CHAPTER - III

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS (CATTĀRA ARIYASACCHĀNI)

The Bhagava Said:

"O Bikkhus, it is through not having proper understanding and penetrative comprehension of the four Noble Truths that I as well as yourselves have had to go incessantly through this long stretch of samsāra, round of existences, that we have had to go through one life after another continuously"

Mahāparinibbāna Sutta
CHAPTER – III
THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS (CATTĀRI ĀRIYASACCĀNI)

The Four Noble Truths embody the entire teachings of the Buddha. The Buddha has expounded the nature of entire existence in the form of the four truths. He formulated and taught his enlightenment in the form of the four truths. The four truths are the organized version of his teachings. They are the systematic interpretation of his central teaching, namely, the origin and cessation of suffering. In other words, the four truths constitute the elucidation of the law of dependent origin (paticcassamutpaṭṭa). They are meant to expound the dependent arising and ending of suffering. Dependent origination is otherwise known as the law of causation governing our lives. The Buddha prescribed it as such for the people who are of great wisdom (prajñā). But he prescribed it to the common man in the form of the four noble truths¹.
The Buddha has explained the causation and cessation of suffering in a systematic manner. The process of causation and cessation of suffering means the dependent origination and ending of suffering. The Buddha discovered that there are four stages in the arising and cessation of suffering. The four stages constitute the four truths about suffering and its cessation. He found these truths after six years of rigorous quest. He taught them as his First Sermon at the holy city of Banaras to a small assembly of five ascetics. The five ascetics were his own friends who had shared his severe austerities. They had fallen out from him in anger when he renounced the extreme approach of self-mortification.

The four truths are truths about the whole of our existence which is full of suffering. The truths about suffering are the same as the truths about existence. Ending of suffering means the ending of the existence which is saṃsāra. The realization of these truths liberates man from saṃsāra which is full of misery. The truths will enable man to attain nirvāṇa which is 'beyond' saṃsāra. They are not ordinary truths which contribute to materialistic life. They are noble (ārya) since they show a way out of saṃsāra. They are called noble also because they are realized by no less a person than the Buddha, the enlightened one. He was a noble (Āryan) person who strived hard and revealed the mystery of life. As Grimm rightly puts, "The perfect
one is an Aryan. Therefore, his Four Truths are called Aryan Truths.\textsuperscript{3}

Aryan is not the one who is born in a particular region. He is not the one who belongs to a particular time or culture. It is not by birth that one becomes an Aryan. It is not the race that determines a person to be an Aryan. It is not even the profession that makes one an Aryan. The original meaning of the term "Aryan" is "devout" or "pious". Accordingly, an "Aryan" is one who is pious and devout. He is the one who leads a deeply religious life which is free from samsāra. A truly religious person is one who has conquered desire and sensual pleasures. He is one who works for a better life in future. He ponders over the consequences of living a life of egoism and unrestrained pursuit of pleasure. An Aryan shuns the path of ignoble life and treads the noble eightfold path. The noble path inevitably leads to the ennoblement of life here and hereafter.\textsuperscript{4}

As it has been mentioned above, the Buddha has revealed the truth of (human) existence in the form of the four noble truths. The truths embody the entire teachings of the Buddha. They constitute the axioms of the Buddhist doctrine which is of reason and meditation. They are the fundamental truths from which everything logically follows. The four noble truths are: (1) the Most Excellent Truth of Suffering; (2) the Most Excellent Truth of Arising of Suffering; (3) the most Excellent Truth of Annihilation of Suffering; and (4) the
Most Excellent Truth of the Path Leading to the Annihilation of Suffering.

THE MOST EXCELLENT TRUTH OF SUFFERING

The first noble truth is the truth of suffering. This truth comprises the origin and nature of suffering. It reveals that the existence as we know it to be is full of suffering. In explaining this truth, the Buddha aims at showing the reality of suffering by drawing a clear picture of it. The truth of suffering must be seen as it actually is. One should not either justify or condemn it. One should not interpret it as a normal or natural condition of life. It is wrong to think that suffering is inescapable fact of life. The Buddha advised that we should see truth as truth and falsity as falsity. One should not convert truth into falsity or vice versa. One should avoid the attitude of distorting the facts and truths of life. One should not accept the partial truths as complete ones.

According to the noble truth of suffering, entire life as we know is full of sorrow. The very birth is suffering; disease, old age, death and lamentation, are a source of suffering; grief due to the loss of things, the kith and kin is suffering. The physical and mental pain is suffering; meeting the undesirable or separation from the desirable is suffering. Failure to obtain the expected or receiving the unexpected is suffering. According to the Buddha, suffering is not confined to the woes of the human beings. Suffering encompasses the whole of
existence. It is the fate of both the sentient and the insentient beings. Even the Gods living in Heaven are not an exception to suffering. There is nothing at all but suffering in the universe as we know it to be.

The Bhagava has elaborated the truth of suffering through five important events of our life. The analysis and understanding of these events reveal the truth in clear terms. They make suffering extremely evident. Every being born in this world undergoes the following five events of suffering.

(1) **The Trauma of Birth**

According to the Buddha, the event of birth is not a happy affair. Experience of birth is painful. It involves painful feelings of excitation and discharges. It causes suffering to both the mother and the child. The child suffers the birth pangs rather unconsciously. The mother experiences them very clearly. The Buddha says that the sensations of suffering at birth continue to work during the rest of life. They will become a prototype for all painful events in life. That is, they will be reproduced in us in future. They will repeatedly occur in different forms. The Buddha says that the process of delivery from the womb is not a pleasant event. It causes a painful shock to the new born baby. The cry of the baby is its first response to birth. It is a testimony to the fact that birth is a source of pain. It throws the child into the world of suffering. It does not mean that the child is happy.
in the womb either. Life in the womb is suffering, since the womb is constricted and full of filth. Thus suffering begins at the very point of germination. Life from its very beginning is suffering, since it is the product of desire (tanha) and a process of becoming (bhava). Life from birth in the womb till death is the ocean of saṁsāra (bhavasāgara).

2. **Sickness, Morbidity and Decrepitude**

After the birth every being succumbs to sickness, morbidity and decrepitude. Life in the early years may be pleasant. It may be easy for the fortunate. The life of the child is relatively happier. This also depends upon the kinds of parents and circumstances. It is determined by the environment into which one is born. But life in the latter years becomes gloomy. Nobody is an exception to the problems of life. Life will be beset with full of fears. There are innumerable fears in life. The fear of failure, dependence and illness. There are also fears of being unwanted, physically repulsive and a nuisance. Man in his latter years will be a victim of acute melancholy due to sickness, morbidity and decrepitude.

(3) **Attachment and Detachment**

In life suffering arises from attachment to things, people and ideas, for everything is transitory. Not only the objects that are transitory. Even we are transitory. Impermanence is the fact of life. Suffering arises when we happen to be associated with objects or persons whom we dislike. Ineradicable weaknesses, incurable
diseases and unwanted obligations are the source of suffering. So also detachment from things, persons or ideas which we like is the source of suffering. Separation from anything that we love must cause suffering.

(4) Phobia of Death

Fear of death is an important source of suffering. Death is the inevitable fact of life. It is not only in old age that one dies. It is not only due to sickness that one dies. The causes of death are many. Anything may happen at any time that causes death. Death is certain but its occurrence is uncertain. It may happen at any moment in life. The moment one is born he or she is old enough to die. So the fact of death grips the heart of everyone. It cripples the young and the old, the healthy and the sick alike.

Besides the sources of suffering mentioned above there is another important source of suffering, namely, the personality. Our personality is composed of five groups of grasping (khandas). They are: (1) corporeal from (rūpa), (2) sensation (vedāna), (3) perception (saññā), (4) the activities of the mind (saṅkhāra), and (5) cognition (viññāna). Corporeal form is the body, the basis of personality. It originates in the moment of generation. It is composed of four material elements, namely, the earth, the water, the fire, and the air. The four elements give rise to the female egg as well as the male sperm. Thus the body is nothing but the product of the four
elements. The body is generated by the parents and sustained by the food which is again the product of the four elements\textsuperscript{12}.

The Buddha contends that there is nothing immaterial about the body. The body is a material thing through and through. There is no spiritual or transempirical element in it. That is, there is no such thing as Soul in the body. There is no Self as the core of the body. Body is like an onion at the core of which there is nothing. It is like a chariot which is nothing but a name given to its parts. So also the body is composed of its five skandhās. The "self" is only a name designating the body, when the skandhās are decomposed, the personality (the name and form) ceases to exist. The so-called "self" is neither identical nor separate from the five groups. There is no such thing as independent "self". Independent "self" is unfindable upon a detailed analysis of the five groups\textsuperscript{13}.

According to the Buddha, the whole world, from the beginning to the end, is composed of the five skandhās. All beings, both the sentient and the insentient, are the product of the five groups. They are the result of the casual connection among the skandhās. The skandhas are causally connected without the "self". There is nothing abiding in them. They appear and disappear in a particular form (rūpa) with a particular content (Nāma). Human being is a non-substantial composition of the skandhās. Man is a mere physical and mental states which are momentary in nature. But we are under the
illusion of thinking that we have a permanent Self. This is the false view which is responsible for our attitude of clinging, hatred and delusion. This is the source of ignorance, the cause of suffering\textsuperscript{14}.

The Buddha further examined our personality. He has discovered that it is constituted by the five skandhas which are composed of the eighteen sense bases (āyatanas). The sense bases are the six organs of the sense, namely, the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue, the touch (skin) and the mind; the six objects of the sense, namely, the forms, the sounds, the odours, the sapids, the tangibles and the thoughts; and the six types of consciousness, namely, the consciousness of forms, the consciousness of sounds, the consciousness of smells, the consciousness of tastes, the consciousness of tangibles, and the consciousness of thoughts. The personality is the product of these eighteen bases. They are impermanent and transitory. They do not have anything as their core. That is why the human being is subject to suffering. He is in the vast ocean of sorrow\textsuperscript{15}.

The Buddha holds that transitoriness is the ultimate criterion of suffering. Transitoriness means that things are subject to annihilation. It means that the pleasure we derive from things is momentary. The dictum that everything is transitory forms the basis of granite upon which the Buddha has built the doctrine of suffering. Everything logically and factually follows the law of transitoriness. All
things are impermanent and subject to destruction. Everybody will concede that both the personality and the objects outside are subject to constant change. There is nothing immortal about them. There is nothing permanent in them. As it has been mentioned above our personality is not an exception to transitoriness. Personality is only a composition of form, sensation, perception, mentation and consciousness. These parts of personality are transitory. We are under the impression that personality, unlike objects, is an exception to the law of transitoriness. There is a deep rooted illusion in man that personality is imperishable and eternal. We entertain the idea that there is the pure spirit that escapes transitoriness. But the idea is baseless and a barrier to the understanding of the truth of suffering. Eliminating this obstacle is the main task of the Buddha. He always limits himself to this task. He takes all the trouble to make it clear that personality and everything connected with it is subject to the iron law of momentariness. Life is subject to dissolution and decay, therefore painful throughout its whole extent. “This he (the Buddha) does by dissolving personality into its parts: corporeal form, sensation, perception, mentation and consciousness, and thereby showing the characteristics of transitoriness present in each of them”\textsuperscript{16}.

Thus the Buddha furnishes a clear proof of the great universal law of transitoriness and suffering. Proof lies in recognizing the truth
that everything, including our personality is transient and full of suffering. Personality is only a six-sense machine. It is through this personality that we experience the world. It is within the personality that there is the origin and the end of the world. We have all our being in it. Our entire existence—living, moving, and having—lies in the personality and in its contact with the world. Wisdom lies in seeing the nature of personality as it actually is, as being soulless and transitory. It renders the truth of suffering self-evident. "For if we recognize all the five groups of personality as transient, then everything is known as transient, and full of suffering, because for us everything consists only in and through our personality." 17

THE MOST EXCELLENT TRUTH OF THE ARISING OF SUFFERING

The second Noble Truth, namely, the arising of the suffering deals with the cause of suffering. The Buddha was scientific and systematic in his approach to the problem of suffering. He wanted to root out suffering by eliminating its cause. Total elimination of suffering is possible only when its cause is discovered. As it has been mentioned in the first noble truth, personality is the source of suffering. Since personality is transitory, attachment to it gives rise to suffering. Freedom from suffering is possible by being free from personality. The arising of personality should disappear. There should be an end to the reappearing of personality. This is possible only when we know how personality comes about. One must know
how it ever and again arises anew. The conditions under which it arises should be known. Guarding against the arising of personality is possible only when its production is clearly understood. "I can only regard myself as definitely freed from suffering, when I reach the unshakable, intimately assured certainty that I am not only something entirely different from the components of my present personality, and therefore something that I cannot be touched by its fate, but also that my present personality will be the last to which I am chained, that therefore with my coming death, the last in store for me, I shall for ever depart out of the round of rebirths, samsāra, and never more be troubled by any of its elements. This is the problem".18

That is why in this second holy truth, the Buddha lays bare the arising of the production of personality which is full of suffering. He explains the principal cause of the incessant and successive reproduction of personalities. He uncovers the process of its incessant repetition. The Buddha reveals this through the intricate formula of dependent origination (patīccasamutpāda). Understanding the law of origination by dependence makes the production of suffering self-evident. This law has to be understood in an objective manner and without presuppositions. One should keep aside one's prejudices and philosophical commitments. Preconceived notions are a barrier to its correct understanding. We should place ourselves in the position of the Buddha himself. The formula has to be analyzed
impersonally. Only then can we appreciate its depth and significance. The truth of the law reveals that there exists no "person" either in the realm of the cognizable or in that of the uncognizable. There is no real person anywhere or at any time. The person is merely the course of causes and conditions. "And so, the formula of origination through dependence, in fact shows us nothing more than mere processes running their course against the background of nothing, as the domain of our inner most essence, withdrawn from knowledge, arising out of nothing and always again disappearing into it."\(^{19}\)

The truth of the arising of suffering says that the fact of suffering, like any other fact, does not have an inherent existence. Suffering is not an independent reality. That is, there is no suffering without a cause. Suffering is produced by causes and conditions. It arises depending on its causes and conditions. Suffering is not an exception to the law of dependent organization (Dhammapāda). Patīcasamutpāda, etymologically means that everything both subjective as well as objective, is subject to 'dissolution' and those that are dissolved 'appear' again. It also means that everything is 'produced' by the causes and conditions. Grimm defines it as, "Inasmuch as that is, this is. Through the arising of that, this arises"\(^{20}\). The causes and conditions may be immediate or remote to that which is produced. Dependent origination is otherwise known as conditioned co-production. It is a scientific principle through which
the Buddha has explained the arising of suffering. It constitutes a
systematic description of the composite nature of suffering (dukkha
samudāya). It is also known as cycle of existence which is full of
suffering (bhavacakra).

The Buddha has called the dependent origination of suffering as
the casual nexus of suffering. The causal chain has twelve links in it.
It begins with ignorance and ends with old age and death which
involve sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair. It reveals the
"conditioned genesis" of suffering in clear and lucid terms. It shows
how one link in the causal chain follows another one with logical
necessity. The exhaustive and all inclusive picture of the conditioned
coproductive of suffering is as follows:

1. In dependence on ignorance (avijja) arise the productions
   (saṅkāra) which build up the germ grasped in the womb
   into an apparatus of perception.

2. In dependence on the productions arises consciousness
   (vinñāna)

3. In dependence on consciousness arises the corporeal
   organism (Nāma-rūpa).

4. In dependence on the corporeal organism arise the six
   organs of sense (salayātana).

5. In dependence on the six organs of sense arises contact
   (phassa).

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6. In dependence on contact arises sensation (vedanā).

7. In dependence on sensation arises thirst (ṭāṇha).

8. In dependence on thirst arises grasping (upādāna).

9. In dependence on grasping arises becoming (bhava).

10. In dependence on becoming arises birth (jāti).

11. In dependence on birth arises old age and death (jarāmarapa).

12. In dependence on old age and death arise suffering (dukkha)\(^2\).

The causal chain of suffering is not a mere temporal sequence of causes and effects. Each link in the chain is internally related to the other. The succeeding link necessarily and organically follows from the preceding link. For instance, the link of old age and death necessarily pre-supposes the birth of the six sense machine. So also the link of birth is caused and conditioned by the link of becoming. And every case of becoming is conditioned and caused by grasping which in turn is caused and conditioned by the thirst (ṭāṇha). Thirst can appear only as and when there is sensation. Sensation is the consequence of contact between the senses and their objects. The sense organs presuppose the existence of a corporeal organism for their existence. Corporeal organism presupposes the building up of consciousness which in turn presupposes the productions.
(saṅkhāras). And the productions or the predispositions are caused and conditioned by ignorance, the root cause of suffering\(^{23}\).

Dependent origination of suffering can be understood in its reverse order also. It can be understood from sorrow to ignorance, instead of from ignorance to sorrow. In this case, old age, sickness, death and sorrow occur because of birth. Birth is because of becoming. Becoming is because of clinging which is because of craving. And the chain of causes and conditions goes on till it reaches the root cause, namely, ignorance\(^{24}\). The causal chain is a closed circle. It is not an open ended one. Ignorance gives rise to suffering which in turn contributes to ignorance. Since each link is dependent on the other, the chain continues endlessly without a break. Only prajñā can break the chain. Prajñā understands the nature and structure of the dependent arising of suffering. It is the antidote to ignorance. It also reveals the truth that human being or any other sentient being is not an ‘individual’ but complex of Nāma-rūpa, the physical and mental phenomena. Every being who is subject to suffering is a flux of arising and disappearing of the phenomena\(^{25}\).

Let us now explain in brief the nature of each link in the chain of dependent origination.
(1) **Ignorance (Avijja)**

Ignorance is lack of the knowledge and understanding of the Buddhist doctrine. It is being oblivious of the Four Noble Truths. Ignorance is not only the absence of knowledge. It is also having wrong views about life and the world. It is inability to see things as they actually are. Ignorance precludes the correct view of things and deludes us to take things for what they actually are not. An ignorant person regards the real as unreal, good as evil, and vice versa. The Buddhist scriptures refer to ignorance as the non-comprehension of the law of dependent origination which encompasses all phenomena, both physical and mental. Ignorance is also clinging to the extremes of eternalism and annihilationism, self-indulgence and self-mortification. It is the avoidance of the middle path of steering clear of the extremes.

(2) **The Productions (Saṅkhāras)**

The productions are also called predispositions (saṅkhāras). They are the products of ignorance. They are the impressions left in the mind as a result of wrong views and actions. They are the thought constructs which determine the nature of life. They are the mental states of the present which are dependent on the mental states of the past. They are the products of the deeds done in the previous lives. They are responsible for the arising of consciousness.
(3) Consciousness (Viññāṇa)

Consciousness is the result of the productions. The productions bring about fresh mental states which form as consciousness. Depending on the six senses and their corresponding objects, there is the formation of six types of consciousnesses. In dependence on the eye and forms arises visual consciousness. In dependence on the ear and sounds arises auditory consciousness. In dependence on the body and tangibles arises tactile consciousness. In dependence on the tongue and sapids arises gustatory consciousness. In dependence on the organ of thought and objects of thought arises mental consciousness. The conjunction of the three factors, namely, the sense organ, its object and consciousness arising out of their relation gives rise to the corporeal organism28.

(4) Corporeal Organism (Nāma-rūpa)

Corporeal organism is nothing but the six sense machine with its six types of consciousnesses. It is a product of consciousness as well as the carrier of consciousness. It is called personality with physical and mental factors. The physical factor (rūpa) is its body. The mental factors (Nāma) are constituted by sensation, perception, impressions, and consciousness. The physical factor is constituted by the four elements (mahābhūtas), namely, earth, water, fire and air.
(5) Six-Organs of Sense (Salayātanas)

Six-organs of sense are the product of the corporeal organism. They signify the realms of consciousness. Salayātana literally means "six fold realm". It consists of the six inner and six outer realms. The six outer realms are the totality of the objects corresponding to the six internal organs of sense. They are the realms of forms, sounds, odours, and so on. The six inner realms are the six organs of sense themselves.

(6) Contact (Phassa)

Contact is the conjunction of the sense organ, its object and the consciousness arising out of them. It is the result of the grasping of the objects by the senses. There are as many kinds of contact as there are sense organs and their respective objects. For instance, there is the eye-contact with the forms, ear-contact with sounds, nose-contact with odours, and so on.²⁹

(7) Feeling (Vedanā)

Feeling is the consequence of contact. There are as many feelings as there are the sense organs and their respective objects. There are the feelings of the eye and forms, the ear and sounds, the nose and odours, and so on. There can be no scope for feeling in the absence of contact. It is in dependence on contact that feeling arises. The Buddha said that contact is "the cause of, the source of, the origin of, and the condition for Vedanā."³⁰
(8) Thirst (*Taṇha*)

Feeling produces thirst, the desire to become. Corresponding to the six sense organs and their objects, thirst is of six kinds. There is the desire for forms, for sounds, for odours, and so on. Besides these desires, there are three other kinds of desire also. They are the desire for visible objects (*rūpataṇha*), desire for clinging to future lives (*bhavataṇha*) and desire for disregarding the present life (*vibhavataṇha*). The desire for attachment to the future life is associated with one’s belief in eternalism (*sāsvatavāda*). And the desire for disregarding the present life is associated with one’s belief in annihilationism (*ucchedavāda*). The Buddha says that our very existence is conditioned by thirst. Thirst for existence fills us from the first moment of our existence. It runs through all our repeated existences also. It works so powerfully and unceasingly that it is difficult to notice its arising and passing away. It deludes us to think that it is without causes and conditions. According to the Buddha, thirst is “our veritable actual and true self, of which it held good that ‘this am I, this belongs to me, this is myself’, a standpoint also practically taken up by mankind in its entirety from all times”\(^{31}\).

No doubt, thirst is a very strong impulse. It appears to be our true essence and true self. It gives an impression that it is an uncaused and an independent phenomenon. But thirst is conditioned and can be eradicated. There is nothing mysterious
about thirst. It does not have an intrinsic being of its own. It is in dependence on sensation or feeling that thirst arises. Thirst for existence works all through life. It shows itself mainly at the moment of death by bringing about a grasping at a new germ. It has feeling as its fundamental antecedent condition. So thirst "is nothing metaphysical, but subject in every respect to causality, therefore conditioned, and therefore something purely physical, that is anatta, not-the-I" 32.

(9) **Clinging (Upadāna)**

Clinging is also called grasping or attachment. It is the product of thirst, desire or craving. Where there is craving there must be clinging. That is, clinging necessarily follows from thirst. There are four kinds of clinging. They are: (1) clinging to the world of people and objects (kamupādana), (2) clinging to wrong views (diṭṭupādana) like eternalism and annihilationism, (3) clinging to ascetic practices and rituals (śīlabhātupādana), and (4) clinging to the existence of the Soul (attavadupādana). Clinging to people and objects leads to prejudices, meanness, wickedness, quarreling, back-biting and falsehood33.

(10) **Becoming (Bhava)**

The attitude of clinging gives rise to becoming. Becoming has its cause in grasping or clinging. Becoming sets in the moment we are born. It remains in action throughout our life. It manifests itself in
several ways like becoming somebody, becoming glad, satisfied, angry, envious and so on. Fundamentally, becoming is of two kinds: (1) becoming according to one's past deeds (kammābhava), and (2) becoming wherein a being is reborn (uppaṭṭibhava). The first is controlled by the three kinds of productions (saṅkhāras), namely, (i) merit (puṇṇa), (ii) demerit (apaṇṇa), and (iii) neither merit nor demerit (aneṇjā). The second kind of becoming is of three kinds: (i) the becoming of the beings which have form, (ii) the becoming of the beings which have no form, and (iii) the becoming of the beings which act. The becoming may be classified into several kinds depending on the number of khandhas with which a being is born34.

(11) Birth (Jāti)

Becoming gives rise to birth or rebirth. Becoming pervades the whole of our life. It is because of becoming that we are reborn. And it is because of becoming in the present life that we will be reborn in the future life. The cycle of births and deaths will continue to move as long as we become. It is the strong feeling of becoming at the time of death that causes rebirth. The personality, the Nāma-rūpa takes rebirth in a modified form. It is determined by the deeds in the past. It is also conditioned by the circumstances into which it is born. The Buddha has clarified that there is no "self" or the "soul" that transmigrates. The "I" or the "self" is only a convenient designation
used to signify the Nāma-rūpa. Everything is momentary and conditioned\(^{35}\).

(12) Oldage, Sickness, death and Sorrow (Jarāmarana and Dukkha)

Birth or rebirth necessarily causes oldage, sickness and death. The first noble truth reveals that very birth is suffering. Even the foetus in the womb is subject to suffering. The process of birth is the source of suffering. And life from beginning to the end involves suffering. Oldage and sickness bring a lot of suffering to us. Death is inevitable. The very thought of death is the source of suffering. Oldage and decease lead to isolation. The idea of death leads to separation. Isolation and separation are the sources of suffering. Leave alone oldage, sickness, decease and death, even the prime of life is a source of suffering. "Even pleasures and worldly happiness lead one to sorrow because they are transitory and the loss of pleasure and happiness is worse than never to have had them"\(^{36}\).

The twelve links in the wheel of the dependent origination of suffering may be divided into three parts, namely, the past, the present, and the future. Ignorance and productions belong to the past life. Consciousness, name and form, six sense organs, contact, craving and clinging belong to the present life. And becoming, rebirth and oldage, sickness and death belong to life in the future. It is important to note that the law of dependent origination is not always
explained in terms twelve links. Some times, it is explained in terms of nine links only. Some of the links overlap each other. For instance, thirst, clinging and becoming cannot be treated as being totally distinct. They are mutually and intimately related. One entails the other. The three can be understood in terms of any one of them. Nevertheless, illustration of the law of dependent origination in terms of the twelve links gives a clear picture of the arising of suffering. It shows how the past causes the present which in turn causes the future.

Thus the second noble truth deals with the arising of suffering. It is a detailed explanation of the origin and nature of suffering through the natural principle of dependent origination. As it has already been mentioned, dependent origination means 'this being given, that arises'. It also means that 'certain effect follows a certain cause'. The Buddha called it the bodhi or the dhamma. He said that whoever sees paticcasamutpāda sees the dhamma and whoever sees the dhamma sees paticcasamutpāda. The ignorance of the truth of the law of dependent origination is the central cause of suffering. The circle of dependent origination of suffering is a closed one, since its links internally determine one another. It works on the mutual dependence of the several links of suffering. They dependent on one another and condition in themselves. Ignorance of the nature and structure of the law is the basis of the chain of suffering. Ignorance
means the ignorance of the fact of suffering, the arising of suffering, the ceasing of suffering, and the path leading to the cessation of suffering. The Buddha has called ignorance as the darkness in which humanity has been leading a life of suffering. "It is the deep night, rapped in which beings from beginningless time have used their six-sense machine, with the result that ever and again new thirst for more of such activity arises, which thirst, then, in its turn, upon the break-up of the six-sense-apparatus in death, effects the constant up building anew of same: ignorance is the deep night, wherein we here so long are circling round."23.

THE MOST EXCELLENT TURHT OF THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

The third noble truth, namely, the truth of cessation of suffering says that it is possible to annihilate suffering. As we have seen in the second noble truth, suffering is not an independent entity. It does not have an intrinsic being. It arises out of several causes and conditions. And ignorance is its root cause. Suffering can be eliminated by removing its prime cause, namely, ignorance. Elimination of ignorance is necessarily followed by the elimination of the whole chain of suffering. Clear knowledge of the dependent origination of suffering puts an end to ignorance. Knowledge of the dependent origination leads to detachment from the chain of suffering. Everything that is caused can also be uncaused. Everything that arises out of something can also be subsided by not contributing to its causes and
conditions. Since suffering is caused it can also be uncaused. This is possible by the removal ignorance through knowledge. "As soon as this state of ignorance is removed by the rise of knowledge in consciousness, and the cloud of ignorance thereby dispersed forever, the motion of willing cannot rise any more. Whoever as a child, ignorant of the effect of heat, once has put his hand on a heated stove and burnt himself severely, in future, as long as the remembrance of this lasts? and probably it will remain alive during his whole life? cannot any more will to touch a heated stove, this motion of will is extinguished in him for his whole life."\(^39\)

The Buddha compares the arising and cessation of suffering to the burning and putting out of the lamp. The lamp burns as long as the oil is supplied. It ceases to burn the moment oil is exhausted. That is, with the absence of the causes there will be the absence of the effects. In the absence of oil, there is the absence of flame. In the absence of ignorance there will be the absence of its ultimate effect, namely, suffering. The Buddha said, "Suppose, ye monks, the light of an oil-lamp is burning, generated by oil and wick, but no one from time to time pours in new oil and attends to the wick; then, ye monks, according as the fuel is used up, and no new fuel added, the lamp for want of nourishment will go out. Even so ye, monks, in him, who dwells in the insight into the transitoriness of all the fetters of existence, thirst is annihilated; through the annihilation of thirst,
grasping is annihilated; through the annihilation of grasping becoming is annihilated; through the annihilation of becoming birth is annihilated; through the annihilation of birth, oldage, sickness, death, pain, lamentation, suffering, sorrow and despair are annihilated.

The law of independent origination is at work even in the third noble truth. It manifests in the annihilation of suffering as much as in the arising of suffering. In the second noble truth, the law works in its positive sense of 'inasmuch as that is, this is'. Inasmuch as ignorance is, suffering is. In the case of the third noble truth, the law works in a negative sense of 'inasmuch as that is not, this is not'. If ignorance is eliminated, then suffering gets eliminated. Accordingly, the formula of the casual nexus of suffering has to be understood in the following way:

1. By the entire and complete annihilation of ignorance, the productions (saṅkhāra) are annihilated.
2. By the entire and complete annihilation of the productions, consciousness is annihilated.
3. By the entire and complete annihilation of consciousness, the corporeal organism is annihilated.
4. By the entire and complete annihilation of the corporeal organism, the six senses are annihilated.
5. By the entire and complete annihilation of the six senses, contact is annihilated.
6. By the entire and complete annihilation of contact, sensation is annihiliated.

7. By the entire and complete annihilation of sensation, thirst is annihiliated.

8. By the entire and complete annihilation of thirst, grasping is annihiliated.

9. By the entire and complete annihilation of grasping, becoming is annihiliated.

10. By the entire and complete annihilation of becoming, birth is annihiliated.

11. By the entire and complete annihilation of birth, old age and death are annihiliated.

12. And by the entire and complete annihilation of old age and death, suffering is annihiliated\(^{41}\).

Thus the cycle of suffering in its totality comes to an end. The whole circle of rebirths is broken for ever. The complete insight into the chain of suffering breaks it completely. Insight alone breaks down the chain. Mere abstract knowledge about the formula of dependent origination is not sufficient. The knowledge has to be direct, immediate and insightful. Insightful knowledge enables man to shun ignorance. A sane person abhors suffering. Having understood the workings of the wheel of suffering, the wise person never turns it again. He gives up the whole apparatus, the \textit{Nāma-rūpa} of suffering.
He never contributes to the arising of suffering. He destroys the whole network of causes and conditions of suffering. Freedom from suffering is a 'negative' state. It is the absence of suffering and its causes and conditions. Freedom is deliverance from the limitations that cause suffering. We are not the limitations. We only possess them. Deliverance lies in dispossessing them\textsuperscript{42}.

It is important to note that the third noble truth is based on the Buddha's conviction that the personality, which is full of suffering, is not the real essence of man. The name and form which is anattā does not belong to the innermost essence of man. Man is beyond the whole of the corporeal organism together with consciousness. Ignorance is involvement in all that is alien to our essence. Man is beyond the endless chain of misery. Nirvāṇa is the real essence. It lies in freeing oneself from the chain of misery. Nothingness is our true essence. That is, we are nothing of what we appear to be. Nāma-rūpa is what we appear to be. But in actuality we are not that. We are nothing from immemorial time. "We are nothing of what we appear to be, therefore we are in the most complete sense without quality, and thereby for knowledge, which can only have qualities for the object, we are nothing at all. But we are nothing only for knowledge; in ourselves we are the most real thing of all, for we are the very opposite of everything we have seen arise and pass away for countless million of years, for eternity\textsuperscript{43}."
We are *nothing* in reality. Nothingness is our inscrutable essence. But consciousness is covering over this nothingness. Consciousness is the cloud, as it were, that is hiding the clear light of nothingness. Consciousness is essentially intentional. Consciousness is consciousness 'of' something. To be conscious means that there are objects for me. It implies that there is a contact with the world which is alien to me. Consciousness, with its name and form and the world with which it is related, is a symptom of disturbance in our true essence. It is a source of irritation in the heavenly clearness of our essence. Only clear knowledge of the arising of consciousness over and above nothingness can put an end to suffering. "As soon as this state of ignorance is removed by the rise of knowledge in consciousness, and the cloud of ignorance thereby dispersed forever, the motion of willing (tanha) cannot rise any more"⁴⁴.

The person who has completely understood the nature of ignorance and overcome thirst is called the *extinguished*. He is extinguished for the world only. He neither nourishes the world nor is he nourished by it. The Buddha compares the extinguished person to the fire that has been extinguished. The fire that has been extinguished is nowhere to be found and yet it is lying in wait everywhere. The fire can flame up any moment and anywhere as and when suitable circumstances are found. In the same way the person who has completely extinguished his thirst and attained *Nibbāna*, is
nowhere and everywhere. He is nowhere to be found in the world but he can re-enter the world anywhere and at any time in the infinity of space and time. He appears in the world if only he wishes, if only the slightest desire for such thing should arise within him. "But contrary to the greed with which fire ever and always presses into the world, he has lost all desire of this kind for all eternity. Safe and secure he reposits in the boundlessness and infinitude of his own highest essence."45

The one who has torn the veil of ignorance, broken the chain of suffering, is the perfected one. He is the exalted one. He cannot be comprehended by means of body, sensation, perception, mentation and cognition. That is, he cannot be understood through the six sense machine, for he has abandoned it. His body, his sensation, his perception, his mentation, his cognition are entirely annihilated. There is no possibility of their ever arising in the future. He is beyond the name and form. The unnamable has caught hold of his innermost being. It is wrong to say that 'He is'. It is equally wrong to say that 'He is not'. "He is indefinable, inescrutable, immeasurable, like the great ocean".46
THE MOST EXCELLENT TRUTH OF THE PATH LEADING TO THE CESSATION OF SUFFERING

The fourth noble truth, namely, the path leading to the annihilation of suffering is crucial in the Buddha’s dhamma. The preceding three truths have dealt with the nature, the arising and the possibility of eliminating suffering. They necessarily lead to the path leading to the elimination of suffering itself. The ultimate cause of suffering is ignorance. The third truth has given us a complete comprehension of the cessation of ignorance and thereby suffering. It has given us the knowledge that the cause not being there, the effect will not be there. But the knowledge that the third truth gives is intellectual. Though insightful, the knowledge is still theoretical. There is a need for transforming it into a concrete one. Intellectual knowledge and understanding of the arising and cessation of suffering is necessary but not sufficient. The actual state of Nibbāna is attained by practicing the Noble Eightfold Path enshrined as the Fourth Noble Truth. The path is the one and only way to the elimination of suffering. It is the most systematic and practical method of eliminating suffering by eliminating its cause. It is the middle way that steers clear of all extremes like eternalism and annihilationism, self indulgence and self mortification. It consists of eight steps that are internally and intricately connected. All of them construe a complete and unitary way. The Buddha appealed to
people to enter the path for attaining a noble life of peace and perfection. He said, "You yourself must take the effort, the Buddhas are only preachers, that the thoughtful who enter the path are freed from the bondage of sorrow." 49.

The eight steps of the Noble Path are as follows:

1. *Sammā Diṭṭhi* or *Samyak Drṣṭa*: It has been variously translated as Right View, Right Belief, Right Knowledge or Right Understanding.

2. *Sammā Sankappa* or *Samyak Sankalpa*: It has been translated as Right Resolve, Right Aspiration, Right Intention, Right Thought, Right Judgment, Right Aim or Right Motive.

3. *Sammā Vaca* or *Samyak Vāc*: Right Speech or Right Words.

4. *Samma Kamanta* or *Samyak Carita*: It has been rendered as Right conduct, Right Action or Right Behaviour.

5. *Sammā Ājiva* or *Samyak Ājivana*: Right Living or Right Means of Livelihood.

6. *Sammā Vāyāma* or *Samyak Vyāyama*: It has been variously translated as Right Effort, Right Endeavour, Right Application, Right Exertion or Right Striving.

7. *Sammā Sati* or *Samyak Smṛti*: It has been differently rendered as Right Recollection, Right Attention, Right Mindfulness or Right Awareness.
8. *Samma Samādhi* or *Samyak Samādhi*: Right Concentration, Right Absorption or Right Tranquility

1. **Right View (Sammā Diṭṭhi)**

Right view means knowledge about the nature, origin and cessation of suffering. It is the comprehension of the four noble truths comprising the doctrine of no-self, impermanence and dependent origination of all phenomena. It is the rejection of hearsay and heretical views about life and the world. It is also the rejection of superstitions, irrational ideas and the incorrect method of eliminating suffering. It includes the rejection of the extreme views of eternalism and annihilationism, the practices of self-indulgence and self-mortification. Right views are those that keep the mind in the right direction by orienting it to the Buddha’s teachings. They give a right plan of action and make the progress along the path smooth and easy.

The Brahmajala Sutta of Digha Nikaya speaks of two kinds of wrong view: (1) wrong views about the past existences, and (2) wrong views about the future existences. The former are those which the monk formulates basing on the memory of his past existences along with their characteristics and related facts such as names and clans. They consist of the false views about the self and the world that they are both eternal and not eternal, infinite and finite. They include the view that the self and world arise without a cause. They
represent the attitude of a person who is not clear about the true nature of the self and the world and does not admit that he is not clear. He conceals his ignorance for the fear of being punished. These views cause the arising in him of mental defilements.33

The wrong views about the future existences are those that are related to the fate of the self after death. They comprise the view that the self is corporeal, incorporeal and both corporeal and incorporeal. It includes the views that the self does not decay after death and that it has perception even after death. Similarly, wrong views comprise the views that the self is finite, infinite, both finite and infinite and neither finite nor infinite. They include the views that the self experiences either bliss or sorrow or both or neither after death. The Buddha said that holding on to wrong views causes agitation and misery. There are totally sixty two wrong views related to the past and future existences. Those who adhere to them are the victims of ignorance and suffering. All their discourse is confined to the compass of these views only. The Buddha said, "Bhikkhus when any of the Samanas and Brahmanas who speculate on the past or the future or both the past and the future and adhere to beliefs relating to them assert many and varied wrong views about the past or the future or both, all of them are caught in the net of this discourse with all their sixty-two categories of wrong views, and if they rise or sink, they rise

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or sink within the net, for all their views fall within the net of this discourse.\textsuperscript{53}

Wrong views are the source of ignorance and suffering. Right views are their remedy. Right views are those which enable the seeker to be aware of the condition of his present life. They create an earnest desire to overcome the imperfections in the present life. They are based on the Buddha's teaching of direct knowledge and experience. The Buddha never wanted us to follow his teachings blindly, out of faith in or reverence for him. He discouraged those who would simply carry out his instructions without knowing their meaning. He wanted us to follow them after a deep insight into their truth. He said, "Feeling of pleasure or delight due to faith in and devotion to the Buddha is meritorious (kusala kamma). But when the feeling of pleasure or delight is tainted with personal attachment to the Buddha, it becomes demeritorious (akusala kamma). Thus it will be an obstacle in practicing the dhamma, and will be harmful to the striving of jhāna, magga, phala.\textsuperscript{54}

2. Right Thought (Sammā Sankappa)

Right thought is a natural consequence of the first step, namely, right view. Right thought is thinking without desire, anger, covetousness, greed and wrath. It is free from worldly pursuits, ill-will and cruelty. Positively, right thought is that which is full of compassion and loving kindness. The Buddha said that the disciple
who is following the middle path abandons thoughts of taking what is not given, of leading a life of unchastity, of taking stick and sword, and destroying life. He entertains only the thoughts that are good, chaste and compassionate. He welcomes the thoughts that can establish him in purity and are conducive for the well-being of all.

The cultivation of right thoughts enables the disciple to transcend self-centeredness and personal point of view. He overcomes greed and passion. With this he becomes happy and peaceful at the heart. He entertains only the thoughts that are altruistic and conducive to reach the final goal of enlightenment. "As a result of right thinking wisdom gradually starts to develop. The whole life thus turns in the direction of the final goal and becomes a continuous training for its achievement."

The first and second steps, namely, the right view and right thought, constitute the wisdom (prajñā) part of the eightfold path. The two were placed at the beginning of the path. But later on, the two were placed at the end of path, namely, after the samadhi. It was held that wisdom arises as a consequence of sila and samadhi. However, the Buddha placed the wisdom part at the beginning only. He felt that right views and right thoughts are a pre-requisite to sila and samadhi. Unless one's views are set right, one cannot understand the teachings of the Buddha that are mistaken as stressing upon the sorrow in the world. "It is generally felt that
without virtuous life as the basis one cannot concentrate and without concentration one cannot come to arise to the wisdom”.\textsuperscript{57}

After a sustained training in the cultivation of right views and thought, the farer on the way enters the morality (\textit{sila}) part of the path. The morality part consists of three steps, namely, right speech right action, and right means of livelihood. “All these are grouped under virtue (\textit{sila}) and it is the heart of the entire system of eightfold path”.\textsuperscript{58}

3. \textbf{Right Speech (\textit{Sammā Vacā})}

Right speech is that which is devoid of lying, tale bearing, double talk, gossip, empty chatter, malicious and careless language. It means abstaining from back biting, vain and unbeneﬁcial talk. It also means “speaking only the truth, combining truth with truth, remaining steadfast in truth, trustworthy and not deceiving”\textsuperscript{59}. A monk devoted to treading on the path always speak blameless, relevant words. He never speaks out of context, words of division and dissention. He speaks to unite and to make people happy and peaceful. He abandons words of slander and discord. “He reconciles those who are at variance. He encourages those who are at accord. He delights in unity, loves it, and rejoices in it. He speaks to create harmony”.\textsuperscript{60}

The monk who is on the path speaks only those words that are conducive to the attainment of \textit{Nībbāna}. His speech is always in
conformity with the teachings of the dhamma and conducive to the welfare of all. His speech is gentle, soothing, loving, courteous, dear, agreeable to many. He abstains from loud and vociferous talk. He also avoids talking about kings, thieves, ministers, armed forces, calamities, battles, food, drinks, clothing, beds, flowers, unguents, provinces, womenfolk, heroes, streets, water-fronts, the dead and the departed, trivialities, the universe, the oceans, prosperity, adversity and so on.  

4. Right Action (Sammā Kāmanta)

Right action means the right behaviour. It means restraining from stealing, lust and violence. It is abstaining from “killing, from what is not given, from wrongful indulgence in sensual pleasures.” In its positive sense, right action means being continent, chaste and generous. It also means the right conduct of avoiding intoxicants and entertainments like dancing, singing, recitations, exhibitions, rituals, boxing, wrestling, bullfights and so on. It means abstaining from gambling, sports and games like chess, dice, acrobats, bow-arrow, alphabetical riddles, etc.  

A monk of right conduct abstains from indulging in the mutually disparaging disputes about the knowledge and practice of the Buddha’s doctrine and discipline. He avoids the pride of knowing and practicing the doctrine. He avoids finding fault with other doctrines and disciplines. He would never say, “I have exposed the
faults in your doctrine. You stand rebuked. Try to escape from this
centre or explain it if you can"64.

5. **Right Livelihood (Sammā Ājīva)**

Right livelihood means living a life of purity and righteousness. It is living
the way that is useful to one's body and mind. It is
adopting a way of life that is conducive to the welfare of one’s fellow
beings. The Buddha said that the noble disciple following the middle
path would abstain from wrong means of livelihood like fortune
telling, interpreting dreams, reading physiognomy, reciting spells to
overcome evil spirits, charming snakes and curing snake-bites,
foretelling the time of death, diverting the flight of arrows, identifying
the cries of animals65. The farer on the way would abstain from living
by means of making predictions about kings' victories and defeats in
battles, about the eclipses, earthquakes, rainfall, drought, famine and
decease. He should also abstain from living by making mathematical
calculations about the controversial matters relating to the origin of
the universe. He should not live by means of the professions like
propitiating the Gods for favours, causing possession by spirits or
exorcising them, casting spells, turning a eunuch into man and man
into eunuch, choosing building sites, fire-worship, giving purgatives
and causing vomiting, arranging betrothal or divorce, predictions
relating to requisition or distribution of property. He also does not
adopt the means of living by casting spells to cause immobility of the

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tongue, jaws and hands, and making fire issue from the mouth. He also abstains from invoking Gods for glory, acting as a messenger of kings, Brahmins and householders. The Buddha considered all these ways of wrongful living as low arts which are contrary to the correct practice which is conducive for the attainment of Nibbāna.

As it has already been mentioned right speech, right action, and right livelihood constitute the virtue (sīla) part of the eightfold path. It is a pre-requisite to the next part, namely, samādhi. The samādhi part consists of the remaining three parts, namely, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

6. **Right Effort (Sammā Vāyama)**

Right effort means strong resolve to adhere to and progress on the path till the final goal is attained. The will or decision to carry along the path has to be sustained from moment to moment. The volitional drive has to be steered in the direction of the goal and maintained till the vision of it is clear and strong. The effort should be so strong and diligent that once began deviation from the path would be virtually impossible.

Anguttaranikāya mentions the four kinds of right effort. They are: (1) putting forth will, stirring up energy and strengthening the mind to prevent the evil and wrong states which have not arisen, shall not arise; (2) to strive that the evil states which have arisen shall be put away; (3) to strive that the good states which have not arisen,
shall soon arise; and (4) to strive that the good states that have arisen shall persist and become multiplied more and more.\(^68\)

The Buddha has prescribed four more kinds of effort relating to the physical and mental health. They are: (1) striving not to adopt bad habits like over eating and disorderly living; (2) striving to eliminate such bad habits if they have been adopted; (3) striving to adopt new good habits which have not been adopted; and (4) striving to develop the good habits that have been adopted. Efforts of similar kind have to be made even in the fields of economics and politics for the welfare of all. They create a sane and sustainable society of a wise ruler and wise subjects. Right effort is applicable to the well-being of the person as well as the society. Buddha has called right effort as the courage which is indispensable for the growth of the individual and society.

7. **Right Mindfulness (Sammā Sati)**

The word “sati” generally means mindfulness. It means the absence of carelessness and forgetfulness. The term has several other meanings like memory, awareness, alertness, recognition, conscience and so on. It may also be rendered as diligence, lucidity, self-possession or self-consciousness. The Buddha advises his disciples to be accompanied by mindfulness always and wherever they go. He speaks about it in the *Satipatthāna Sutta* of *Dīgha Nikāya*. Here “sati” is *smṛti*, and *patthāna* means *prasthāna*. “Sati” also means that with
which the monks go. "Buddha recommends his disciples to be possessed always of this factor, since it is an accomplisher in all things (satisabbatthasādhaka) and wherever he goes, he should not miss this possession and hence he is endowed with 'sati' with which he goes"\textsuperscript{69}.

Since mindfulness involves a deep contemplation, it also carries the meaning of insight (anupassana). It is also known as insight-meditation of observing everything with full awareness (samprajānya). It has the character of diligently "attending (upatthana) that rightfully places oneself in the proximity of oneself so that he is alert in observation, similar to the situation of a good gate keeper who alertly places himself near the gate for performing right function"\textsuperscript{70}. The preceding step, namely, the right effort is at the basis of right mindfulness. Just as a dutiful gatekeeper allows the eligible person to enter or leave, similarly the monk practicing mindfulness strives to cultivate wholesome thoughts and abandon the unwholesome ones. The mindfulness has to be practiced without covetousness, attachment and greed. It has to be practiced with discipline and contentment. Sati is "the first step in all meditative practices of Buddhists, whether it is through tranquility (samatha) or insight (vipassana)"\textsuperscript{71}. In Mahasatipatthana Sutta the Buddha speaks of the four kinds of mindfulness. They are: (1) the mindfulness of the body (kāyanupassana), (2) mindfulness of sensations (vedanānupassana),

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(3) mindfulness of mind (*cittanupassana*), and (4) mindfulness of the
*dhamma* (*dhammānupassana*). Mindfulness is keeping one's mind
steadfastly on these four kinds of objects with full diligence and
comprehension. It is perceiving the impermanent, the insecure and
the soulless (*anatta*) nature of the objects of mindfulness. Thus
mindfulness keeps the disciple away from greed, hatred and
delusion.  

We are going to extensively deal with the issue of mindfulness
in the next chapter which is devoted to the Theravāda method of
meditation. Here we have given only an outline of the nature and
structure of mindfulness.

8. **Right Concentration (*Sammā Samādhi*)**

Right concentration is a meditational procedure in which the
practitioner withdraws his attention from the outer world and focuses it
inside. Concentration is gained gradually by watching the sensations
entering the mind. It is a process of purging the mind of its
defilements. The purification process takes place by four stages of
meditation (*jhānas*). The first stage begins with detachment from
sensual objects and it is filled with delightful satisfaction and bliss.
The second stage is devoid of discursive thought but filled with delight
and bliss. There is tranquility and oneness of mind in it. In the third
stage, the monk experiences equanimity with clear awareness but
without delight. And in the fourth and final stage, the monk 'experiences' equanimity devoid of pleasure or pain, joy or grief\textsuperscript{72}.

The chief factors of concentration are the same as those of mindfulness. The factors of mindfulness attain their full maturity in concentration. They are rather conceptual which are raised to the level of intuitive realization in concentration. Concentration is the state of Samādhi, the quintessence of the eightfold path. It marks the full attainment of the state of Enlightenment and Perfection. It is the state of Nibbāna which is beyond delusion of attachment and detachment, greed and aversion. It signifies the total deliverance (vimokṣa) of the farer on the way from suffering (dukkha) and its cause, namely, desire (taṇha)\textsuperscript{73}. We will deal with concentration in great detail in the succeeding chapters.
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