CHAPTER IV

MEDITATION AS STEADFAST MINDFULNESS - THE THERAVADA WAY

The Bhagava Said:

"O Bikkhus, this is the one and only way for the purification (of the minds) of beings, for overcoming sorrow and lamentation. For the complete destruction of (physical) pain and (mental) distress, for the attainment of the noble (ariya) Magga, and for the realization of Nibbana. That (only way) is the practice of the four methods of Steadfast Mindfulness, Satipatthana"

Mahāparinibbāna Sutta
CHAPTER -IV
MEDITATION AS RIGHT MINDFULNESS - THE THERAVĀDA WAY

THE NATURE OF MINDFULNESS

Buddha's teachings offer a great variety of the methods of meditation. They give the systems of mental training suited to the various individual temperaments and capacities. But all these methods ultimately culminate in the way of mindfulness. The Buddha has called mindfulness the Only Way or the Sole Way (ekayāno magga). The way of mindfulness is called the heart of Buddhist meditation, the entire Buddhist doctrine (dhamma-hadaya) itself. "This great Heart is in fact the centre of all the blood streams pulsating through the entire body of the doctrine (dhamma-kāya)." 1
The Buddhist way of steadfast mindfulness has far reaching significance. A systematic cultivation of it provides the most simple and direct method of training the mind for its daily tasks. It is also the most effective method of developing the mind for its highest aim, namely, deliverance from greed, hatred and delusion. It is as practicable to-day as it was two thousand five hundred years ago. It is applicable to both the West and the East equally. It is useful to the monk and the common man alike. Right mindfulness is indispensable for all to lead a right kind of life. It has a vital message for everyone, everywhere and for all times. It is the best means of mastering the mind which is difficult to control. It is a thorough method of developing the latent faculties of power and happiness. The Buddha says that the highest purpose of mindfulness is to overcome sorrow and misery, and destroy pain and grief. And this is what everyone wishes for. Thus mindfulness has a universal human concern. "Suffering is the common human experience, and therefore, a method for radically conquering it, is of common concern."\(^2\)

It is also held that mindfulness shows immediate and visible results of its efficacy. The practice of it defeats suffering and results in happiness. In addition to it, it helps in the development of the mental faculties. The true aim of it is the final liberation from suffering, namely, nibbāna. It is the only path that is straight and direct towards it. A continuous progress on this path requires a sustained
effort. It has to be applied to a few selected objects of meditation. Nevertheless, a general application of it to normal activities of life is also important. General application forms the basis for the specialized application of mindfulness. It instills in the mind the mood and attitude of being steadfast in awareness. Its benefits in the ‘worldly’ affairs will encourage us to practice it for attaining the highest goal. There is a creative power in mindfulness. As a true method of Enlightenment, it has a universal appeal. It has the depth and simplicity of providing a framework for a dhārmic life. It has been a source of salvation for a section of humanity that is not susceptible to pseudo spirituality. It has been of great help to those who feel in their lives and minds “the urgency of fundamental problems of a non-material kind calling for solution that neither science nor the religious faith can give”.2

In the Pali canon, the Buddha's discourse on mindfulness occurs at two places: (1) as the 10th discourse of the Middle Length Discourses (Majjhima Nikāya), and (2) as the 22nd discourse of the Long Discourses (Dīgha Nikāya). In both the places the discourse on mindfulness has been entitled as the Maha Satipatthāna Sutta. At both the places the content of the Sutta is the same. However, we find in the latter a detailed exposition of the four Noble Truths.

As it has already been mentioned in the previous chapter steadfast mindfulness is Satipatthāna in Pali. The first term “Sati”
originally means memory or remembrance. In Sanskrit, *Smrti* is its equivalent. But in Pali it has hardly retained this meaning. It has mostly been used in the sense of attending to the present. As a general psychological term, it carries the sense of 'being aware' or 'being attentive'. The second part of the compound term, namely, "patthana" literally means placing near ones' mind. It also means remaining aware, establishing or keeping present. In Sanskrit, *upatthana* is its equivalent. The Sanskrit version of the Discourse reads as *Smrtupasthana Sutra*. In English, it may be rendered as the presence of mindfulness.

*Satipatthāna Sutta* enjoys a great popularity and veneration in the Buddhist culture. In Sri Lanka, the lay devotees choose to read it on full moon days. They recite, listen to, and contemplate on the *Sutta*. It is reverently possessed by every family and frequently read to the members. It is also recited to a dying Buddhist to console and gladden his soul. *Satipatthāna Sutta* is one of the very few discourses which the Buddha himself marked out. Its long-standing and singular veneration is due to the profound benefits one enjoys after its practice. As Nyanaponika Thera says, "May this Undying Speech of the Buddha continue to wield the beneficial power, even far from the place and time of its origin in the Western hemisphere! May it be a bridge between the races, by pointing to the common roots of human nature
and to a common future of an ennobled mind's mastery over human destiny.5

Another important point to note is that the method of steadfast mindfulness is not confined to the Pali canon alone. No doubt, it is originally found in the Sutta Pitaka of the Pali canon. It is predominantly a meditative method of the Theravāda school. But we find its echo in the early Mahāyāna literature also. The early Mahāyāna Sūtras like Śantideva's Bodhicaryāvatāra have made a mention of the way of mindfulness. Right mindfulness forges a strong link between the Theravāda and Mahāyāna. It is a testimony to the common spiritual endeavour of the two schools of Buddhism. In both the schools, the summit of Insight (Vipassana) is reached through the full application of the way of mindfulness. This is the way that all the liberated ones have tread and will be tread by the seekers as well. The uniqueness of the way is that it elevates the person to superior heights by enabling him or her to fully comprehend his mind, life and the world in the present. Mindfulness shares the common aims and concerns of all the systems of Buddhism. "In common are, for instance, the direct confrontation with actuality (including one's mind), the merging of everyday life with meditative practice the transcending of conceptual thought by direct observation and introspection, the emphasis on Here and Now."6
Mindfulness is insightful in nature. Meditation by way of mindfulness is known as Insight meditation. In Pali, it is called Vipassana bhāvana. The term “vipassana” is derived from two roots, namely, “vi” and “passana”. The prefix “vi” basically means ‘in a special way’. It also has other connotations like “into” and ‘through’. And “passana” means perceiving or seeing. The complete meaning of vipassana is “looking into something as distinct and separate, and piercing all the way through so as to perceive the most fundamental reality of that thing”. Vipassana bhāvana is the cultivation of the mind for seeing something in a special way. It is a process that leads to insight into the basic reality. It is a means of getting the full understanding of the phenomena under investigation. It is a unique mode of perceiving reality exactly as it is. The process of mindfulness is entirely different from what we normally do. We usually are oblivious of what is really there in front of us. We are unconscious of what we actually are. We are unaware of what we actually do in the present. We do not see things intensely but casually and in a routine manner. We see life through a screen of preconceived notions and prejudices. We mistake the conditioned reality for a true reality. We get caught up in the web of thoughts and concepts. We spend our life engrossed in the pursuit of pleasure and gratification. We also spend all our energy to escape from fear, pain and suffering. We seek security amidst all that is unstable and false. But the insight-
meditation enables us to penetrate the illusion and discovers the reality. In vipassana meditation we drop the hectic pursuit of gratification. We train ourselves to live in the reality and touch the beauty of life. We learn to dispel illusions and live in real freedom and security. Mindfulness is an authentic way of knowing the reality. What it reveals is "an observable reality, a thing you can and should see for yourself".8

As it has already been mentioned, mindfulness is attention carefully directed for an intense examination of the phenomena. It is a process of meditation in which the meditator realizes more and more of his or her own flowing experiences. It is a gentle and a thorough—going receptive attitude to one's own sensations and thoughts. The object of mindfulness is learning to pay attention to the ongoing surge of our life events. Through it we slowly become aware of what we really are down below the structure of our ego. Through it, we learn for the first time what is really happening around and within us. It is a process of participatory investigation into oneself and discovery of the truth of one's being. "It is an ancient and codified system of sensitivity training, a set of exercises dedicated to becoming more and more receptive to your own life experience. We learn to smell acutely, to touch fully and really pay attention to what we feel. We learn to listen to our own thoughts without being caught up in them".9
It is important to note that the Buddhist doctrines of no-self, impermanence and dependent origination are at the background of meditation as steadfast mindfulness. It is for the realization of the truth of these doctrines that the Buddha advocated it. We human beings live in a peculiar way. We grasp the "self" where it is not findable. We view impermanent things as permanent. We take dependent reality as being independent. We never pay attention to these fundamental truths of our existence. We get attached to things, ideas and persons as being independent and permanent. We suffer when they slowly change and ultimately disappear. Suffering is due to our inattention to the basic truths of life. Right mindfulness is a method of tuning oneself to the constantly changing reality. We can learnt o perceive life as an ever-changing movement and a symphony of myriad things. We can abandon the programmed ways of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching and thinking. We stop the habit of solidifying our perceptions into mental images. We stop the process of accumulating experiences in the brain as memory. We negate the process of burdening the mind with the past. Instead, we learn to travel along the ever changing reality. "You can learn to take joy in the perpetual passing away of all phenomena. You can learn to live with the flow of existence than running perpetually against the grain".10

Vipassana meditation shows us the way of scrutinizing our perceptual processes with precision. It enables us to watch them with
a feeling of serene detachment and clarity. Training in steadfast mindfulness puts an end to the obsessive nature of thought and feeling. We will be able to do everything in an entirely different way. It will bring about a complete paradigm shift in our perceptual mechanism. We can get married and be a householder but without going through the hell there. We shall never get caught in the trap of our own constructed "self" and its possessions. We shall never treat our "self" as a static and permanent entity. The so-called "self" is no more a solified entity which separates itself from all others. We will never regard it as being insulated from the process of eternal change in the universe. Training in vipassana meditation reveals that the "self" or the "I" is only a flowing vortex of sensations, thoughts, and feelings. It also reveals that the mistaken view of the "self" is the cause of our insensitivity. The false notion of the "self" is the source of evil, pain and suffering in the world. Mindfulness explodes the myth of the inherent, independent and permanent "self". With the dissolution of this one illusory conception, the whole of our universe changes. It brings about a total transformation of our life. Thereafter every moment of life will be different. We live with perfect mental health, peace and love. Mindfulness is a gradual process of training. The more we practice it, the more we learn about the nature of our existence. "Vipassana meditation is inherently experiential. It is not theoretical. In the practice of meditation you become sensitive to the
actual experience of living, to how things feel. You do not sit around developing subtle and aesthetic thoughts about living. You live. *Vipassana* meditation more than anything else is learning to live".\textsuperscript{11}

Meditation as mindfulness aims at achieving all comprehensive *cognition* that destroys ignorance. It is a process of developing our *cognition* to its zenith comparable to the Sun at noon. It seeks to ripen our abstract comprehension of the dependent arising of suffering into infallible knowledge. Infallible knowledge is that which is beyond doubt. It is *cognition* which is intuitive and concrete. It is the result of, as the Buddha puts it, "the meditative contemplation: only what is being seen positively, clearly and concretely, is being known in truth"\textsuperscript{12}.

The meditative contemplation by steadfast mindfulness gives rise to the intuitive cognition that the five-groups of grasping are our mortal enemies. They constitute the components of our personality. It is through them alone that we are in connection with the world. They are the microcosm through which we experience the macrocosm, namely, the universe. Right mindfulness is meant to provide us the precise knowledge of our personality, the source of sorrow. It reveals the nature, the arising and vanishing of the form, the sensation, the perception, the mental activities, and the consciousness. The clear cognition that the five-groups of grasping are our foes destroys our thirst for them. We will no more feel the thirst for them. Complete
penetration into the nature of the personality is the kernel of mindfulness. The Buddha prescribed it to unravel the truth of the corporeality of the person. He hailed it to be the only way of perceiving the truth that the corporeal form is alien to us. The monk who steadfastly practices mindfulness will never regard the nāma-rūpa as belonging to him. He will be able to extract the thirst out of himself. He will completely get rid of the pride of his personality. He will be able to put an end to suffering. The insight of the mindfulness brings about the final delivery by clear and concrete knowledge. It leads to great salvation and security. With the practice and development of the insight-meditation "the ignorance will perish, the knowledge will arise, that I-am-delusion will disappear, the inclination will die away, the fetters will fall down".

Right Mindfulness works as a stern guardian at the gates of the senses. It does not allow craving, hatred or delusion enter through any of the six senses. It does not allow anything evil to arise in the mind. It extinguishes the thirst for the pleasures provided by the objects of the senses. The insight gained by the mindfulness stops nourishing the thirst and stunts its growth. It will deaden the pleasing sensations and shall not allow the new ones to arise. Then the monk will come to the realization that his body is only a form of matter and a mechanism in an organized form. The body has to be sustained by destroying thirst altogether. The monk takes food in thorough
mindfulness. He takes it not to enjoy, not to become smart but to sustain the body. He eats only to protect the body from damage and to lead the holy life. He eats to sustain his life in an unblemished way. "For this reason he restricts himself to such scanty maintenance of his body as indispensable condition for a future perfect destruction of all thirsting". 14

According to Buddhism, the ultimate end of man is to free himself from the lust of being born again. The aim is to break the chain of the causation of suffering. There are two important links in the chain of suffering. They are desire and ignorance which are intimately connected. One cannot be eliminated without eliminating the other. But ignorance is the fundamental cause of suffering. A purely intellectual understanding of removal of ignorance is not sufficient. The practice of the path of conduct (śīla), concentration (samādhi) and wisdom (prajñā) is essential. That is, the noble eightfold path is the way of emancipation from suffering. And samādhi is the most important part of the path. It consists of three steps namely, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. Right effort is to suppress the rising of evil states, to eradicate the evil states that have arisen, to stimulate good states, and to protect those that have already come into being. Right mindfulness is watching the body and the mind in such a way as to remain ardent and self-possessed by overcoming both hankering and dejection. And right concentration

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consists of four meditations. In the first state of meditation the adept isolates himself from the world of sensual objects; he engages himself in initial and sustained application of mindfulness to the truths of the Buddhist doctrine. As a result of this, the adept is freed from all desire and evil dispositions; and he "enjoys a condition of zest and pleasure (pīti-sukha)"\(^{15}\). In the second stage of meditation, the adept suppresses initial or sustained application; as a result, he obtains inner peace and "concentration (ekodibhāva) of thought (cetas) produced by deep reflection (samādhi), and characterized by zest and pleasure"\(^{16}\). In the third stage of meditation, zest and its activity disappear and the adept remains mindful and intent (satimān) but indifferent to all mental states; here the adept, however, enjoys pleasure, the state is not one of neutral feeling, but intellectual; the adept looks with impartial tolerance on all mental states\(^{17}\). And the adept enters the fourth stage of meditation by putting away the sense of pleasure and pain, elation and dejection. This state is "one of pure and complete self-possession and indifference (upekkhāsatipariṇāmuddhi) without pleasure or pain"\(^{18}\).

The foregoing explanation shows that mindfulness as "the concentrated intuitive activity of cognition"\(^{19}\) is the heart of the Buddhist path of meditation. The Buddha has set forth a mode of procedure for the cultivation of meditation as mindfulness. The power of mindfulness is to be gained by constant exercise, concentrating
upon a definite object. It requires a determined focusing of attention on a particular object. The meditator should have no other purpose except gaining insight into the nature of the object. He or she should struggle against the hindrances like absent-mindedness or inattention. One should gain complete mastery over the undesirable thoughts and emotions. Indefatigable pursuit of mindfulness strengthens our effort for gaining insight and clear knowledge. "Thus this training finally leads us to being able to will to maintain an attitude of pure cognition with regard to any object whatsoever."

The Buddha has prescribed three basic modes of strengthening the way of mindfulness. They are: (1) exercise in looking intently at an object, for instance, a tree; (2) training of attention on a visible object like a coloured round disc made specially for the purpose; and (3) concentration on the act of breathing.

In the first mode of mindfulness, the meditator trains his mind in concentrating on a given object as long and as intently as possible. He keeps looking at it, say a tree, till at last it completely fills his ocular cognition. In this contemplation the meditator overcomes the impulsive will. There remains only the direct perception of the object. The rest of thoughts and desires get totally allayed. As a result, the meditator enjoys perfect rest. The pure cognizing activity in this mode of mindfulness brings about freedom which is called "a grand deliverance of the mind." Exercise in the pure and direct cognition of
mono-idea-izing by means of intuitive representation can be extended in terms of time and the object of meditation. Sustained training in it gives us a considerable degree of freedom of will to cognize. With this power over cognition, we will be able to concentrate on a particular object deeply and for hours or even for days. Thereby the meditator will easily be able "to penetrate the machinery of personality to the bottom and thus realize the vision of Anattā".

The second mode of mindfulness is called the kasiṇā exercise. It is a method of entirely absorbing one's cognition in the respective object of meditation. Kasiṇā is the object by which cognition is totally grasped. It involves focusing of the undivided attention on a visible object. Here the object chosen is a coloured round disc made specially for this purpose. The disc may be red, blue, yellow or white in colour. The Kasiṇā may also be a clearly visible spot of the earth (earth Kasiṇā). It may be a pond lying at a distance (water Kasiṇā). Contemplation on the Kasiṇā should be maintained until at least "a moon-like reflex is distinctly beheld with eyes opened as well as with eyes closed". The image of the moon thus formed in the mind is called "conceived reflex" (uggahanīmitta). Now the meditator has to leave the external object of meditation and begin to concentrate on its conceived reflex. Concentration on the inner reflex gives rise to a reflex of moon or a sparkling star without colour or form (patibhāganīmitta). With this all the hindrances to higher states of
meditation will disappear. The meditator will reach the first stage of concentration known as *upacāra-samādhi*. "All the motions of thirst have gone to sleep; the light of knowledge, no more dimmed by any of them, beams forth in all its clearness. Hence, also on this basis, if it is directed upon the personality by the will for the complete penetration of this personality, now coming into action, it may in time, penetrate it through and through."²⁴.

The third model of mindfulness is training of concentration on the act of breathing. Concentration of cognitive activity upon inhalation and exhalation is the most important path of meditation. The Buddha said that a thoughtful exercise of inhalation and exhalation would produce a great merit. Cultivation of watchfulness over breathing greatly promotes mindfulness. It gives rise to the Four Foundations of recollectedness. A thoughtful cultivation of these Foundations will produce the seven constituent elements of Awakening. A thoughtful exercise in these constituents will bring about the liberating wisdom.

**ĀNAPĀNASATI (MINDFULNESS OF BREATHING)**

In practicing mindfulness of breathing, the monk resorts to the depths of a forest or to the foot of a tree or to any solitary and quiet spot. There he sits down with legs crossed and back held erect. Then he begins the practice of mindfulness of breathing. He takes a long breath inward and while doing so he is completely aware that he is

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doing so. He takes a long breath outward and while doing so he is fully aware of doing so. Similarly he takes a short breath inward and outward with total mindfulness. The monk trains himself in being attentive to the whole process of breathing. He practices the mindfulness of breathing in and breathing out till he perceives the entire process of it. The perception quietens the process of the breathing activity of the body. The practice of mindfulness on breathing gives the monk control over the purely corporeal processes. It gives him the ability to be watchful over his body, since inhalation and exhalation constitute prime activity of the body. The Buddha said, "Herein, monks, a monk who is forest-gone or gone to the root of a tree or gone to an empty place, sits down cross-legged, holding his back erect arousing mindfulness in front of him. Mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out. Whether he is breathing in a long breath he, comprehends, 'I am breathing in a long breath'; or whether he is breathing out a long breath he comprehends, 'I am breathing out a long breath'; or whether he is breathing in a short breath he comprehends, 'I am breathing in a short breath'; or whether he is breathing out a short breath he comprehends, 'I am breathing out a short breath'. He trains himself thinking, 'I will breath in experiencing the whole body'. He trains himself thinking, 'I will breath out experiencing the whole body'. He trains himself, thinking, 'I will breath in tranquillizing the activity of the body'"\textsuperscript{28}. \textsuperscript{134}
Having stabilized mindfulness on the whole process of breathing, the monk exercises in directing it on to the other activities of the six-senses-machine. He closely observes the rest of the mechanism of this machine and learns the way of influencing it. He makes the process of controlling the machine as the fulcrum of concentration. He maintains the process by constantly attending to it. He thus avoids distractions by other movements of the mind. Then the monk experiences rapture and joy. "He trains himself, thinking, 'I will breath in .... breath out experiencing rapture'. He trains himself thinking, 'I will breath in .... breath out experiencing joy'.

Having established mindfulness on the breath in respect of the body, the monk trains himself breathing out and breathing in regarding the sensations. He trains himself exhaling and inhaling while watching upon the sensations. He carefully gives heed to the constant changing of the sensations when he is inhaling and exhaling.

Next the monk trains himself on the mindfulness of thoughts while breathing in and breathing out. Fully mindful of thoughts he exhales and fully mindful of thoughts he inhales. Enlivening the thoughts he breathes out; enlivening the thoughts he breathes in. Loosening the thoughts he breathers out; loosening the thoughts he breathes in. Thus, the monk trains himself in the mindfulness of the mind and its thoughts while exhaling and inhaling.
Next, the monk trains himself on the fourth and last foundation of mindfulness while breathing, namely, the momentariness. Beholding impermanence, the monk breathes out and beholding the same, he breathes in. He also trains himself in the mindfulness on detachment and unattractiveness while breathing in and breathing out. The monk overcomes covetousness and dejection by seeing them with clear consciousness and wisdom. Thus the monk develops and makes much use of the mindfulness of breathing in and breathing out. He succeeds in applying it to the four kinds of the objects of mindfulness. The Buddha says, "Monks, mindfulness of in-breathing and out-breathing when developed thus, make much of thus, brings to fulfillment the four applications of mindfulness." 

Training in the application of steadfast mindfulness in the four ways brings about the "seven constituent members of Awakening (Sambojihangā)". The seven constituents are also called as the links of awakening. They are: (1) mindfulness or recollectedness, (2) ascertaining of reality by investigating into things, (3) unstaggered energy or strength, (4) rapture or joy, (5) peace or tranquility, (6) concentration, and (7) equanimity. The development of any these seven links or constituents of awakening brings freedom through knowledge. The development of one constituent stirs up the development of the rest. The Buddha said, "Herein, monks, a monk develops the link in awakening that is mindfulness and is dependent
on aloofness, dependent on detachment, dependent on cessation, ending in abandoning, he develops the link in awakening that is investigation into things .... the link in awakening that is energy .... the link in awakening that is rapture .... the link in awakening that is concentration ... the link in awakening that is equanimity and is dependent on aloofness, dependent on detachment, dependent on cessation, ending in abandoning. Monks, when the seven links in awakening are developed thus, are made much of thus, they bring to fulfillment freedom through knowledge"32.

Training in mindfulness on breathing in respect of the four objects and the seven constituents in awakening is an exercise in pure cognition which "is directed from the very beginning upon the vision of Anatta"33. It is the easiest and quickest way of realizing the truth of no-self. With the complete mastery over the mindfulness what remains in the personality is pure cognition and the knowledge born of it. The knowledge born of pure cognition is completely unified. It is wholly pure "like a flame that, nourished by the best wood, burns without smoke or fumes, quite clear and study"34. There is no more attachment or detachment in regard to anything. All the expressions of thirst have been silenced at least for the time being. Pure cognition is without passion and beyond agreement and disagreement, likes and dislikes. It is like water that neither gets horrified nor becomes indignant nor revolts whether we wash pure or impure things in it. So
the pure cognition will, in course of time, “unfailingly lead to pure
vision of Anattā, whereby every kind of thirst will be annihilated
forever, and thus deliverance through wisdom is achieved”.

SATIPATTHĀNA (STEADFAST MINDFULNESS)

In the foregoing pages of this chapter we have explained the
nature of mindfulness and its application to breathing. We have
explained its application, while breathing, to body, sensations,
thoughts and transitoriness. We have also explained in brief the
arising of the seven links or constituents in awakening. The
explanation of all these issues is as contained in the Ānapānasati
Sutta of the Majjima Nikāya. Let us now deal in detail with the
application of steadfast mindfulness to body, sensations, thoughts and
mind, and to dhamma as contained in the Satipatthāna Sutta of the
Dīgha Nikāya.

In Satipatthāna, the term “sati” etimologically means
remembrance, memory or recollection. In Sanskrit, “smṛti” is its
equivalent. Since these meanings are rather misleading the term
has also been translated as presence, being aware or
calling-to-mind. The second part of the term, “paṭṭhāna”, means
keeping present, starting off or going away. Prasthāna is its Sanskrit
equivalent. Buddhagōsa has used it in the sense of gocara which
means the feeding ground or the resort of an animal. In English, the
term Satipatthāna has been rendered as steadfast mindfulness, pillar
of insight or intent contemplation\footnote{37}. The Buddha has regarded the application of mindfulness as the most efficacious way of deliverance from sorrow. Mindfulness is concerned with the clear comprehension of the nature and functioning of the six-sense-machine. It is also concerned with the clear comprehension of the whole of the Buddhist dhamma. It is a path of supreme diligence and discipline of the mind aimed at intense concentration or meditation. The Buddha has categorically declared that Satipaṭṭhāna is the one and only way of purification of beings. It is the sure and secure means of overcoming sorrow and attaining nibbāna through wisdom.

In the MahaSatipaṭṭhāna Sutta of the Dīgha Nikāya, the Buddha has spoken of the four kinds of Steadfast Mindfulness. They are:

1. Steadfast Mindfulness of the Body, its structure and Activities (Kāyanupassana Satipaṭṭhāna)
2. Steadfast Mindfulness of Feeling (Vedanānupassana Satipaṭṭhāna)
3. Steadfast Mindfulness of the Mind (Cittānupassana Satipaṭṭhāna)
4. Steadfast Mindfulness of the Dhamma, the Nāma-rūpa – the Mental and Physical Phenomena (Dhammānupassana Satipaṭṭhāna).
Steadfast Mindfulness of the Body

The Bhagava Buddha said that the monk who is treading the noble eightfold path and the path of right mindfulness in particular, would concentrate steadfastly, with diligence and clear comprehension, on the body. The monk perceives its impermanent, insecure and soulless nature and he thus overcomes covetousness and distress. Mindfulness of the body consists of six ways of practice\(^2\). They are: (a) the Mindfulness of Breathing (Ānapāna Sati); (b) the Mindfulness of the Body posture and its Movement (Iriyapatha); (c) the clear Comprehension (Sampajanna); (d) the Mindfulness of the Repulsiveness of the Body (Patikkula Manasikara); (e) the Mindfulness of the primary Elements (Dhatu Mnasikara); and (f) the Mindfulness of Nine Kinds of Corpses (Nava Savathika).

The Mindfulness of Breathing (Ānapāna Sati)

The monk goes to a forest, a solitary place or to the foot of a tree, sits down cross-legged with his back erect. Then he begins to be mindful of his breath. He breathes-in and breathes-out with diligent mindfulness. He is mindful of the long and short breath with clear comprehension. He trains himself to be fully conscious of the whole process of the breath. He is aware of exhalation and inhalation. He watches the arising, the development and the end of each breath. While observing the whole stretch of breathing, the monk also says to himself, 'I am breathing-in..., I am breathing-out', 'I am breathing
long...., I am breathing-short'. The monk repeatedly performs the mindfulness of the whole process of breathing for a long time. It does it regularly with great intensity. Thus he calms down the strong inhalations and exhalations. He tranquillizes the breathing activity of body. "Mindfulness of Breathing is very effective in quieting bodily and mental unrest or irritation, for ordinary or higher purposes."

**Mindfulness of Body Postures and Movements (Iriyapatha)**

Mindfulness of breathing is followed by the mindfulness of the body postures and movements. The monk trains himself in being mindful of the body postures and movements. He is mindful of standing, sitting, walking and lying down while standing, sitting, walking and laying down. While being mindful of them, he also utter that 'I am standing, sitting, walking or lying down. While being mindful of the postures and movements, the monk is also mindful of the fact that the body is only a *nama-rupa* devoid of the self (*atta*). He perceives clearly the actual appearing and disappearing of the physical and mental phenomena. He sees them as being transitory. He maintains the mindfulness till he attains deep Insight (*Vipassana Naana*) of comprehending the momentary nature of the body. He ceases being proud or pleased about his body any more.

**Mindfulness with Clear Comprehension (Samprajanna)**

Next the monk performs the activities of his body with clear comprehension. The activities like moving forward, backward, looking
straight and sideways, eating, drinking, being silent or falling asleep and so on will be performed while being mindful of them. While doing so, the monk also utters within himself 'moving forward', 'moving backward', 'looking straight' and so on. He is fully conscious of all the postures and movements of the body. Thus he clearly comprehends the deteriorating nature of the corporeal phenomena of his body.43

Mindfulness of the Repulsiveness of the Body (Patikula Manasikāra)

Next, the monk trains himself in being mindful of his body from the top to the toe. He is mindful of body from the tips of the hair down to the soles of the feet. He comprehends the fact that the body is merely a two-mouthed leather bag filled with impurities like sweat, unire, mucus and saliva. The body is composed of bones, flesh, blood and tears. Thus the monk is fully mindful of the repulsiveness of his body and its deteriorating nature.43

Mindfulness of the Primary Elements (Dhatu Manasikāra)

Further, the farer on the way of mindfulness concentrates on the fact that the body is merely an aggregate of the four elements, namely, earth, fire, air and water. He perceives the truth that his body is made of the earth element, fire element, air element, and water element.44 The body is simply a composite of the elements of extension, heat, motion, and cohesion. Thus the monk is fully aware of the soulessness and the impermanent nature of the body.

Mindfulness of the Nine Kinds of Corpsees (Nava Sivathika)
Here the monk is mindful of his body as being dead. He contemplates on the nine states of his dead body in future. Firstly, he sees it as being dead, swollen, and abandoned in the burial ground. Secondly, he sees it as being eaten by vultures, dogs, jackals and worms. Thirdly, he visualizes the skeleton which is held together by the flesh and tendons. Fourthly, he imagines the skeleton as being put together by the tendons only. Fifthly, the monk is mindful of the skeleton as being still held together without flesh and tendon. And sixthly, he concentrates on the condition of the skeleton as being disintegrated bones scattering in all directions. Seventhly, he sees the bones as being bleached. Eighthly, he the bones as being old, and lastly, he sees them as being merged in dust.

Thus the monk comprehends the aggregate and deteriorating nature of his body. He sees the causal nature, the appearance and disappearance of his body. In seeing the impermanent nature of his body, he also sees the nature of the body of others. He thus trains himself in keeping away from wrong views of craving for and clinging to his body and that of others. “By looking at the postures with such a detached objectivity, the habitual identification with the body will begin to dissolve”.

Steadfast Mindfulness of Sensation (Vedanānūpassana Satipatthāna)

Here the monk trains himself in being mindful of his sensations and sees nature of their soullessness, impermanence and insecurity.
He is mindful of the pleasant, unpleasant and neutral sensations; he is aware of the sensual desire associated with them. He is also mindful of the fact that the sensations experienced by others are also of similar nature. He thus gains more and more concentration and perceives the causal nature of the sensation as such. He comprehends the way it appears and disappears. He thus sees the truth that sensation is without the so-called soul (anattā). The mindfulness of the causal nature and structure of the sensation or feeling leads to gradual fading away of the evil sensations. It is very "helpful to a gradual refinement of the emotional life and to an increase of noble and elimination of ignoble feelings"48.

Steadfast Mindfulness of the States of Mind (Cittānupassana Satipaṭṭhāna)

Here the monk looks at his mind through the clear mirror of bare mindfulness. "The object of observation here is the condition and the level of mind or consciousness, in general, as it presents itself at the given moment"49. The monk is aware of the mind with defilements like passion (rāga), anger (doṣa), and bewilderment (moha). He is aware of the mind devoid of these defilements50. He is also aware of the indolent (saṅkhitta), distracted (vikkhita), non-development (amāhagatta), the inferior (samuttara), the non-concentrated (asamādhistha) and the unliberated (avimutta) states of mind. He is mindful of these states as they exactly are, without any prevarication.
The monk is also aware of the developed (mahaggata), the superior (anuttara), the concentrated (samādhita), and the liberated (vimutta) states of the mind. He is mindful of them as they actually are. By seeing the mind in its positive and negatives states, he comprehends its impermanent, soulless and insecure nature. He realizes the nature of other's mind also. He sees the causal and dependent nature of the mind. He also perceives the arising, the dissolution and the selflessness of the mind (anattā). Mindfulness of the states of mind is a bare registering without justification or condemnation. It is an intense and effective way of self-examination and self-knowledge. “Such self-examination makes for honesty towards oneself which is indispensable for inner progress and for mental health”.

**Steadfast Mindfulness of the Mental and Physical Phenomena (Dhammānupassana Satipaṭṭhāna)**

At this stage, the monk is steadfastly mindful of the five khandhas and perceives their soullessness, insecure and impermanent nature. The five khandhas cover the physical and mental processes of the personality. The mindfulness of the mental and physical phenomena proceeds by five states: (i) Mindfulness of the Five Hindrances (Nivaranā Satipaṭṭhāna); (ii) Mindfulness of the Five Aggregates (Upadāna Khandha Satipaṭṭhāna); (iii) Mindfulness of the Twelve Sense-Bases (Āyatana Satipaṭṭhāna); (iv) Mindfulness of the
Seven Links (Bojjhanga Satipaṭṭhāna); and (v) Mindfulness of the Four Noble Truths (Āriya Sacca Satipaṭṭhāna).

**Mindfulness of the Five Hindrances**

Here, the monk trains himself to be steadfastly mindful of the five hindrances to mindfulness. The hindrances are: (i) Kamma-cchanada; (ii) Byāpāda; (iii) Thina-midha; (iv) Uddhacca-Kukkucca; and (v) Vicikiccha. Kamma-cchāna comprises the hindrances like craving and desire. Byāpāda consists of hindrances like evil thoughts and ill-will. Thina-midha is composed of indolence, sloth and torpor. Uddhacca-Kukkucca consists of distractions like agitation and worry. And Vicikiccha means having doubt and wavering of the mind. The five hindrances are a barrier to one’s spiritual progress. “They are hindrances to doing good deeds and to the achievement of Jhānas and of the four Magga Insights”.

The monk is mindful of the five hindrances to the extent and intent that they do not arise in him anymore. He sees the truth that the mental and physical phenomena are without substance. He realizes that the dhamma in others too is of the same nature. Further he perceives the cause, the actual appearing and dissolution of the mental and physical phenomena as a whole. He also perceives the truth that mindfulness is practiced for gaining insights (vipassana) into the nature of the dhamma as a whole. “The bhikkhu remains detached from craving and wrong views, without clinging to any of the
five khandhas (that are continuously deteriorating). Bhikkhus, it is also, in this way that the bhikkhu keeps his mind steadfastly on the five nivarana dhamma (perceiving their true nature).\textsuperscript{55}

**Mindfulness of the Five Aggregates**

Here the monk keeps his mind steadfastly on the five aggregates which are the sources of desire and clinging. The five aggregates are: (i) the body (rūpakkhandha); (ii) sensations (vedanākkhandha); (iii) perception (saññākkhandha); (iv) mental formations (sañkhārakkhandha); and (v) consciousness (vinnānakkhandha).\textsuperscript{56} The monk steadfastly and directly keeps his mind step by step on the body, sensation, perception, mental formations and consciousness. He intensely and for long perceives the arising, the disappearances of these aggregates. The aggregates are also known as the five groups of grasping. While being mindful of each of the aggregates, the monk utters within himself thus: "such is material shape, such is the arising of material shape, such is the setting of material shape; such is feeling, such is the arising of feeling, such is the setting of feeling; such is perception, such is the arising of perception, such is the setting of perception; such are the mental formations (tendencies), such is the arising of the mental formations, such is the setting of mental formations; such is consciousness such is the arising of consciousness, and such is the setting of consciousness."\textsuperscript{57}
Mindfulness of the Twelve Sense-Bases

At this stage the monk keeps his mindfulness on the mental and physical phenomena of the twelve sense-bases and perceives their soullessness (anatta). The twelve sense bases are: the eye and forms the ear and sounds, the nose and smells, the tongue and tastes, the skin and tactiles, and the mind and ideas. The monk is mindful of the fetters that arise out of the sense-bases. He is also aware of the fetters that are arising, the fetters that have not yet arisen, the fetters that he has discarded, and the not arising of the fetters he has discarded. In this way the monk applies steadfast mindfulness to the arising and discarding of the fetters in regard to all the twelve-sense bases.

A fetter is that which binds the person to sorrow. There are ten fetters according to the Abhidhamma: (1) craving for sensual pleasure, (2) anger, disappointment, ill-will, fear and grief, (3) pride and conceit, (4) belief in the self, (5) doubt, wavering and skepticism, (6) belief in paths other than the eightfold path, (7) craving to become a Brahma, (8) jealously and envy, (9) meanness and stinginess, and (10) ignorance of the four noble truths. The monks keeps his mind steadfastly on the fetters that arise out of the twelve-sense bases. He perceives the truth that they are only phenomena without a substance. He also realizes the nature of the twelve-bases and the fetters related to them as they are in other persons also. He perceives the cause, the actual arising and dissolution of the dhamma of the
twelve-sense bases. "And further, the bhikkhu is firmly mindful of the fact that there are only dhamma. That mindfulness is solely for gaining (vipassana) insights progressively, solely for gaining further mindfulness stage by stage. The bhikkhu remains detached from craving and wrong views, without clinging to any of the five khandhas that are continuously deteriorating. Bhikkhus, it is also in this way that the bhikkhu keeps his mind steadfastly on the six internal and six external āyatana dhamma, perceiving their true nature."

Mindfulness of the Seven Links of Enlightenment

Here, the monk steadfastly keeps his mind on the phenomena of the seven links (bojjhanga) leading to nibbāna. The seven links are: (1) the link of mindfulness (sati sambojihanga), (2) the link of investigative knowledge (dhammāvicayasaṃbojihanga), (3) the link of effort (vīrya-sambojihanga), (4) the delightful satisfaction (pītisasambojihanga), (5) the link of serenity (passadhi-sambojihanga), (6) the link of concentration (samādhi-sambojihanga), and (7) the link of equanimity (upekka sambojihanga). The monk clearly comprehends the presence as well as the absence of each link of enlightenment. He perceives as to how each link arises and disappears. He also experiences complete fulfillment in developing and cultivating insights into one link after another. Thus he reaches the final link which is equanimity. Then the monk remains detached from carving and wrong views, without clinging to any of the five aggregates that are
continuously deteriorating. The Buddha said, "Bhikkhus, it is also in this way that the bhikkhu keeps his mind steadfastly on the seven bojjahanga, perceiving their true nature".89

**Mindfulness of the Four Noble Truths**

At this stage of meditation, the monk steadfastly keeps his mind on the nature and contents of the Four Noble truths. He perceives the truth that sorrow is just a phenomena without any entity. The Buddha said, "Bhikkhus, the bhikkhu following my teaching knows 'This is dukkha as it really is; he knows This is the origin of dukkha' as it really is; he knows 'This is the cessation of dukkha' as it really is'; he knows 'This is the practice of the path leading to the cessation of dukkha' as it really is".60

Firstly, the monk trains himself in being steadfastly mindful of the first noble truth. He is mindful of birth, ageing, and death; he is mindful of grief, lamentation and sorrow. He is mindful of the fact that to be associated with persons or things one dislikes is painful; he is mindful that to be separated from the persons and things one like is painful. He is also mindful of the five aggregates which are the source of suffering. The monk is mindful of the whole process of the conception, the arising of the new form, the appearance, the aggregates, and the acquisition of the sense-bases. He is mindful of the process of aging and the arrival of death; he is mindful of the vanishing of beings, the dissolution of the aggregates and the

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discarding of the body; he is also mindful of grief as arising of loss; he is also mindful of lamentation as the act of weeping at the loss of something or somebody. And he is mindful of despair as "the state of tribulation of one who is beset by some ruinous loss or other, who encounters, some painful misfortune or other—"\(^6\)1.

The monk is mindful of suffering that arises when one is associated with things and persons one dislikes; he is also mindful of suffering that arises when one is separated from things and persons one likes. Meeting, remaining together and being associated with anything one dislikes including the sights, sounds, odours, tastes and so on is sorrowful. Similarly disassociated from the sights, sounds, odours, tastes which one likes is also painful. Further, the monk is mindful of suffering that arises out of craving for what one cannot obtain. He is aware that the very wishing for what one cannot get is suffering. The monk is also mindful of suffering due to clinging to the five aggregates such as clinging to corporeality, sensation, perception, mental formations and consciousness. Thus the monk is mindful of the whole content of the first noble truth. He directly and practically comprehends the meaning of the noble truth of suffering\(^6\)2.

Next, the monk is mindful of the whole nature and content of the second noble truth, namely, the noble truth of the origin of suffering. He is mindful of craving as the origin of suffering; he comprehends that craving gives rise to rebirth associated with passion;
craving finds delight in pleasures of the senses (kama-tanha); craving is craving for better existences (bhava-tanha) and craving for non-existences (vibhava tanha). The monk is also aware that craving "arises and establishes itself in delightful and pleasurable characteristics of upadana-khandhas"\(^63\).

Carving arises and establishes itself in the characteristics of the six sense organs of the eye, the ear, the nose, and so on. The monk is mindful of craving arising and establishing itself in the six sense objects such as the visible, the sounds, the tastes, and so on. He also perceives craving as arising and establishing itself in the six types of consciousness such as the eye-consciousness, the ear-consciousness, the nose-consciousness and so on. He further sees craving as arising and establishing itself in the six types of contact such as the eye-contact, the ear-contact, the nose-contact, and so on. The monk is clearly aware and mindful as to when craving arises and establishes itself in six types of sensations, six types of perception, and six types of volition. The monk is mindful that craving arises and establishes itself in craving for six-types of objects, namely, visible objects, sounds, tastes, and so on. The monk is fully aware that "when craving arises it arises there, when it establishes itself, it establishes itself there"\(^64\). The monk is mindful of the above phenomena through initial application (vitaka) and the sustained application (vicāra) of the mindfulness. Through the two kinds of

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application of mindfulness, the monk fully comprehends the nature of arising and establishment of craving.66

Next, the monk proceeds to the mindfulness of the third noble truth, namely, the truth of the cessation of suffering. He begins mindfulness with perceiving the fact that the complete extinction of suffering lies in total abandoning of craving. He sees the abandonment of craving lies in the abandonment of the pleasurable and delightful characteristics of the six senses, six sense objects, six consciousnesses and six types of contact.66 The monk is also mindful of the fact that craving ceases to be only when there is the cessation of craving for the pleasurable characteristics of the six types of sensation, namely, the sensation born of eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, and so on. He perceives that craving is abandoned and it ceases to be only when there is the abandonment and cessation of it for pleasurable characteristics of the six types of perception, namely, the perception of visible objects, sounds, odours, tastes, and so on. The Buddha said, "In the Upādanakkhandha, craving for visible objects, craving for sounds, craving for odours, craving for tastes, craving for tactile objects, craving for mind-objects (each) has the characteristic of being delightful and pleasurable. When this craving is abandoned, it is abandoned there, when it ceases, it ceases there."67

Further, the monk is mindful that craving is abandoned and it ceases to be only when there is the abandonment and cessation of it
for the pleasurable characteristics of the six types of volition, namely, volition for visible objects, for sounds, for odours, for tastes, for tactiles, and for mind-objects. The monk perceives that craving is abandoned and ceases to be only when there is the abandonment of it for the pleasurable characteristics of six types of craving, namely, craving for visible objects, for sounds, for odours, for tastes, for tactile objects, and for mind-objects. He also perceives that craving is abandoned and it ceases to be only when there is the abandonment and cessation of it for the pleasurable characteristics of the six types of thought conception, namely, conception of forms, sounds, odours, tastes, tactiles and ideas. Here also the monk applies mindfulness in its initial (vitaka) and sustained (vicāra) levels to visible objects, sounds, odours, tastes, tactile objects and mind-objects. He comprehends that each has the characteristic of being delightful and pleasurable. He is fully aware that "when craving is abandoned, it is abandoned there; when it ceases, it ceases there". Thus the monk diligently keeps his mind on the nature and content of the third noble truth, namely, the truth of the cessation of suffering. He clearly comprehends the truth that complete extinction of suffering is possible through the complete cessation of craving. He realizes that Nibbāna lies in the liberation of the mind from craving.

And lastly, the monk focuses his mindfulness on the nature and content of the fourth noble truth, namely, the truth of the path leading
to the cessation of suffering. The Noble Eightfold Path is the path that leads to the cessation of suffering. As it has already been mentioned, the path consists of eight steps. They are: (1) Right View, (2) Right Thinking, (3) Right Speech, (4) Right Action, (5) Right Livelihood, (6) Right Effort, (7) Right Mindfulness, and (8) Right Concentration.

In being mindful of the first step, namely, right view, the monk gains the Insight-knowledge (Vipassana Jñāna) of the four noble truths of suffering, arising of suffering, cessation of suffering and the path leading to suffering. He comprehends the truth that the four truths dispel all the false views about the nature, arising and cessation of suffering. In being mindful of the second step, namely, right thinking, the monk liberates himself from the thoughts of sensuality, ill-will and hatred for others. He cultivates compassion and loving kindness for others. In being mindful of the third step, namely, right speech, the monk is free from falsehood, back-biting and coarse talk. In being mindful of the fourth step, namely, right action, the monk learns to abstain from the evil acts like indulgence in sensual pleasures, stealing and violence. In being mindful of the fifth step, namely, right livelihood, the monk learns to abstain from the wrong means of livelihood and lives by right way of livelihood. The Buddha said, "And bhikkhus, what is Right Livelihood? Bhikkhus, the āriya disciple following my teaching completely abstains from a wrong way of
livelelihood, and makes his living by a right means of livelihood. This, bhikkhus, is called Right Livelihood”.

Next, the monk is mindful of the fifth step, namely, right effort. In being steadfastly mindful of it, the monk generates will, makes good effort, rouses energy; he strives to prevent the arising of demeritorious states of mind that have not yet arisen; he strives to abandon demeritorious states of mind that have arisen; he strives to attain the meritorious states of mind that have not yet arisen; and finally, he also strives to maintain the meritorious states of mind that have already arisen; he most ardently strives “to prevent their lapsing, to increase them, to cause them grow to make them develop in full in samathā, vipassana meditation”.

Next, the monk is mindful of the seventh step, namely, right mindfulness. This is a very important and crucial step. Here, the monk firstly is mindful of the mindfulness itself. He focuses his attention on the way of mindfulness with diligence and comprehension; he perceives with mindfulness the way of his mindfulness. He then proceeds to the mindfulness of the four important objects of mindfulness. The four objects are: (1) the body, (2) the sensation, (3) the mind and (4) the dhamma. The monk following the way of mindfulness keeps his mind steadfastly on the body (kāya). He does so with diligence, comprehension and mindfulness; thereby he perceives the impermanent, insecure, soulless
and repulsive nature of the body. Similarly the monk keep his mind steadfastly on sensation (*Vedana*). He does so with diligence, comprehension and mindfulness; thereby he perceives the impermanent, insecure, soulless nature of sensation. He thus “keeps away covetousness and distress which will appear if he is not mindful of the five Khandha’s”.

Next, the monk steadfastly concentrates on the mind (*citta*); he keeps his mind on the mind with diligence, comprehension and mindfulness; thereby he perceives the impermanent, insecure and soulless nature of the mind; thus he keeps away covetousness and distress which will appear if the monk is not mindful of the five *khandhas*.

And lastly, the monk proceeds to the mindfulness of the fourth object, namely, *dhamma*. The monk keeps his mind steadfastly on the *dhamma*; he does so with diligence, comprehension and mindfulness’ thereby he perceives the impermanent, insecure and soulless nature of the *dhamma*; thus he keeps “away covetousness and distress which will appear if he is not mindful of the five *khandhas*”.

And now, the monk proceeds to the mindfulness of the eighth and the last step of the noble eightfold path. Here, he is mindful of concentration. As it has already been mentioned in the preceding chapter, right concentration (*Samādhi*) consists of four states of meditative absorptions (*jhānas*). The monk who is following the
Buddhist way and has detached himself from sensual pleasures and
demeritorious states of mind achieves and remains in the first state of
meditative absorption. This state has initial and sustained application
of the mind; it also has delightful satisfaction (pīţi) and bliss (śukha)
which are born of detachment from the hindrances (niyānapās).

Next, the monk by intensifying his concentration gets rid of
initial and sustained application of mind; he thereby achieves and
remains in the second state of meditative absorption. With this, the
monk experiences internal tranquility with delightful satisfaction and
bliss. This state is "born of one-pointedness of concentration"72.

Further, the monk detaches himself from delightful satisfaction;
he dwells in equanimity with mindfulness and clear comprehension;
here the monk experiences bliss in his mind and body. This is the
third state of meditative-absorption. The monk who attains it is "to be
praised by the Noble Ones as one who has equanimity and
mindfulness, one who abides in śukha"74.

And finally, the monk attains the fourth and final state of
meditative-absorption. In this state the monk dispels both delightful
satisfaction and bliss; he also overcomes both sadness and gladness;
thereby he experiences "a state of equanimity and absolute purity of
mindfulness, without pain or pleasure"78.

Thus the monk is mindful of the last step of the eightfold path,
namely, right concentration. With this, he comprehends the nature
and meaning of the noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering. The monk keeps his mind steadfastly on the nature of the fourth object, namely, \textit{dhamma}. He perceives the nature of \textit{dhamma} in himself and in others to be phenomena without a substance. Having more concentration, the monk perceives the cause and the actual arising of the \textit{dhamma}. He also comprehends the cause and actual disappearance of the \textit{dhamma}. He also perceives simultaneously both the actual appearance and disappearance of the \textit{dhamma} with their causes. He also perceives the truth that there is only \textit{dhamma} without substance. He is mindful of the fact that mindfulness of \textit{dhamma} is meant only for gaining insights (\textit{vipassana}) progressively; mindfulness is meant for gaining further mindfulness gradually stage by stage. Thus the monk gets detached from craving and wrong views; he remains without clinging to any of the five \textit{khandhas} that are continuously deteriorating. The Buddha said, “Bhikkhus, it is also in this way that the bhikkhu keeps his mind steadfastly on the four Noble Truths, perceiving their true nature”\textsuperscript{76}.

The Buddha says that whosoever practices the aforesaid four methods of steadfast mindfulness for a considerable length of time and intensity, he will certainly gain good benefits. The one who practices it for seven years, will gain the result of either \textit{arahata phala} or \textit{anāgāmi phala}. By gaining \textit{arahata phala}, the monk attains the state of \textit{arhatship}; he gains the knowledge of final emancipation in this very
existence. In case there is till an element of clinging in him, he will gain the benefit of anāgāmi phula which makes the monk an anāgāmini, "the state of non-return to the world of sense-existence". The monk who steadfastly practices the four methods of mindfulness even for seven months gains one of the two benefits, namely, arahata phala or anāgāmi phala. Let alone seven years or seven months, the one who steadfastly practices the four kinds of mindfulness even for seven days, will gain either of the two results, namely, arahata phala or anāgāmi phala. He will certainly become an arahat in this very existence. If not, he will surely become an anagami, who does not return to the world of sense-experience. The Buddha again declares thus: "Bhikkhus, this is the one and only way for the purification of the minds of beings, for overcoming sorrow and lamentation, for the complete destruction of physical pain and mental distress, for attainment of the noble (Āriya) Magga, and for the realization of Nibbāna. The only way is the practice of the four methods of steadfast mindfulness. Satipaṭṭhāna".

Thus, the Theravāda meditation as steadfast mindfulness is the most traditional and effective method. Gotama Buddha taught it to his disciples in the form of the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta. The Sutta is included both in the Middle Length Discourses and the Long Discourses of the Buddha. What we find in the Long Discourses is a little more
elaborate than the former. The content of the Sutta in both the Discourses is the same.

As it has already been mentioned, meditation as mindfulness is also known as Insight-meditation. Its aim is to tame and transform the mind. It is meant to liberate the mind from sorrow and ignorance. The Pali canon likens mindfulness to the way of taming a wild elephant. The process begins with tying a newly captured elephant to a post with a strong rope. The elephant begins to scream and trample; he pulls and pushes against the post for days. After a long struggle, the animal comes to realize that it cannot escape. Then it settles down calmly. Only then can we dispense with the post and handle the animal safely. We can also feed and train him for various tasks. Taming the animal is the first requirement for training him for useful work. And the Buddha has advocated mindfulness of the breath as the first step of taming the mind. Mindfulness of the breath is like the rope and the post with which and to which the elephant is firmly tied. Mindfulness of the breath makes the fluctuating mind a concentrated one. The concentrated mind alone is useful for the further mindfulness of the body, sensation, mind and the dhamma. It alone can overcome ignorance and suffering. "The tamed elephant who emerges from this process is a well-trained so also the concentrated mind can then be used for the exceedingly tough job of piercing the layers of illusion that obscure reality." 79.

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The Buddha begins the *vipassana* or steadfast mindfulness with breathing because the breath is easily and immediately available. The object of meditation should be cheap and portable. It should be such that it is conducive to liberate us from the bad states of mind. It should be able to free us from anger, greed and delusion. The Buddha felt that the breath has an intimate connection with the body and mind as a whole. Breath is a very common thing to all. It is always there with us. We go with it wherever we go. It is constantly available to us from birth to death. It covers the whole of our life. It represents the whole of our psycho-physical organism. "Breathing is a non-conceptual process, a thing that can be experienced directly without a need for thought. Furthermore, it is a very living process, an aspect of life that is in constant change. The breath moves in cycles? inhalation, exhalation, breathing in and breathing out. Thus, it is a miniature model of life itself."  

The Buddha has prescribed mindfulness of breathing to promote awareness of what is occurring in the present. Mindfulness of breathing is present-time awareness. In it, you look neither into the past nor the future. You leave the past breath behind and you do not look for the ending of it. We do not also look forward to the exhalation to follow. The meditation stays right there with what is actually taking place. The purpose of mindfulness is restraining the mind which is wandering like a monkey. The state that is aimed at is the one in
which we are aware of everything in our mind and life. And the mindfulness of the breath can be the best way to begin with. This is not an easy task, since our mind has accustomed to distraction and diffusion. Focusing attention on the breath needs an intense and a long practice. "This meditation is a process of retaining the mind. The state you are aiming for is one in which you are totally aware of everything that is happening in your own perceptual universe, exactly the way it happens, exactly when it is happening; total, unbroken awareness in present time. This is an increasingly high goal, and not to be reached all at once. It takes practice, so we start. We start by becoming totally aware of one small unit of time, just one single inhalation. And, when you succeed, you are on your way to whole new experience of life."

Vipassana-meditation aims at prolonging the fleeting moments of mindfulness. It can be intensified and sustained by regular practice. The other characteristics of vipassana-meditation are that it is non-judgmental. It is observation without criticism or condemnation. It is the ability of taking a balanced look at things. It is allowing the object of meditation to reveal its story. It is an observation in which things are understood exactly as they are in their states. It is also an unbiased approach to what we actually are. Mindfulness is an impartial watchfulness without taking sides. It does not allow the attitude of accepting the pleasant and rejecting the unpleasant states
of mind. "Mindfulness sees all experiences as equal, all thoughts as equal, all feelings as equal: Nothing is suppressed. Nothing is repressed. Mindfulness does not play favorites".\textsuperscript{82}

Mindfulness is non-conceptual concentration. It is not a process of thought not an intellectual play of opinions. It is not a process of theories or ideas. Mindfulness observes everything without labeling or categorizing them. It observes the phenomena as if it were occurring for the first time. Mindfulness is not even a process of analysis based on memory and reflection. "It is rather the direct and immediate experiencing of whatever is happening without the medium of thought".\textsuperscript{83}

Another important trait of mindfulness is that it is a non-egotistic awareness. It takes place without reference to the "I" or the "self". It is a pure seeing without the idea of the "me" or "mine". Mindfulness is an impersonal awareness of even the personal problems, for instance, pain in the body. Mindfulness is being aware of pain without a reference to the "I". The person who is mindful of his or her pain would never say 'I have a pain'. He or she would objectively observe it simply as a sensation of pain. He would say 'there is a sensation of pain' in the body. The truth that the "self" is a mental construct is at the basis of mindfulness. Mindfulness aims at the dissolution of the concept of the "self" of both persons and things. Nothing is a substantial entity. Nothing has an intrinsic being.
Everything is dependently arising and disappearing. And an adept in mindfulness perceives the phenomena as being devoid of the "self", as being impermanent and momentary. He sees them objectively without a subjective bias. The meditator here does not add anything to perception. There is neither subtraction nor enhancement of perception. He observes the phenomena without any distortion. "Mindfulness is participatory observation. The meditator is both a participant and an observer at one and the same time. In it one watches one's emotions or physical sensations one is feeling at that very same moment. Mindfulness is not an intellectual awareness. It is just awareness. The mirror-thought metaphor breaks down here. Mindfulness is objective, but it is not cold or unfeeling. It is the wakeful experience of life, an alert participation in the ongoing process of living".84

As it is evident from the foregoing exposition, steadfast mindfulness is the one and only way of perceiving the deepest truths of existence. In Pali, the three truths are called Anattā, Anicca and Dukkha. The Buddha never taught these truths as dogmas demanding blind faith and following. He wanted to show them as universal and self-evident truths. He discovered mindfulness as the best method of investigating into them. It is the surest way of demonstrating them to be self-evident and universal. It alone has the power to reveal the deepest level of reality. An ardent practitioner of steadfast mindfulness
will definitely see that all conditioned things are inherently impermanent that every worldly thing in the end is unsatisfying, and that there is only a process and no substance. He realizes that there is no ground for clinging, delusion and sorrow. He applies the method to every part of his psycho-physical organism. He also applies it to every part of the Buddha's teachings. He comprehends the truth of all phenomena and the teachings. He gradually becomes mature and wise. He overcomes the ugly states of mind like hatred, envy and jealousy. He becomes compassionate and kind. He attains equanimity of mind which is not affected by the vicissitudes of life. "This pure and unstained investigative awareness not only holds mental hindrances at bay, it lays bare their very mechanism and destroys them. Mindfulness neutralizes defilements in the mind. The result is a mind which remains unstrained and invulnerable, completely unaffected by the ups and downs of life."  

Thus steadfast mindfulness gives us both mundane and transcendent benefits. The initial application of it gives us some practical results. The sustained application of it gives us sublime results. It liberates us from the defilements of greed, lust and hatred. It liberates us from them totally and for ever by showing them as they actually are. It extinguishes them without a residue and prevents their arising and growth in future. The sublime benefits of sustained mindfulness are: seeing everything as a process which is in constant
transformation; being increasingly sensitive to the hindrances that conceal the true reality; being compassionate to every being both sentient and insentient; attainment of equanimity which is Nibbāna. All these benefits are simultaneous and co-extensive. Nibbāna is a state of clear and pure cognition which shows everything 'within' and 'without' as it really is. It is cognition devoid of grief due to illusion and ignorance. "In this state of perception, nothing remains the same for two consecutive moments. Everything is seen to be in constant transformation. All things are born, all things grow old and die. There are no exceptions. You awaken to the unceasing changes of your own life. You look around and see everything in flux, everything, everything, and everything. It is all rising and falling, intensifying and diminishing, coming into existence and passing away. All of life, every bit of it from the infinitesimal to the Indian Ocean, is in motion constantly. You perceive the universe as a great flowing river of experience. Your most cherished possessions are slipping away, and so is your own life. Yet this impermanence is no reason for grief. You stand there transfixed, staring at this instant activity and your response is wondrous joy. It is all moving, dancing and full of life".66
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