Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, pp-369-370.
Nibbāna in that it is liberation from craving (vānato nikkhantattā nibbānanti pavuccati).”62

The Buddha also states thus: “Taṅhakkhayā dukkhakkhayo, dukkhakkhayā Nibbānam- The extinction of craving leads to the extinction of suffering and the extinction of suffering is Nibbāna.”63

Nibbāna is also explained as the extinction of lust (rāgakkhaya), the extinction of hatred (dosakkhaya) and the extinction of illusion (mohakkhaya).64

Nibbāna, in one sense, is interpreted as Deathlessness (amata). It literally means the ultimate release from future rebirth, old-age, disease and death. As a result of completely extinction of craving, Kammic forces cease to operate and consequently rebirth, ageing, disease and death are also ceased.

Therefore, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering or Nibbāna is the extinction of craving. According to Buddhism, the extinction of craving is brought about through Insight-wisdom (vipassanā ñāṇa) and Path-wisdom (magga ñāṇa). By virtue of Insight-wisdom, craving has no chance to rise and it is dispelled by Path-wisdom. This extinction of craving is regarded as the noblest and highest form of extinction.

In the sense of extinction of craving through Insight-wisdom, when one meditates on the true nature of things, i.e., their

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62 Abhidhammatthesaṅgaha Pāli, p-113.
63 Khuddaka Nikāya, Nettippakaraṇa Pāli, p-50.
64 Sarīyuttika Nikāya, Salāyatanavagga Sarīyutta, Nibbānapaṭhā Sutta, p-447.
impermanence (anicca), suffering (dukkha) and non-self (anatta) and sees things as they really are, he will not be blinded by the illusion of permanence (nicca), happiness (sukha) and self (atta) and he is momentarily free from ignorance (avijjā) or delusion (moha).

Having seen the true natures of things, i.e., impermanence, suffering and non-self and being free from ignorance or delusion of permanence, happiness and self, for him, there is no pleasant feeling towards the pleasurable and agreeable things and thus, craving for them does not arise during the period of contemplation. In this way, the temporary extinction of craving comes about through Insight-wisdom. This is the extinction of craving through Insight-wisdom.

Every time one engages with Insight meditation (vipassanā bhāvanā) and Insight-wisdom appears to him, craving gets no chance to rise and consequently, there occurs the temporary extinction of craving. It may be said that one is realizing the temporary extinction of craving or the momentarily cessation of suffering, otherwise called momentary Nibbāna, by means of development of Insight-wisdom.

Through Insight-wisdom which promotes the temporary extinction of craving, Path-wisdom, higher wisdom is developed. In Buddhism, there are four stages of Path-wisdom in the sense of extinction of craving. One who attains those four stages is called a noble man, a holy man or a saint.
One who has attained the First Stage of Sainthood is called a sotāpanna or stream-winner because he has entered the stream that leads to the cessation of suffering or Nibbāna. The stream represents the Noble Eightfold Path. A sotāpanna has unshakeable faith in the three refuges, the Buddha, Dhamma and Saṅgha. He neither violates the five precepts nor commits the heinous crimes. He has also destroyed self-illusion (sakkāyadiṭṭhi), doubts (vicikicchā) and false practices (sīlabbataparāmāsa) that do not lead to the end of suffering.

However, he has not eradicated all the fetters (saṁyojana) that bind him to existence and therefore, he will suffer not more than seven rebirths in the states of sensuous sphere (kāmasugati bhūmi). For the sotāpanna, the doors of the woeful states are closed forever and he will never revert to a world-ling (puthujjana puggala) again. He will eventually attain Arahantaship and realize Nibbāna.

There are three types of sotāpanna, depending on the number of rebirths in the states of sensuous sphere before they attain Arahantaship. The first three Fetters are eliminated at the First Stage of Sainthood (Sotāpanna); the fourth and fifth fetters are only weakened at the Second Stage of Sainthood (Sakadāgāmi) but eliminated at the Third Stage of Sainthood (Anāgāmi) and the remaining fetters are all eliminated at the Fourth Stage of Sainthood (Arahanta).

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65 Saṁyojana means fetter that binds beings to the wheel of existence and to the rounds of misery. There are ten fetters, namely: Sakkāyadiṭṭhi = false view of a personality taking the complex combination of psycho-physical aggregates as a person or self or I; Vicikiccha = skeptical doubt about the Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha, the Training, past lives, future lives, both the past and future lives, and Dependent Origination; Silabbataparāmāsa = adherence to the false practices or rites and rituals that do not lead the end of sufferings; Kāmarāga = attachment to sensual pleasures; Paṭigha = ill-will, anger or aversion; Māna = conceit or pride; Uddhacca = restlessness; Rūparāga = attachment to the rūpa-jhānas (the form absorptions) and rūpa-existence (existence in the form realms); Arūparāga = attachment to the arūpa-jhānas (formless absorptions) and arūpa-existence (existence in the formless realms); and Avijjā = ignorance.
Arahantaship or realize Nibbāna namely: Ekabījī sotāpanna, who realizes Nibbāna after one life; Kolaṁkola sotāpanna, who realizes Nibbāna after two to six lives and Sattakkhattuparama sotāpanna, who realizes Nibbāna after seven lives in the sensual planes.

One who has attained the Second Stage of Sainthood is called a sakadāgāmi, which literally means ‘once returner’. At this stage, the grosser forms of sensual craving (kāma) and ill-will (paṭīgha) are attenuated, but not completely destroyed to some extent that he will suffer not more than one rebirth in the sensual planes before he attains Arahantaship or realizes Nibbāna.

Here, though the sakadāgāmi, once returner, has not also eradicated all fetters, compared to the sotāpanna, stream-winner, he has less lust (rāga), ill-will (dosa) and delusion (moha). Thus, he is nobler than the sotāpanna.

One who has attained the Third Stage of Sainthood is called an anāgāmi which literally means 'non-returner', one who will not be reborn in the sensual realms. Only at this stage of sainthood, the fetters of sensual craving and ill-will are completely destroyed, and thus he will no longer experience anger, hatred, worry, despair, fear, and any other unpleasant mental feeling and he will not crave for and enjoy sense pleasures. However, the subtle forms of craving, such as craving for existences in the fine material plane and non-material plane (rūparāga and arūparāga), and ignorance are still present. Therefore, he will not be reborn in the sensual

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66Saṁyutta Nikāya, Mahāvagga Saṁyutta Aṭṭhakathā, p-270.
plane but in the Pure Abodes (brahmaṇalokas) where he attains the Final Stage of Sainthood and lives till the end of his life.

One who has attained the Final Stage of Sainthood is called an Arahanta. At this stage, the subtle forms of craving and ignorance are completely destroyed. In other words, all Fetters (Saṃyojanas) that bind one to existence are completely eradicated. The mind of an Arahanta is always free from all defilements and that purest state of mind makes him the Noblest One, the Highest Saint, the Holiest One or the Purest One.

An Arahanta does not accumulate fresh kamma and is not subject to rebirth again because the conditions for his rebirth have been completely destroyed. For him, birth is exhausted and as a result, there is no more suffering. He has fully realized the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering or Nibbāna.

It should be carefully observed that craving is not even attenuated merely on attaining the First Stage of Sainthood and anyhow on attaining the Second Stage of Sainthood, the grosser forms of craving, such as craving for sensual pleasures, wealth, power, etc., are mere attenuated. Moreover, on attaining the Third Stage of Sainthood, mere the grosser forms of craving are eradicated and only on attaining the Final Stage of Sainthood, the subtle forms of craving, such as craving for existences in the fine material plane and non-material plane are completely eradicated. Therefore, it is evident from this sense that how powerful craving is and how hard to eradicate it.
In the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering, the causal conditions which give rise to suffering were explained by the formula of Dependent Origination. Likewise, here also how suffering ceases, ends and vanishes will be explained in accordance with the formula of Dependent Origination. In other words, the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering will be explained by the formula of Dependent Origination.

The reverse Order of Dependent Origination explains how the Cessation of Suffering comes about. Its reverse formula is as follows:

1. The complete cessation of Ignorance leads to the cessation of Volitional Activities.
2. The cessation of Volitional Activities leads to the cessation of Consciousness.
3. The cessation of Consciousness leads to the cessation of Mental and Material phenomena.
4. The cessation of Mental and Material phenomena leads to the cessation of Six Sense Bases.
5. The cessation of Six Sense Bases leads to the cessation of Contact.
6. The cessation of Contact leads to the cessation of Feeling.
7. The cessation of Feeling leads to the cessation of Craving.
8. The cessation of Craving leads to the cessation of Clinging.
9. The cessation of Clinging leads to the cessation of Becoming.
10. The cessation of Becoming leads to the cessation of Rebirth.
11. The cessation of Rebirth leads to (12) the cessation of Decay, Death, Sorrow, Lamentation, Pain, Grief, and Despair.

Thus the cessation of the entire aggregate of suffering arises.

This is how the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering arise is explained by the formula of Dependent Origination. The formula states that when the causative causes such as ignorance, volitional activities, etc., cease, the resultant effects such as volitional activities, consciousness, etc., also cease. Here, the important point to note is that Ignorance (avijjā) is the chief cause that sets the wheel of life in motion. Once Ignorance vanishes, all other factors become extinguished.

According to Buddhism, one’s eyes of understanding of Truth (sacca) are covered in ignorance. When Ignorance is completely eradicated, one sees things as they truly are and comprehend the Truth. As he fully comprehends the Truth, he becomes the Noblest One (Arahanta). Since Ignorance has been completely eradicated, the chain of Dependent Origination, also called the Wheel of Existence is broken and there is no more rebirth and suffering for the Noblest One (Arahanta).

In brief, it should be noted that only when all forms of craving are completely eliminated, the true and permanent
liberation from suffering comes about. Unless all forms of craving are completely eradicated, the true and permanent liberation from suffering is not brought about. When all forms of craving are completely eradicated, all kinds of suffering are entirely ceased. Therefore, the total extinction of all forms of craving is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering or Nibbāna which has to be realized.

The eternal heaven which is the goal of other religions can be attained only after death while the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering or Nibbāna which is the goal of Buddhism can be attained or realized in this very life. It needs not to wait until death to realize or to attain it. This is the difference between Buddhist conception of goal and non-Buddhist conception of goal.

He who has eliminated craving, lust, passion, can live peacefully and happily in his personal life, household life, social life and the world as he is free from all the worries, sorrows and grieves which are the results of all kinds of craving.

The Buddha states: “Yaṁ esā sahate jammī, taṇhā loke visattikā, sokā tassa pavaḍḍhanti, abhivaṭṭhaṁva bīraṇaṁ. Yo cetaṁ sahate jammiṁ, taṇhāṁ loke duraccayaṁ, sokā tamhā papatanti, udabinduva pokkharā. - In the world, for one who is tormented by this attached and base craving, sorrows grow like grass flourishes after the rain. But if he overcomes that unruly and
base craving, from him sorrows fall away like water-drops fall off a lotus leaf.”67

He can also overcome problems and troubles that are arisen out of craving. Since he has no selfish desire, greed, covetousness, attachment and others impure thoughts and ideas, his mentality is pure and calm, and his conducts are good and gentle. Therefore, he leads to a happy, joyful, serene and peaceful life. He lives in the perfect condition.

**The Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering**

According to the Buddha, the cessation of suffering or the extinction of craving is achieved by following the Noble Eightfold Path (Ariya-Atthaṅgika-Magga), known as the Middle Path (Majjhima- Paṭipadā), which is the Fourth Noble Truth, the Noble Truth of the Path Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (dukkha nirodha gāmini paṭipadā ariya sacca).

The Buddha states that man should cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path to eliminate cravings (taṇhās).68

The Buddha says thus: “Now, o monks, this is the Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering (dukkha nirodha gāmini paṭipadā ariya sacca). It is this Noble Eightfold Path (Ariya Atthaṅgika Magga) - namely; Right View (Sammā-

68 Saṁyutta Nikāya, Mahāvagga Saṁyutta, p-53.
diṭṭhi), Right Thought (Sammā-saṅkappa), Right Speech (Sammā-vācā), Right Action (Sammā-kammanta), Right Livelihood (Sammā-ājīva), Right Effort (Sammā-vāyāma), Right Mindfulness (Sammā-sati), and Right Concentration (Sammā-samādhi). This Noble Truth of the Path leading to the Cessation of Suffering should be developed (bhāvetabbaṁ).”

According to the teachings of Lord Buddha, in striving for the purification of all defilements with a view to gaining Insight into the Truth and to leading to the end of all kinds of suffering, there are the two extremes that one must avoid. They are Indulgence in Sensual pleasure (Kāmasukhallikānuyoga) which is base, common, vulgar, unholy and unprofitable, and Self-mortification (Attakilamathānuyoga) which is painful, unholy and unprofitable.

Through the practice of these two extremes, one cannot see the Truth and realize the Cessation of Suffering or Nibbāna. Only through the practice which steers the middle course between those two extremes, one can lead to peace, discernment, Enlightenment, and Nibbāna. It is this Noble Eightfold Path, the Middle way that leads to the cessation of suffering or Nibbāna.

The Middle Way is the practice that leads to the end of suffering, in other words, is the path that leads to the realization of the cessation of suffering or Nibbāna.

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69 Saṁyutta Nikāya, Mahāvagga Saṁyutta, Dhammacakkavattana Vagga, Dhammacakkavattana Sutta, pp-369/370.
It consists of:

1. Right View (sammā diṭṭhi)
2. Right Thought (sammā saṅkappa)
3. Right Speech (sammā vācā)
4. Right Action (sammā kammanta)
5. Right Livelihood (sammā ājīva)
6. Right Effort (sammā vāyāma)
7. Right Mindfulness (sammā sati), and
8. Right Concentration (sammā samādhi).

It should not be understood that these eight factors of the path are to be followed in serial order as given in the usual list above. In fact, they are highly interdependent each other and linked together. They are to be developed simultaneously.

Though the Buddha taught many discourses to different people in different ways and in different words during the forty five years ‘for the good of the many (bahujanahitāya) and for the happiness of the many’ (bahujanasukhāya), those discourses deal with this Noble Eightfold Path one way or another. In other words, the whole teaching of the Buddha is essentially based on this Noble Eightfold Path.

These eight factors of the Path constitute the three trainings (sikkhās) - namely: Moral Conduct (sīla), Mental Discipline (samādhi) and Wisdom (paññā) that are the essences of the Buddha’s teachings.70

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70 Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaṇṇāsa Pāli, p-375.
These three trainings represent self-discipline in actions and speeches, self-purification in mind and self-development in intellect respectively to lead a pure and noble life.

These three trainings are regarded as the three stages of the Path that are to be developed for the attainment of deliverance from sufferings stage by stage. Therefore, if the eight factors of the Path are explained according to these three stages, it will be more helpful and useful to the clear and better understanding of the Noble Eightfold Path.

The first stage of the Path is Moral conduct (sīla) consisting of the three factors of the Noble Eightfold Path- namely: Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood.

Right Speech refers to virtuous, moral and honourable verbal actions and it deals with refraining from four kinds of evil and immoral verbal action, namely: falsehood (musāvāda), slander (pisuṇavācā), harsh and abusive words or language (pharusavācā), and frivolous and useless talk (samphappalāpa).71

Generally speaking, the term “Right Speech” embraces all kinds of speeches, words, languages and talks that bring about truth, love and benefit to the speaker and another. It means to tell the truth, to speak friendly, warm, and gently and to talk something useful.

One must always abstain from all forms of wrong speeches and rough words which first debase him and then hurts another. On

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71 Khuddaka Nikāya, Paṭisambhidāmagga Pāli, p-40.
the contrary, one should ever speak the truth and use sweet and
gentle words. Because of a wrong and harmful speech or word,
hatred and enmity, disunity and disharmony may arise in an
individual life or a society. One should speak carefully and
seriously and give the useful and fruitful talks. Talking waffles and
gossips, one may lose admiration and respect of others.

An aspirant must abstain from back-biting, calumny,
offensive speech and harsh language. The success of great people
in history was due in part to their carefulness of the use of
language. A good deal of social conflict is generated by the
carelessness of the use of language. The avoidance of offensive
speech and harsh language not only leads to the social
advancement, but also imparts social esteem and prestige. We must
therefore beware of offensive speech and harsh language, if we
want to be successful in life.

The importance of speech is obvious. Words can destroy or
save lives, make enemies or friends, start war or create peace. It is
natural that people like who tells the truth and the good; love who
speaks sweetly and politely; and admire who says meaningful and
useful things. Therefore, speeches and words should be true,
pleasant and beneficial.

Right Action refers to virtuous, moral and honourable bodily
actions or conducts which does no harm, but does good to all living
beings and it concerns with refraining from three kinds of evil and
immoral bodily action, namely: killing (pāṇātipāta), stealing (adinnādāna) and sexual misconduct (kāmesumicchācāra).\textsuperscript{72}

Right Action literally means abstinence from any immoral and dishonourable bodily actions or conducts which make one’s bad reputation and hurts one’s dignity. One should not do any evil deed that may cause death, pain, fear, misery, sorrow, and grief for others. Instead, one should do good deeds which make others happy and peaceful. In this way, one should lead a moral and honourable life.

Right Livelihood means making a living through just and righteous means, refraining from unjust and wrong means.\textsuperscript{73}

According to the Buddha, one should make a good living through a career or a profession refraining from trading in the five kinds of merchandise that harm other beings. They are (1) trading in arms and weapons (satthavāṇijja), (2) trading in living beings, including trading human beings for slave and prostitution as well as animals for slaughter (sattavāṇijja), (3) trading in flesh and meat (mamsavāṇijja), including rising animals for slaughter (4) trading in intoxicating drinks and drugs (majjavāṇijja), and (5) trading in poisons (visavāṇijja).\textsuperscript{74}

Furthermore, any other work, job and occupation that would violate the principles of right speech and right action should be avoided such as cheating, swindling, stealing, picking someone’s pocket, robbing, snatching, kidnapping, etc.

\textsuperscript{72} Khuddaka Nikāya, Paṭisambhidāmagga Pāli, p-40.
\textsuperscript{73} Khuddaka Nikāya, Paṭisambhidāmagga Pāli, p-40.
\textsuperscript{74} Āṅguttara Nikāya, Pañcakanipāta, p-183.
In general, one should refrain from livelihood based on immoral, dishonourable, evil, unjust and illegal means and one should earn one’s living in moral and righteous ways. One’s wealth and property should be acquired legally and righteously.

Here, it is very interesting to note that Buddhist Ethical conduct can be viewed as a guideline not only to attain deliverance, but also to lead a good and moral life and to establish a peaceful and harmonious society. It is important to live up to the high moral standards in all spheres of life.

Buddhist Ethical conduct promotes the social process and structure. The adherence to the concepts of Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood introduces better community relations in a society. If these concepts are practised on a collective scale, they can provide the basic value for solving social problems.

This Ethical conduct is regarded as the essential, indispensable, basic foundation for higher spiritual and intellectual developments. Without this basis of Moral Conduct, it is not possible to build a brick house of spirit and intellect. Only based on the cultivation of ethical conduct, spiritual and intellectual development can be attained.

The second stage of the Path is Mental Discipline consisting of the three factors of the Path: namely- Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration. This Mental Discipline flows from Moral Conduct.
Right Effort is a psychological and moral scheme of training and it is concerned with the will and the mental exertion. That is to say: (1) to prevent the arising of evil and unwholesome states of mind that have not yet arisen, (2) to discard the evil and unwholesome states of mind that have already arisen, (3) to develop the good and wholesome states of mind that have not arisen, and (4) to promote the good and wholesome states of mind that have already arisen.\textsuperscript{75}

Right Effort means these four mental exertions that are explained with reference to their four functions, namely: preventing, discarding, developing and promoting. But in reality, there is only one factor here — the effort. When one tries to attain purity and deliverance, the effort covers these four functions automatically.

One should rouse his will and make effort to avoid any thought of greed, hatred, enmity, ill-will, conceit, pride, illusion, delusion and any other evil states of mind, and to overcome them. Furthermore, one should rouse his will and make effort to produce all thoughts of selflessness, loving-kindness, compassion, good-will, non-conceit, non-delusion and all other good states of mind, and to maintain them.

According to Buddhism, only through one’s own effort, one can overcome the ills of life and obtain perfection. By merely confession, one’s sins and vices cannot be cleaned and by merely prayer, deliverance cannot be attained. Buddhism admonishes that

\textsuperscript{75}Khuddaka Nikāya, Paṭisambhidāmagga Pāli, p-40.
one should remove all evil thoughts from the mind and cultivate virtuous thoughts in the mind by one’s own exertion. Effort is a prerequisite for the purity of mind. Without effort, it cannot be achieved.

Right Mindfulness is the complete and constant awareness with regard to the body (kāya), feelings (vedanā), the mind (citta) and mind objects (dhamma). It literally means the ardent and mindful dwelling in contemplation of the body, feeling, mind and mind objects.

Regarding the body, one should dwell in contemplation of the body through the awareness of breathing out and in; the awareness of the four postures, i.e., lying, sitting, standing and walking; the awareness of the activities of the body; meditation on thirty-two parts of the body and the four elements; and other modes of meditation in reference to body.

In regard to feelings, one should dwell in contemplation of feelings through the awareness of pleasant feeling, unpleasant feeling and neutral feeling, of how feelings arise and vanish, and of the arising and vanishing of feelings.

Concerning the mind, one should dwell in contemplation of the mind through the awareness of the mental states, i.e., whether it is the greedy mind or not, the angry mind or not, the deluded mind or not, the developed mind or not, the distracted mind or the concentrated mind, the attached mind or the freed mind, the negative mind or the positive mind, etc. One should be aware of
how mental states appear and disappear, and of the appearing and disappearing of mental states.

As regards mind objects, one should dwell in contemplation of mind objects through awareness of mind objects, namely: the five Mental Hindrances, namely: sensual desire, ill-will, sloth and torpor, distraction and doubts, the five Aggregates of Clinging, the six Sense Bases and their Objects, the seven Factors of Enlightenment, and the Four Noble Truths. One should understand the natures of mind objects; know how they developed and how they are destroyed. One should be aware of how they appear and disappear, and of their appearance and disappearance.

Through the application of mindfulness on these four foundations, one develops Insight Wisdom which leads the eradication of the misconceptions of pleasantness, happiness, permanence and self with regard to things.

Right mindfulness also indicates vigilance (appamāda), the constant presence of mind. It stresses a strenuous desire to overcome dejection inertia and lethargy and to stay ardent, self-possessed and mindful.

In the Dhammapada, the Buddha says as follows:

“Appamādo amatapadaṁ, pamādo maccuno padaṁ, appamattā na mīyanti, ye pamattā yathā matā- Vigilance is the path to the deathless state (amata); Non-vigilance is the path to death; The vigilant persons die not, though they may be dead already; The
non-vigilant persons are as if dead already, though they may be alive."76

Right Concentration means the one-pointedness of the mind developed through Tranquility meditation (samatha bhāvanā). Through the concentrated mind, one views things objectively and develop the Insight Wisdom which sees things as they really are. The concentration is a basis for the development of higher knowledge.

It is important to keep the mind calm and still whatever happens. Having the serenity of mind, one can overcome the ills of life best and act everything wisely.

Right Concentration has a great social value. Social problems, such as tensions and conflicts, are the consequences of the dangerous explosions of rage and frustrations of individuals. Hence, if we are able to attain a sense of calmness of mind, we not only experience peace of mind, but also render a great social service.

This Mental Discipline is meant to make the mind pure, alert and serene. It is possible to penetrate the true natures of things only when the mind is completely free from all mental defilements and impurities.

76Khuddaka Nikāya, Dhammapada Pāli, verse-21. (The deathless state (amata) here means Nibbāna, so called because, according to Buddhism, those, who had attained Nibbāna, are free from the cycle of repeated birth and death (saṁsāra). It means they will not be born and dead again.)
The third stage of the Path is Wisdom consisting of the two factors of the Path: namely - Right View and Right Thought which flows from Mental Discipline.

Ultimately, Right View is defined as the realization of the Four Noble Truths. Otherwise, it is the understanding of things as they really are. It simply means that seeing things through the penetrative wisdom; grasping the impermanent and imperfect nature of all worldly things and knowing that all being and things are subject to change and suffering. This understanding of Ultimate Reality is the highest and the greatest understanding in Buddhism. It is attained, sustained, and enhanced through the capacity of mind which is free from all mental defilements and impurities and is fully developed through the tranquility meditation and insight meditation.

Knowingness of demerits and their roots, merits and their roots is also explained as Right View.

What are demerits, and what are the roots of demerits? What are merits, and what are the roots of merits?

According to Buddhism, Destroying life, taking what is not given, misbehavior in sensuality, telling lies, slandering, rough talk, frivolous talk, coveting, ill-will, and wrong view- all these are demerits. Greed, anger and delusion are the roots of demerits. On the other hand, abstaining from destroying life, abstaining from taking what is not given, abstaining from misbehavior in sensuality, abstaining from telling lies, abstaining from slandering, abstaining from rough talk, abstaining from frivolous talk, non-
coveting, good-will and right view— all these are merits. Absence of greed, absence of anger and absence of delusion are the roots of merits.\(^{77}\)

If a man knows demerits and roots of demerits, merits and roots of merits, he gives up demerits and tries to destroy their roots; on the other hand, he develops merits and attempts to cultivate their roots.

Therefore, this Right view plays a key and important role in the Noble Eightfold Path.

Right Thought denotes the good and pure mental states and it consists of threefold, namely; Thought of detachment, selflessness or renunciation which is totally absent from attachment, selfishness, and covetousness (Nekkhamma-sañkappa), Thought of loving-kindness or good-will which is totally absent from hatred, ill-will and malevolence (Abyāpāda-sañkappa) and Thought of humanity or compassion which is totally absent from callousness and cruelty (Avihiṃsa-sañkappa).\(^{78}\)

Clearly speaking, Right Thought means the mental state which is free from low, evil and impure mentality and full of high, good and pure mentality.

In an individual life, the thoughts of selfishness, ill-will and cruelty give rise to quarrels and arguments, thereby giving us unhappiness and suffering. Moreover, they bring about conflicts

\(^{77}\) Majjhima Nikāya, Mūlapaṭṭhāna Pāli, Mūlapariyāya Vagga, Sammādiṭṭhi Sutta, p-57.
\(^{78}\) Khuddaka Nikāya, Paṭisambhidāmagga Pāli, p-40.
and wars that are prevalent in the world today, thereby drenching the earth with blood.

On the contrary, the thoughts of selflessness, good-will and compassion produce happiness and peace in both the individual and the universal.

It is this thought that either debase or elevate oneself in the worlds of art, sport, education, politics and economy. It is this thought that either destroy or protect the benefits, interests and welfares of oneself and others in all spheres of life whether individual or social. Therefore, it is important to keep the thoughts clean, pure and good. Being pure in mind, words and deeds would be right and good.

It is very interesting and important to note here that thoughts of selfless detachment, love and non-violence are grouped on the side of wisdom. This clearly shows that true wisdom is endowed with these noble qualities, and that all thoughts of selfish desire, ill-will, hatred and violence are the result of a lack of wisdom-in all spheres of life whether individual, social, or political.79

This Wisdom is meant to see things in their true natures, i.e., their impermanence, unpleasantness, non-entity and to discard thirst, greed, passion, attachment, hatred, ill-will, cruelty and other defilements and impurity of the mind.

One who is endowed with Wisdom is fond and sympathetic, upright and honest, gentle and smooth. His mind is pure and his

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heart is soft. He also knows how to act rightly when the problems of life come before him, and perceive the right way to real happiness and peace.

It has been seen earlier that according the discourse of Dependent Origination, the most power factors which cause all living beings to go through the cycle of rebirth and to suffer the consequent miserable results of life, i.e., birth, old-age, sickness, etc, are ignorance and passion. These factors are completely destroyed by this Wisdom. Therefore, this Wisdom is the highest and the last stage of the Path.

The Noble Eightfold Path or the Threefold Training is a means of attaining deliverance or perfection. It is the practice to eradicate, to eliminate, to discard lust, anger and delusion. It is a noble way of life.

Though this Path is aimed at realization of the cessation of craving or Nibbāna ultimately, it should be also followed and practised to lead a moral and pure life in this present. It develops good conduct, good words, and good thoughts and cultivates selfless, kind, gentle, considerate acts, speeches and attitude towards self and others.

Here, this is the gist of what has been discussed with regard to the Four Noble Truth.

According to the first three Noble Truths which represent Buddhist philosophical principles, there are suffering, the cause of suffering and the cessation of suffering. Suffering is to be
perceived and understood clearly; the cause of suffering is to be eliminated and eradicated completely and the cessation of suffering is to be realized and comprehended absolutely.

Buddhism views that suffering in life take place because of birth. If there is no birth, then there is no suffering. Most other religions view the death is the end of a life. But Buddhist view is quite distinct from that other religions’ view. According to Buddhism, the death is not the end of a life. In fact, it is the beginning of another life.

For instance, the setting of the sun in one country becomes the rising of the sun in another country. So the setting of the sun in one country is not the end of the sun. In fact, it is the beginning of the rising of the sun in another country. In the same way, the death itself is not the end of a life, but it is the beginning of another life. Birth brings suffering. So if we want to avoid suffering, we must prevent birth.

The basic root of birth is craving accompanied by ignorance. Because of ignorance of the true natures of life, i.e. its impermanence, miseries, pains, and insubstantiality, we crave for a joyful and prosperous life. However, our desires cannot ever be satisfied because everything is impermanent and nothing remains steady. Therefore, to prevent birth, we must discard craving and ignorance.

If craving which conditions the future life is completely eradicated, there is no more birth and consequently, suffering which is the evitable result of birth is also ceased. Therefore,
Buddhism regards the extinction of craving (rāgakkhaya) or non-attachment (virāgatā) as the true and permanent happiness. In other words, the complete cessation of suffering is the total eradication of craving. This is the ultimate goal of Buddhism. There must be a path or a way to reach the goal and also that path or way is important to be right and straight.

According to the Fourth Noble Truth, which represents Buddhist ethical principles, there is the Path leading to the eradication of the cause of suffering, and to the realization of the cessation of suffering. It is the Noble Eightfold Path.

That Noble Eightfold Path is the best way to be followed exactly to eradicate the cause of suffering and to realize the cessation of suffering.

**Conclusion**

Buddhism preaches an ethical system based on the notions of purity and holiness. The goal of Buddhism is to attain deliverance from suffering or to lead a perfect life. That goal is achieved through the moral, spiritual and intellectual process that is developed by following the Noble Eightfold Path that can be called the quintessence of Buddhist ethics or the principles of Buddhist ethics.

The Noble Eightfold Path is a practical guideline to moral, spiritual and intellectual development freeing the individual of attachments and delusions, and it finally leads him to the
understanding of the true about the nature of all things and to the end of suffering.

The principles of Buddhist Ethic should be followed in daily life to lead a happy and peaceful life; to overcome the physical and mental sufferings in life; to break through all the defilements and impurities which cause sufferings, and to attain true happiness, freedom and deliverance through moral, spiritual and intellectual development and perfection.

The principles of Buddhist ethics are the path to lead to salvation from suffering for humanity and to contribute to the creation of an awakened, enlightened human society.