

## The Path of Liberation: Nibbāna

Jeet Baudh,  
University of Delhi, Delhi

The prince of Kapilvatthū and son of the King Suddhodhan and Queen Mahāmāyā, Siddhārtha Gautama studiously meditated variously to get the solutions of the problems of sufferings faced by human beings under the kind guidance of Acāryā Alārakālama and Acāryā Rāmputta Udaraka and some other ascetics and hermits<sup>1</sup> for a long period of about six years and there after he came to village Senāni near Uruvella, presently Bodhagayā where Sujātā, a villager's daughter served him with milk rice (Pāyas) in a golden bowl. After having taken milk rice he sat under the ficus religiosa (PEEPAL Tree) on bank of the river Niranjanā with strong determination and he vowed that unless and until he has not achieved the supreme knowledge, he will not leave this place whether his blood, skin, sinew, flesh and bones may dry up in his body<sup>2</sup>. After all on Veshaka's full moon day he achieved perfect supreme enlightenment. He spends his first week under the Bodhi tree in deep meditation. The second week was spent at Animeshlochana Chaitya on looking the Bodhi Tree in great gratitude without closing his eyes for all seven days. Third week was spent at Ratnācakramana or Jewelled Ambulatory in walking eighteen steps to and fro. This event is marked there with a high platform where eighteen feet marks were raised over there as of lotus flowers. The fourth week was spent at Ratnāgarha Cetyā in meditation where he seen the vision of future. The fifth week was spent under Ajpāla Nigrodh Tree and he preached the law of equality to the Brāhmana. Sixth week was spent in meditation at Mucalinda Pond where the pond serpent king give protection to him from a violent storm by coiling himself around the body of the Buddha seven times and kept his hood over the head of the Buddha and the last and seventh week was spent by him at Rājyaratna tree where two merchants namely Bhāllika and Tapassū of Utkal Pardesh met and served him with honey made food<sup>3</sup>. This was his first meal, after achieving perfect enlightenment and the Sujata's milk-rice. Buddha spent seven weeks at different places wondering and meditating at Bodh Gayā.

Brahmā, the king of celestial beings, senses through his clairvoyance that Prince Siddārtha Gautama achieved perfect supreme enlightenment on the earth in Jambūdvīpa and now already seven weeks passed, still he is not share his knowledge to any human being. Brahmā descended on the earth and made prostrations to the Buddha and requests the enlightened Buddha, "Please do not remain silent and preach Dharma for the benefits of all sentient beings." The unhappiness of the sentient being can be overcome through practicing vipassana, the practice of four noble truths through spiritual means. The practice of four noble truths is most important today to come out of suffering, same as at time of Buddha.

Buddha, The perfect enlightened senses through his clairvoyance that his teachers Achāryā Alārakālam and Achāryā Rāmputta Uderaka were passed away whom he fathom to

---

<sup>1</sup> The Buddha and His Dhamma By Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

<sup>2</sup> The Buddha and His Dhamma By Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

<sup>3</sup> BuddhaGaya Temple Its History By-Dipak K Barua

received the teachings well in due course and effectively. He then senses through clairvoyance for the five former sincere ascetic companions who were helped him well during his meditation period. He senses that they were at Isipattan, Migdaya (Deer Park) near Varānasi. After sensing their presence at Migdaya, he advanced towards the Isipattan where he gave his first ever sermon after enlightenment to the group of five ascetics namely Kaccāyana, Māhānāma, Bhadāyī, Vappī and Asjī. This discourse is considered variously as “The Turning of wheel of Dhamma (Pāli: The Dhammacakkrapavattana Sutta)” or “The Turning of Wheel of Life” and also known as “Dependent origination”<sup>1</sup>. This one sutta contains all that is necessary teachings for understanding the Dhamma and also leading to enlightenment (Arhant). Even though it is quite simple and divided into four noble truths that are grouped into three aspects with four insights each that is twelve all insights/cycles. It is the tool to understand the eight fold path called “Paticcasamuppāda sutta” or in pāli - “*Ye Dhammā hetu pabhavā tesam hetum Tathagato yāha, tesam ca yo nirodha evam vādi mahāsermano ti*”<sup>2</sup> and it helps us to understand the suffering. This is most profound teaching of the Buddha.

“The Dependent origination” has twelve links as such that one is dependent to the next one to originate that. These links are Ignorance (Avijjā), Contaminated Karma (Saṃkhāra), Consciousness (Viññāna), Name and Form (Nāma –Rūpa), Sense sources (saḍayātan), Contact (Phassa), Feeling (Vedanā), Craving (Tanhā), Grasping (Upādan), Becoming (Bhava), Birth (Jāti) and Aging and Death (Jarā-maram). Similarly the twelve links are reverse in the nature of the above. If the process of the wheel is reverse than one can achieved enlightenment (Nibbāna)<sup>3</sup>.

The four noble truths are not so easy to understand but a little bit difficult to practice and meditate upon. This is quite essence to practice a lifelong ongoing attitude vigilantly and provide the lifetime examination in context of miseries and successfully helping in renunciation of miseries. This is the most fundamental and important principle of Buddha to rid of human miseries. This is the well established process to identify suffering, practice over that and the path of leading to cessation of misery. The cessation can be achieved by actual practice of the four noble truths, never by mere cramming all that and chanting all the time or discussion with other colleagues.

The practice of four noble truths is kept alive worldwide in Buddhism and by the people hungry for inner peace from the time of Buddha by the teacher –disciple’s tradition of learning (by spiritual Guru and disciple) descended directly from Buddha.

The four noble truths are:--

---

<sup>1</sup> The Four Noble Truths by Ven.Ajahn Sumedho

<sup>2</sup> The Blaze of Non –Dual Bodhicittas- Geshe Dorji Damdul La, Tibet House

<sup>3</sup> The Blaze of Non--Dual Bodhicittas- Geshe Dorji Damdul La, Tibet House

1. The Noble truth of suffering or misery ( Dukkha).
2. The Noble Truth of cause or origin of the Suffering (Dukkha - samudaya)
3. The Noble Truth of the cessation or end of suffering. (Dukkha –nirodha)
4. The Noble Truth of the path or way leading to the ending or cessation of suffering.  
(Dukkha-Nirodha Gāmini Paṭipadā)

(Digha Nikaya, Sutta 16 - Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta)

1. The first Noble truth -Suffering

*The first noble truth is suffering. The Buddha defined suffering /misery as such – Birth, sickness, aging and death all are suffering. Disassociation from the beloved ones and association with dislike ones are suffering. Not getting what one wants is the suffering. In concise all the five aggregates affected by the clinging are suffering.*

Suffering is the common to all human irrespective of country, colour, clan , caste, sex, size and religion.

2. The second Noble Truth-cause of suffering

*The second noble truth is origin or cause of suffering and that the cause of suffering /misery is craving (Tanhā). Craving is of three kinds-(1) Craving for sense of pleasure (Kāma Tanhā )*

*(2) Craving for becoming (Bhava Tanhā) and (3) Craving for ceasing or get rid of becoming (Vibhava Tanhā)*

3. The third Noble Truth-the cessation of suffering

*The third noble truth is cessation or ending of misery. The relinquishing or renouncing of misery for Ever by abandoning the craving.*

4. The fourth Noble Truth- the path of cessation leading to relinquishing of suffering

*The fourth Noble Truth is the way leading to get rid of suffering or the path of cessation of misery. This is the eight fold noble path –covered under the first aspect: Moral Commitment (Sila) - (1) the perfect speech (Sammā Vācā), (2) The perfect Action (Sammā Kamma), (3) The perfect Livelihood (sammā ājiva). Under the second aspect: Meditation or Concentration ( Smādhi) - (4) the perfect effort ( sammā vayāma) ,(5) the perfect mindfulness( sammā sati ) and (6) the perfect concentration ( sammā Samādhi) and under the third aspect –Widom (paññā ) - the perfect understanding (sammā diṭṭhi) and the perfect aspiration ( sammā sankappa).<sup>1</sup>*

( Samyutta Nikaya LVI,11)

The Four Noble Truths have Three aspects grouped with four insights each:-

This is the pattern of the three groups of all the four noble truths. One can see this aspect is in terms of Pāli words- Pariyati, Paṭipatti and. Pativadha The Pariyati stands for identification of four noble truths such as this is suffering by practice and theoretical knowledge of suffering.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Four Noble Truths by Ven. Ajahn Simedho

Paṭipatti is the actual practice to cessation of the suffering . Both are most important and beneficial for cessation of misery and Pativedha is the result of the practice<sup>1</sup>.

1. The teaching on four noble truths relating to IDENTIFICATION (Pariyati )
2. The Teaching on four noble truths relating to PRACTICE ( Paṭipatti )
3. The Teaching on the four nobles truths relating to the RESULTS (Pativedha)<sup>2</sup>

1. The teaching on the four noble truths relating to the identification:-

This is just the recognition of the four noble truths that is it and nothing else. This is not to make anything grand. That is the basic insight to identify the first noble truth. It is simply to acknowledge an important aspect of the four noble truths with equanimity (Upekkhā Bhāva)- and not in a habitual way.

1. This is the Noble truth of suffering or there is suffering.
2. This is the Noble truth of cause of suffering or there is cause / origin of suffering.
3. This is the Noble truth of cessation of suffering or there is a cessation or end of suffering.
4. This is the Noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering or there is the path leading to the relinquishing of suffering.

2. The teaching on the four noble truths relating to the practice:-

This is to understand the four noble truths and practice over them whether these are of any form of suffering -physical, mental or vocal. The truths are really accepted rather than just to react over it. When this is being actually looked at then being accepted, really hold and embraced.

1. The Noble truth of suffering is to be identified or to be acknowledged properly.
  2. The Noble truth of cause of suffering is to be eliminated /to be abandoned or to be relinquished.
  3. The Noble truth of cessation of suffering is to be actualised / to be attained or to be substantiated.
  4. The Noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering is to be meditated Upon or concentrating upon (Vippassanā meditation).
3. The teaching on the four noble truths relating to results:-

1. Although the noble truth of suffering is to be identified, there is nothing to be

---

<sup>1</sup> The Discourse on Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta By S.N. Goenka

<sup>2</sup> The Four Noble Truths By Ven.Ajahn Sumedho

Identified or acknowledged.

2. Although the noble truth of cause of suffering is to be eliminated /to be abandoned, there is nothing to be eliminated /to be abandoned/ to be relinquished.
3. Although the noble truth of cessation of suffering is to be actualised /to be attained , there is nothing to be actualised /to be attained or to be substantiated.
4. Although the noble truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering is to be meditated upon there is nothing to be meditated upon or to be concentrated (Vipassanā meditation).

There are various kind of concentrations (Samādhi ) are in practice worldwide in Buddhism. One of them and the most popular is vipassanā based on the Four Noble Truths or cause and effect theory ( hetu Parbhava) . Vipassana meditation is particularly based on observation of sensation inside as well as over the body. There are also various stages in this practice. Vipassana meditation is practiced in two stages. First anāpānā, the practice of awareness towards respiration between nostril and upper lip constantly without any disturbance in the mind and also without any control over breath and mind. This practice will be observed naturally. Coming breath will be observed as coming and going breath as going ,similarly short breath as short and longer breath as longer. The breath goes as subtle, subtler and subtlest the same may be observed as such as it is. This practice is paripatti. As the practice proceed further properly piercingly and penetratingly and concentration going ascending and observed that nothing to be identified, nothing to be eliminating, nothing to be abandon and nothing to be meditating upon . The concentration of the mind and matter phenomenon as such is because both mind and matter are related to respiration. During this process a great stock of accumulated impurities insides were melted out. Impurities are always inside and not outside. Similarly purity is existed inside and not outside of a things. For example impurities are removed from dirty water and purity comes out from inside after distillation of water. Impurities vaporized out from water. It should not sought from outside. Similarly suffering eliminated and then nothing to be remain for meditation and the person become pure one , ARHATA.

The Practice of meditation helps with piercingly and penetratingly divide and disintegrate the emotions into the different stages with body( Kāyā), sensation ( Vedanā), mind( citta) and emotions , mental content (dhamma) until and unless observe nothing<sup>1</sup>. To the live witnessing the reality of the body and sensation within body, mind and mental content within mind. No perception and imagination involved in all stages of witnesses rather than fully awareness directly with wisdom. The actual sensations are directly observed pertaining to mind and matter. The truth intellectual knowledge give an inspiration and guidance for the practice of the meditation working with respiration and the actual experience give perfect results. The reality of the moment of passing of breath as such as it is with awareness for a long period day and night continuously except deep sleep. To concentrate the mind over breath passed

---

<sup>1</sup> The Discourse on Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta By S.N. Goenka and  
Mahāsatiṭṭhāna by S.N. Goenka ,Vipassana Research Institute

moment to moment between nostril and upper lips or otherwise observe the sensation inside as well as over the body or both simultaneously. Mind has the nature of wandering every moment. As it moves and the moment as soon as you release the fact, concentrate over sensation or actual respiration. Don't be disappointed or despaired but just accept the truth and begin to work more efforts seriously and diligently continuously remaining equanimous. The practice of meditation is done very diligently with awareness of wisdom. The complete mind and matter contents are wavelets and wavelets and just nothing or empty. These stages of are in the nature of impermanence and suffering melted out. The whole mind and matter dissolve into subtle waves, wavelets and reached point of complete dissolution. All Saṃkhāra are suffering and impermanent. Then the reality about this "I" or "me" or "mine" or "myself" goes crystal clear that these are only words of using daily life. These are just tools in conversation of day today life and nothing else. There is no 'I' which represented the mind or matter / body. These are only mind and matter phenomena that constantly used for interaction and influence to each other. This 'I' becomes clearly nothing or empty at the experiential level. This mind –matter structure possess not any 'I' . Thus impermanence (aniccā), suffering (dukkha) and egolessness (annatta) <sup>1</sup>should apply for all irrespective their caste, colour, creed, country, sex, rich or poor and merely a constant interaction of mind and matter phenomena which developed out of ignorance, enormous grasping and craving. This false ego 'I' or ignorance brings nothing except suffering. This is the fundamental phenomena of self ignorance which causes suffering. The law of nature is so crystal clear that after removing ignorance , observe the impermanence through wisdom and there is nothing as such of 'I', 'my', 'me', or 'myself' which remains with apparent truth and that not be understood with the ultimate truth.

*The Buddha does not wash the negativity of beings;  
Nor does He remove their miseries by His hands;  
His spiritual realisations are not transferred to them;  
It is by teaching the truth of suchness, that beings are liberated.*<sup>2</sup>

## Notes

Buddha Nature ( Tathagata Grabha ) :- Buddha means awakened , fully awakened , anybody who is fully awakened that person is known as Buddha. That seed of the awakening is known as Buddha Nature. Everybody have the same potential to achieve the Buddha Nature without any discrimination of age, sex, education, religion, colour, country, caste and creed. It is the reality.

The craft - artist make the idol of Buddha from stone after removing extra or impure contents of the stone. The Buddha idol is within the stone. So is the nature of sentient beings that both purity and impurity exists inside, not outside. Impurity emitted then there after remains pure Buddha nature .

References:-

---

<sup>1</sup> The Dhammapad, A translators Guide By Dr. K.T.S. Sarao

<sup>2</sup> Discourse on Four Noble Truths – Nalanda Diploma Course By Ven. Geshe Dorji Damdul La

1. The Four Noble Truths by Ven. Ajahn Sumedho, Amravati Publications, Amravati Buddhist Centre, Buddha Dharma Inc. Web site: [www.buddhanet.net](http://www.buddhanet.net)
2. Discourse on Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta by S.N.Goenka, Vipassana Research Institute, Igatapuri , Maharashtra, India
3. Discourse on Four Noble Truths by Ven. Geshe Dorji Damdul la, Nalanda Diploma Course, Tibet House, Delhi, India.
4. The Noble Eight Fold Path by Manly P Hall, Pilgrims Publication, Varanasi, India.
5. The Dhammapada, A translators Guide by Dr. KTS Sarao, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers pvt. Ltd. Delhi
6. The Buddha and His Dhamma by B.R. Ambedkar, Buddha Bhumi Publication
7. The Blaze of Non Dual Bodhicittas , Geshe Dorji Damdul, Tibet House , New
8. Buddha Gaya Temple Its History by Dipak K Barua , Bodhgaya Temple Manadement Committee, Bodhgaya, India
9. Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta by S.N.Goenka, Vipassana Research Institute, Igatapuri, Maharashtra, India