**THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTH THAT CAN LEAD ATTAINING ENLIGHTENMENT**

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**ABSTRACT**

All living beings seek happiness and long to be free from suffering. Buddhism provides a path to end suffering and attain peace. When the Buddha first achieved Enlightenment, his foremost Thought was to share his realization with others so they could transcend suffering. Understanding that suffering is a universal condition, he sought a way to guide all beings toward liberation. To fulfill this mission, the Buddha established the Sangha, a community of dedicated practitioners committed to preserving and spreading his teachings. The core of his message lies in recognizing suffering, understanding its causes, and following the Path to liberation that he discovered. The Sangha plays a vital role in ensuring that these teachings reach as many people and living beings as possible.

In the Theravāda tradition, the Sangha consists largely of those who have internalized the Buddha's Path to liberation and strive to share their wisdom. Their purpose is not only personal Enlightenment but also the guidance of others toward awakening. Through their efforts, countless individuals have come into contact with the Buddha's teachings and found relief from suffering. The presence of the Sangha provides support, wisdom, and encouragement, helping people navigate their own journey toward inner peace and Enlightenment. By following the Buddha's Path and learning from the Sangha, living beings can overcome suffering and experience true freedom. The Buddha's vision inspires those seeking wisdom, compassion, and peace.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Humans operate differently than other creatures because they have a thought and a heart. Perpetual crises have plagued people's emotional lives as a result of so much anxiety, wrath, hatred, and passionate love. Furthermore, problems concerning the value of life are highlighted, which is as pressing as the matter of food and clothing. People are astonished when they see unpleasant situations and shifting events in life, and they wonder who they are and what the genesis of such phenomena is. Why do all species exist, to kill each other, to watch such sadness? What is the meaning of life? How can people be joyful when they are filled with doubt and awe? The amount of dissatisfaction and doubt matches the amount of misery. How can people be happy when they are filled with doubt and awe? The amount of dissatisfaction and doubt matches the amount of misery. People can only be pleased when their dissatisfactions and queries are addressed. As a result, the only option is to comprehend.

 So, what function does Buddhism play in the transformation of suffering? What is true happiness, according to Buddhism? It is the end of suffering, or, to put it another way, pure happiness is the absence of sorrow, despair, and fear. The Buddha detailed the road to Nirvana enlightenment in the Tao. Truth is the truth about the Path to eliminating suffering and leading to ultimate bliss.

Buddhism, above all, always offers a solution to a fundamental human problem. Also, according to Buddhism, human existence implies an impermanent event: there is no happiness, and nothing can last forever, which is always suffering (Dukkha) and death. The first step of the Buddhist Path leading to awakening is to realize that this is the first problem in human life, to recognize that all is suffering - Dukkha. This is not a pessimistic view because while aware of the universality of suffering, Buddhism also offers a solution: the Path to end suffering. The Buddha himself characterized his teachings: "I teach only about suffering and how to end it.

**Keywords: four Noble Truth, Sentient Being,, eightfold Path, Enlightenment**

**The Nature of Modern Life**

Today, we live in a world where people have to work very hard physically and mentally. Without hard work, there is no place for people in modern society. Very often, keen competition is going on everywhere. One is trying to beat the others in every sphere of life, and human beings have no rest at all. The mind is the nucleus of life. Life will collapse when there is no real peace and rest in the mind. People naturally try to overcome their miseries by pleasing their senses: they drink, gamble, sing, and dance all the time, having the illusion that they are enjoying the real happiness of life. Sense stimulation is not the real way to have relaxation. The more we try to please the senses through sensual pleasures, the more we will become slaves to the senses. There will be no end to our craving for satisfaction. The real way to relax is to calm the senses by controlling everything. When the mind is fully controlled and purified, it will be free from mental disturbances it can see many things which others cannot see with their naked eyes. Ultimately, we can attain our salvation and find peace and happiness[[1]](#footnote-1).

The Human Being is the highest fruit on the tree of evolution. It is for the individual to realize their position in existence and understand the true meaning of his life. The purpose of life is to achieve the end of suffering or unsatisfactoriness.

To know the purpose of life, one first has to observe it through one's experience and insight. Then, one will discover its true meaning for oneself. Guidelines can be given, but one must create the necessary conditions for the arising of realization oneself.

There are several prerequisites to the discovery of the purpose of life. First, you must understand the nature of human life. Next, you keep your mind calm and peaceful by adopting religious practices. When these conditions are met, the answer you seek will come like the gentle rain from the sky.

**Understanding the Nature of Life**

Most people dislike facing the facts of life and prefer to lull themselves into a false sense of security by dreaming and imagining. They mistake the shadow for the substance. They fail to realize that life is uncertain, but that death is certain. One way of understanding life is to face and understand death, which is nothing more than a temporary end to a temporary existence. Many people do not even like to hear of the word 'death'. They forget that death will come, whether they like it or not. Recollections on death with the right mental attitude can give a person courage, calmness, and insight into the nature of existence.

Besides understanding death, we need a better understanding of our life. We live a life that does not always proceed as smoothly as we would like. Very often, we face problems and difficulties. We should not be afraid of them because the penetration into the very nature of these

problems and difficulties can provide us with a deeper insight into life. The worldly happiness provided by wealth, luxury, and respectable positions in life which most people seek is an illusion because it is impermanent. The fact that the sale of sleeping pills and tranquilizers, admissions to mental hospitals, and suicide rates have increased in proportion to modern material progress is enough testimony that we have to go beyond worldly, material pleasure to seek real happiness. This does not mean that Buddhism is a negative religion condemning the acquisition of wealth. Far from it, the Buddha has expressly encouraged hard work to gain wealth because He said that wealth can give a person the opportunity to lead a decent life and to do meritorious Action. What He discouraged was an attachment to that wealth and the belief that wealth alone can bring ultimate happiness.

**The Need for a Religion**

To understand the real purpose of life, a person should choose and follow an ethical-moral system that discourages evil deeds, encourages good, and enables the purification of the mind. For simplicity, we shall call this system 'a religion'.

Religion is an expression of the striving of human beings: it is their greatest source of power, leading them onwards to self-realization. It can transform a person with negative characteristics into someone with positive qualities. Buddhism, which civilized the greater part of the East long before, is still a vital force, and, in this age of scientific knowledge is likely to extend and strengthen its influence. It does not, at any point, come into conflict with modern knowledge, but embraces and transcends all of it in a way that no other system of Thought has ever done before or is ever likely to do. Westerners seek to conquer and strive to attain harmony with nature and enhance spiritual satisfaction.

Religion teaches a person how to calm down the senses and make the heart and mind peaceful. The secret of calming down the senses is eliminating desire, which is the root of our disturbances. We need to have contentment. The more people crave their property, the more they have to suffer. The property does not give happiness. A great many rich people in the world today are suffering from numerous physical and mental problems. With all the money they have, they cannot buy a solution to their problems. Yet, the poorest people who have learned to be content may enjoy their lives far more than the wealthiest people.

**The Life of The Buddha: A Little Background**

Siddhartha Gautama of Shakya, later known as the Buddha, was born in modern-day Nepal near the Indian border. Born into a wealthy royal family, the Buddha was born and raised in worldly luxury. Despite his father's attempts to shield him from life's ugliness, he ventured out beyond the castle walls one day and encountered three aspects of life: the old, the sick, and the dead. Each of these experiences troubled him and made him question the meaning and transience of life and its pleasures.

After this, he encountered an ascetic who, by choice, lived a life renouncing the world's pleasures. Even while he was utterly deprived of life's comforts, his eyes shined with contentment. These shocking experiences made Buddha abandon his comfortable lifestyle in search of greater meaning in life. It was during his time practicing extreme forms of self-denial that Buddha discovered the "Middle Path"

During his life, he had experienced intensive pleasure and extreme deprivation, but he found that neither extreme brought one to true understanding. He then practiced meditation through deep concentration under a bodhi tree and found Enlightenment. He began teaching the Four Noble Truths to others to help them achieve transcendent happiness and peace of mind through the knowledge and practice known today as Buddhism.

**The Four Noble Truths & The Eightfold Path to Enlightenment**

**The First Noble Truth**

The First Noble Truth deals with dukkha, which is in need of a better English equivalent and is rendered by suffering or sorrow. As a feeling, dukkha means something that is difficult to endure. As an abstract truth, dukkha is used in the sense of 'contemptible' (du) and 'emptiness'. The world rests on suffering hence it is contemptible. The world is devoid of any reality hence it is empty or void. Dukkha, therefore, means contemptible void. Average men are only surface-seers. An Ariya sees things as they truly are. To Ariya all life is suffering and he finds no real happiness in this world which deceives humanity with illusory pleasures. Material Real happiness is found within and is not to be defined in terms of wealth, power, honors, or conquests. If worldly possessions are forcibly or unjustly obtained, misdirected, or even viewed with attachment, they will be a source of pain and sorrow for the possessors.

Ordinarily, sensual pleasures are the highest and only happiness to an average person. There is no doubt a momentary happiness in the anticipation, gratification, and recollection of such fleeting material pleasures, but they are illusory and temporary. According to the Buddha, non-attachment or transcending material pleasures is a more incredible bliss.

In brief, this composite body itself is a cause of suffering.

This First Truth of suffering, which depends on this so-called being and various aspects of life, is to be carefully analyzed and examined. This examination leads to a proper understanding of oneself as one really is. Real happiness is found within and is not to be defined in terms of wealth, power, honors, or conquests. If worldly possessions are forcibly or unjustly obtained, misdirected, or even viewed with attachment, they will be a source of pain and sorrow for the possessors.

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I know what should be known, what should be cultivated I have cultivated, what should be abandoned that have I get to go. Hence O Brahmin I am Buddha- the Awakened One[[2]](#footnote-2). According to the Buddha non-attachment or the transcending of material pleasures is a greater bliss.

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**The Second Noble Truth**

The Second Noble Truth of the Four Noble Truths deals with the cause of suffering.

In the Dhammacakkapavattana- Sutta, Gautam Buddha says that:

Idam kho pana bhikkhave dukkhasamudayam ariyasaccam yā yam taṇhā ponobbhavikā nandi rāga sahagatā tatrā tatrabhinandinī seyyathidam kāmataṇhā bhavataṇhā vibbava taṇ̣hā[[4]](#footnote-4). It means that it is craving that gives rise to fresh rebirth and, bound up with pleasure and lust, now here and there, finds ever-fresh delight. There is the sensual craving, the craving for existence, and the craving for self-annihilation.

The brief description of craving given in the discourse runs thus: "And what is the cause of suffering? It is craving that causes rebirth, accompanied by delight and lust and finding pleasure in this or that, namely craving for sense pleasures, being, and non-being. Thus, The cause of suffering is none other than craving. In the first discourse of the Buddha, while describing the Second Noble Truth, craving is explained with three epithets together with its three aspects, which cover the entire range of human suffering in the cycle of births and deaths. my mind has attained the unconditioned. Achieved is this end of craving[[5]](#footnote-5).

The causal link between suffering and craving is a discovery of the Buddha to search for a way out of the conditioned relatedness of suffering and craving. As the Buddha has shown, when the cause of craving ceases to be, the resultant suffering ceases to be simultaneous.

**The Third Noble Truth**

The Third Noble Truth is the Cessation of Suffering. The first sermon is described as the cessation of craving without residue and, with dispassion giving up, complete abandonment. Regarding the Four Noble Truths, it is stated that the Buddha gained the knowledge that the First Noble Truth is to be comprehended entirely, and already comprehended it fully . The Second is to be abandoned, and already abandoned; the Third is to be realized, and already realized; and The Fourth is to be developed, and already developed (Bhavitam)[[6]](#footnote-6).

**Nibbana as the Cessation of Suffering.**

The cessation of suffering by destroying craving, the root cause, is the objective of Buddhist training, which culminates in the realization of Nibbana, the Supreme Bliss. In the brief introduction of the Third Noble Truth found in the first sermon, the total destruction of craving is emphasized with four terms of similar import, signifying the relation between craving and suffering. The uniqueness of the Buddhist approach lies in the fact of realizing the transcendental truth, individually, with one's own personal effort. Hence, rejecting the view of vicarious salvation, it asserts that dhamma is 'to be realized individually by the wise with their personal effort'. As Buddhism does not maintain any kind of concept involving a theory of the soul to be saved or an almighty creator god who acts as the savior of suffering humanity, the cessation of suffering is to be achieved by practicing the Path enunciated by the Buddha.

Although the five senses cannot perceive Nibbana and lies in obscurity in so far as the average man is concerned, the only straight Path that leads to Nibbana has been explained by the Buddha with all the necessary details and is laid open to all. The Goal is now clouded, but the method of achievement I perfectly clear and when that achievement is realized, the Goal is as clear as "the moon freed from clouds."[[7]](#footnote-7)

**The fourth Noble Truth (Road Map to Nibbana)**

The Buddha, addressing the monks, said:

"There is a Middle Path for abandoning craving and hatred, giving vision, giving knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to Enlightenment, to Nibbana, and what is that Middle Path? It is just this Noble Eightfold Path."

The best Path is the eightfold Path. The best of truth is four noble sayings: non-attachment is the best of states, and the best of bipeds is the Seeing One.[[8]](#footnote-8)

The Noble Eightfold Path, or the Middle Path, consists of eight factors. It is to be noted that although it is called a path, it is not to be taken as a gradual path, giving a series of steps. The factors of the Path are interrelated and to be practiced simultaneously. Those factors are mutually inclusive and mutually supportive. The Path is described in terms of three aggregates consisting of morality, concentration, and wisdom, but that does not mean that those three aggregates are included in the Noble Eightfold Path. It is to be noted that the Noble Eightfold Path includes the three aggregates of morality, concentration, and wisdom. Vaisakha has asked the question of the Noble Eightfold Path's position concerning three aggregates from nun Dhammadinna:

"Lady, are the three aggregates included in the Noble Eightfold Path, or is the Noble Eightfold Path included in the three aggregates?"

The Bhikkhuni replied:

"The Noble Eightfold, friend Vaisakha do not include the three aggregates, but the three aggregates include the Noble Eightfold Path."[[9]](#footnote-9)

As to how it is included in the three aggregates of practice are shown below.

The Noble Eightfold Path and Three Aggregates

1. Right Understanding

2. Right Thought

3. Right Speech

4. Right Action

5. Right Livelihood

6. Right Effort

7. Right Mindfulness

8. Right Concentration

The three factors, Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Livelihood, are included in the aggregate of morality. The last three, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration, are included in the aggregate of concentration. Correct Understanding and Right Thought are the first two factors in the aggregate of wisdom.

**Right Understanding** is sometimes translated into English as Right View. It is explained as the knowledge of the Four Noble Truths: Suffering, Cause of Suffering, Cessation of Suffering, and Noble Eightfold Path. The entire Sammaditthi-sutta of the Majjima-nikaya is devoted to explaining Right Understanding. The sutta was delivered by Thera Sariputta to a group of monks who wanted to have

a thorough understanding of the subject. Primarily, two external and internal factors are conducive to the right understanding. They are:

1. Hearing from others and

2. Thoughtful reflection.

Hearing from others may include knowing from other sources of information as well. When one comes to know the dhamma by any source of information, he is asked to reflect thoughtfully on what he came to know. The exercise of thoughtful reflection leads one to understanding. The information one receives about dhamma is Food for Thought, which one has to subject to careful scrutiny and analysis. It is the intellectual grasp of what one has come to know through any means of knowledge. It amounts to the understanding of the real nature of the phenomenal existence.

It is stated that when one understands that body, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness are impermanent, he is led to the Right Understanding. Then he is convinced of the efficacy of moral causation in dealing with actions of moral significance and their results, together with the knowledge of correct understanding of the Four Noble Truths. The knowledge of this stage is called 'knowing accordingly' because the understanding at this stage is still mundane Right Understanding and not yet free from defilements. The penetrative knowledge of Right Understanding appears only when one realizes one or the other of the four stages of sanctification: Stream- winning, Once-returning, Non-returning, and Arahanthood.[[10]](#footnote-10) The The knowledge of Right Understanding at those stages is called supra-mundane or transcendental Right Understanding. The mundane Right Understanding comes under the purview of Noble Ones. This stage of understanding is at the highest level and unshakable.

**Right, Thought** has three main constituents: renunciation or giving up sensual enjoyment; developing thoughts of loving kindness and goodwill without any kind of anger and hatred; and practicing amity and concord, abstaining from violence.

The thoughts must be free from lust and craving, which hanker after pleasures of the senses. Buddhism eschews any kind of violence. Hence, it is the development of loving kindness and non-violence towards all living beings. This shows that in addition to the practice of some of the other factors, the Path, Right Thought becomes meaningful in the context of society.

**Right Speech** is the practice of correct speech, which amounts to avoiding lying and adhering to truth; abstaining from tale-bearing or back-biting paves the Path for dissension and disunity. To promote social harmony, one must abstain from using harsh language while cultivating courteous and gentle words in communication; and should avoid irresponsible, vain talk such as gossiping and speak only what is meaningful and conducive to one's and others' welfare.

Right Action deals with the abstinence of three kinds of bodily misconduct: taking life, theft and misappropriation, and sexual misconduct. The mundane **Right Action** produces wholesome worldly results, whereas the practice of transcendental Right Action, avoiding those misbehaviors altogether with a pure mind intent upon the Path, contributes to deliverance. Right Action guarantees the fundamental human rights of the right to live, the right to possess, and the right to maintain sexual relations within the confines of legally permitted boundaries.

Women under the protection of a father, mother, brother, sister or relatives, married women, women under the ban of the king, engaged women, and women who are the temporary wives of others are mentioned as the women to be avoided in sexual intercourse.

**Right Livelihood** is to reject the wrong kinds of Livelihood and live by the right means of Livelihood. Wrong Livelihood means gaining a living by earning wealth by devising ways and means that are detrimental to sentient beings. In this connection, five kinds of trade are usually mentioned in the text. They are: trading in arms, human beings, flesh, intoxicating drinks, and poisons.

**Right Effort** is the Four Great Efforts. It enjoins putting forth effort consciously in four ways: to prevent the arising of unwholesome thoughts that have not yet arisen, to abandon unwholesome thoughts that have already arisen; to develop wholesome thoughts that have not yet arisen, and to maintain wholesome thoughts that have already arisen by one who practices the Path of Emancipation.

**Right Mindfulness** deals with the four kinds of contemplation: contemplation of the body, sensation of mind, and mind-objects. It is said in the Satipațțhana-sutta, "the disciple dwells in contemplation of the body, of sensation, of mind and mind-objects, ardent, clearly conscious and attentive, putting away, worldly greed and grief." This refers to the setting up of mindfulness in four ways. The practice given in the discourse leads to purity, to the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, to the end of pain and grief, to the entering upon the correct Path, and to realizing Nibbana.

**Right Concentration** is the attainment of meditative absorptions. Five hindrances obstruct the Path of deliverance. Through meditative absorptions, one can overcome the five hindrances: desire for sensual pleasure, ill-will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and skeptical doubt. When one attains the first meditative absorption, these hindrances are destroyed by the psychic factors of the meditative absorption. In the Visuddhimagga, ācariya Buddhaghosa says that kusalacittekaggatanama samādhi.[[11]](#footnote-11)It means that the one- pointedness of pure mind is concentration

thus, the desire for sensual pleasure is destroyed by one-pointedness of the mind, ill will by joy, sloth, and torpor by initial application, restlessness and worry by happiness, and skeptical doubt by sustained application. In the Angguttara-nikaya, the nature of five hindrances is illustrated in an alluring simile. Desire for sensual pleasure is like colored water; ill-will is compared to boiling water; sloth and torpor to water covered with moss and weeds; restlessness and worry to water tossed and turbulent due to wind; and skeptical doubt to muddy water[[12]](#footnote-12). Just as in any one of these instances one cannot see one's reflection, the mind overwhelmed by the hindrances will not penetrate things as they really are.

The eight steps of the noble eight Path should be followed by the person who seeds the real happiness in his life. Without the proper pratice of these eight steps,one cannot achieve the holy stage of salvation. Hence, the pratice of the noble eightfold Path is essential for establishing an ideal society.

**CONCLUSION:**

The doctrine of the four noble truths is the ocean of wisdom. It teaches how to remove craving, giving birth to many sufferings. It develops wisdom, sila , morality, and concentration. Wisdom, morality, and concentration are interconnected to each other. Without the practice of wisdom, morality cannot be developed; without the practice of morality, concentration cannot be developed; and with the proper practice of morality and concentration, wisdom is developed. It can be said that they are helpful and complementary in each other's development. Wisdom gives practical knowledge, which helps us understand the real nature of things. It helps to develop the proper understanding and Thought, which is essential for the practice of morality. The practice of morality develops different kinds of moral values, which help to achieve a happy and peaceful human life. The practice of concentration develops the purification of the mind. Having practiced it, one's mind can be free from all kinds of mental defilements. Having practiced wisdom, morality, and concentration, one can be free from craving and can achieve the stage of salvation, the final Goal of human life.

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