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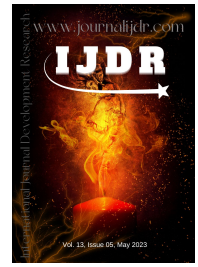
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ANALYSIS OF THE WAY LEADS TO TRUTH IN THE FOURTH NOBLE TRUTH (CATTĀRI ARIYASACCĀNI) IN BUDDHISM

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ABSTRACT

Buddhism is a way of life that was first articulated by its namesake, the Buddha. His teachings were focused entirely on relieving the torment that sentient creatures experience. The teachings are not to escape from life but to help us relate to ourselves and the world as thoroughly as possible. Of these teachings, the Four Noble Truths (Cattāri Ariyasaccāni) are thought to have been the foundation of Buddhism.

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INTRODUCTION

The teachings core of Buddha is *Cattāri Ariyasaccāni* or the Four Noble Truths, especially *Cattāri Ariyasaccāni* (Fourth Noble Truths) which is the path leading us to refrain from doing those things that cause suffering for ourselves and others. On this point, we need to have a clear understanding that there is a connection between the order in which the Four Noble Truths are taught and the ways in which they are cultivated. It is important for a person to engage in the practice of the Buddhist path in order to arrive at realizations that are founded on that practice. In brief, Buddhism can be understood as both a scientific study of suffering and a practical approach to its removal. To a large extent, it is concerned with people, or more specifically, in solidarity with all sentient creatures who are caught in the hamster wheel of need and craving. Therefore, it can be said that the pinnacle of achievement that can be attained via practical tradition in Buddhism. In general and the Four Noble Truths in private is liberation from ignorance or attaining wisdom.

The Teaching of the Four Noble Truths

In Buddhism, (*Cattāri Ariyasaccāni*) or The Four Noble Truths mentioned in Sanskrit 'catvāri āryasatyāni'; and the Pāli translated by 'cattāri ariyasaccāni' is considered one of the Buddha's core teachings, and also the foundation of the Buddhist philosophy and thought, leading people to peacefulness and enlightenment in this life. The Truths were taught by the Buddha as follows:

"Monks, we've been in the cycle of birth and death for a long time because we don't understand the Four Noble Truths. They're what? By not grasping the Noble Truth of Suffering—its origin, cessation, and path—we have continued to cycle through birth and death. "The craving for becoming has been cut off, the support of becoming has been destroyed, there is no more re-becoming" by understanding and penetrating the Noble Truth of Suffering, its Origin, its Cessation, and its Path."¹

In short, the primary objective of Buddhism is to set in motion a metamorphosis that will make people less capable of causing themselves and others mental anguish, stress, and disease. The Buddha was analogous to a highly skilled doctor. Buddha has diagnosed the illness (suffering or dukkha), determined its cause (the origination of dukkha), which is explained the illness could be cured (the cessation of dukkha), and demonstrated how the illness could be treated (the path of the cessation of dukkha). These are *Cattāri Ariyasaccāni*, often known as the Fourfold Truths in early Buddhism.

The Meaning and Practice of *Cattāri Ariyasaccāni* or the Four Noble Truths: The Buddha first taught what is known as the Four Noble Truths, or *Cattāri Ariyasaccāni* discourse are regarded as the basic teachings in early Buddhism. The Buddha's first teachings appeared in *Dhammacakkappavattana sutta*² in *Samyutta-Nikāya*. According to the discourse, after the Buddha had achieved enlightenment, he gave

¹Maurice Walse. (1978). *The Long Discourse of the Buddha: A translation of Dīgha Nikāya, Sutta 22*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, P.239.

²Bhikkhu Bodhi; in 2005; *In the Buddha's words: "An Anthology of Discourse from Pali canon"*; Boston: Wisdom Publications; p.161.

his first sermon about the Four Noble Truths at the Deer Park (Migadaya) in Isipatana near Benares, teaching his five companions about suffering and the way to escape it.

The Truth of *Dukkha*: The Buddha confirmed the first of these truths can be expressed using the following words:

*“Now this, monks, is the noble truth of stress: Birth, aging, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, and despair are stressful; association with the unbeloved, separation from the loved, and not getting what is wanted are stressful. The five clinging aggregates are stressful.”*³

Dukkha is a Pāli term that means ‘unable to accept or enjoy’ or ‘unable to be content with anything’. It refers to a state of being that is constantly changing and is unable to truly fulfill or make one happy. The very first truth that is revealed is that there is an existence of pain. It places an emphasis on the negative aspects of life to go against the natural tendency of humans to focus on the positive aspects of their experiences and to ignore and forget the negative aspects. The Buddha was quoted as saying that he had experienced both the greatest joy and the worst possible pain in his lifetime. The first thing everyone needs to understand is that life is full of hardships, such as experiencing pain, growing old, getting sick, and eventually passing away. Psychological anguish, such as feelings of isolation, frustration, anxiety, shame, disappointment, and fury, is also part of our experience. This is an undeniable truth that cannot be contested in any way. Because pessimism involves anticipating that things will go poorly, this outlook is realistic rather than pessimistic. Buddhism, on the other hand, reveals not only how suffering can be avoided but also how we might achieve genuine happiness. If life consisted solely of unremitting misery, no one would ever have the impulse to carry on living it; on the other hand, if life consisted solely of unadulterated joy, there would be no need for the solace that religion strives to bring. Because there is an option, because escape is possible, and because liberation is within reach, Buddha placed a lot of importance on learning to understand the origins of pain. The reason for this is that there is a path out, and one can break rid of it if they really want to. It is for this reason that it is of the utmost importance to obtain an understanding of the nature of pain since the strength and depth of our understanding of the origins of pain directly correlate to the intensity of our yearning to be liberated from it. As a result, the Buddhist points out the nature of suffering needs to be understood in the context of this broader perspective, which includes recognition of the potential for being completely free from suffering. It would be a waste of time if there were no such thing as freedom to waste on contemplating pain. We could easily misunderstand the Buddhist outlook as involving rather morbid thinking, a fundamental pessimism, and even an obsessiveness about the reality of suffering if we fail to appreciate the historical and cultural context in which the Buddhist emphasis on recognizing that we are all in a state of suffering was developed. Therefore, it is crucial to grasp the background of the Buddhist stress on the universality of suffering.

The Truth of the Origination of *Dukkha*: Because the Buddha was aware of the continuity of existence, he searched for the cause of *dukkha* or suffering not only in this life but also in previous incarnations and states of becoming. He did this in light of the fact that existence is unbroken. He uncovered it by following an instinct dating back to the beginning of time, the (*taṇhā*) for conscious existence:

*“And this, monks, is the noble truth of the origination of stress: the craving that makes for further becoming — accompanied by passion & delight, relishing now here & now there — i.e., craving for sensual pleasure, craving for becoming, craving for non-becoming.”*⁴

The Second Noble Truth states that there is an origin of suffering and that the origin of suffering is grasping the three types of desire:

sensual craving (*kāmatāṇhā*), craving for existence (*bhavaṭāṇhā*), and craving for self-annihilation (*vibhavaṭāṇhā*)⁵. The desire for gratifying sensory experiences of all kinds (visual, auditory, gustatory, tactile, and cognitive) are the six components that make up sexual cravings. Sensual craving is triggered when the sense organs come into contact with the objects that stimulate them. These are what are referred to as *āyatana* (sense perception). The *taṇhā* (craving) for existence can manifest in three different ways, each of which corresponds to a different sphere in which life can be found:

- The craving for existence in *inkāma-loka* or sensual spheres,
- The craving for existence in *inrūpā-loka* or fine-material spheres, and
- The craving for existence in *arūpā-loka* or formless spheres as the mental planes.

The erroneous idea that the phenomenal personal aggregates create a spirit, which is non-existent at death, accompanies a collection of desires known as the longing for self-annihilation. This group of desires includes the desire to end one's own life. In a different classification, the yearning is seen as the source of one's subsequent births. According to the formula of dependent origination, it is the yearning that is responsible for both the promotion and the maintenance of the cycle of existence. There, karma formations, also known as *sāṅkhāra*, are born out of the conditions of not knowing the nature of reality. Those who have been conditioned by the mind in the specific sense of rebirth-linking mind, the mental drive that, like an electric spark, links one ‘life-continuum’ to another. The new life sequence's mind and body are born with conditioned consciousness. The six types of perceptual experience originate from mental and physical conditioning. The contact between a sensory organ and an item in the external world generates six perceptual regions. Contact sensation, also known as *vedāna*, is conditioned through craving-related feelings. It's a vicious cycle: habitual, confirmed urges lead to clutching, which leads to life's impulse, which leads to birth, which leads to decay, which leads to death. The formula of Dependent Origination (*paṭiccasamuppāda*) is a concise summary of the causal relations between three cycles (past, present, and future) in which desire plays a central role. The first step towards recovery for a sick person is for that individual to acknowledge that they are unwell; if they are unaware of their condition, they will not have the motivation to seek treatment. In the same manner, if we are not aware that we are experiencing suffering, our aspiration to be liberated from it will not even begin to form in the first place. As Buddhists who put their faith into practice, the first thing we need to do is acknowledge that the situation we are currently in is *dukkha*, which literally translates to ‘suffering’, ‘frustration’, and ‘unsatisfactoriness’. When that time comes, we will have the desire to investigate the factors and circumstances that give rise to misery. In short, based on the teaching of Buddha, the causes of the suffering of human beings in the world are clinging to and craving for name and form.

The Truth of the cessation of *Dukkha*

Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, the Buddha declared:

*“And this, monks, is the noble truth of the cessation of stress: the remainderless fading and cessation, renunciation, relinquishment, release, & letting go of that very craving”*⁶.

Once we have a true understanding of the sources of suffering, according to the Buddhist perspective, such as *taṇhā* (craving) and *avijjā* (ignorance), then we totally destroy these reasons and, as a result, escape from suffering. This is one of the major tenets of the path to enlightenment that Buddhism teaches. This teaches that in the Buddhist tradition, one's spiritual practice should be geared towards achieving cessation as its endpoint. Cessation is often associated with *Nibbāna*. From the Buddhist viewpoint, *Nibbāna* is the termination of the process of being, like when a fire burns out because there is no

³Ibid; p.161.

⁴ Bhikkhu Bodhi; in (2005); *In the Buddha's words: “An Anthology of Discourse from Pali canon”*; Boston: Wisdom Publications; p.161.

⁵ Maurice Walse. (1978). *The Long Discourse of the Buddha: “A translation of Dīgha Nikāya, Sutta 22”*; Boston: Wisdom Publications, P.309.

⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi; in 2005; *In the Buddha's words: “An Anthology of Discourse from Pali canon”*; Boston: Wisdom Publications; p.161.

longer any fuel to feed it or because the person blowing on it stops doing so. It is the state of peace and joy achieved when craving and desire have been extinguished. When our minds are free of the conditions that lead to suffering, such as yearning, we may experience a fleeting version of the nirvanic state known as samadhi. Therefore, *Nibbāna* is not something that can be described. Rather, it is something that can only be understood through direct experience.

The Truth of the Path of the Cessation of *Dukkha*: The fourth noble truth is the path to the cessation of *dukkha* as the Buddha said in *Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta*:

“And this, monks, is the noble truth of the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: precisely this Noble Eightfold Path — right view, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.”⁷

The first three truths focus primarily on developing an awareness of the nature of suffering, anxiety, and tension explained by the word *dukkha* and the factors that contribute to it. On the other hand, the fourth truth outlines a strategy that can be put into practice to alleviate *dukkha*. The noble way consists of a series of eight linked factors or conditions that, when extended, and uphold collectively. It brings a result of the cessation of *dukkha*. When developed individually, these factors or conditions do not lead to the cessation of *dukkha*. The path is *sariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga* or the Noble Eightfold Path, and it is also called the ‘Middle Way’ in Buddhism. “This is the Middle Way giving vision, giving knowledge, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to *nibbāna*”⁸.

The Middle Way consists of eight practices as follows:

1. ***Sammā diṭṭhi*:** Right view or clear comprehension of the fundamental essence of things, in particular the Four Noble Truths,
2. ***Sammā saṅkappa*:** Right thought is avoiding ideas involving desire, hatred, and the goal to cause damage,
3. ***Sammā vācā*:** Right speech is escaping from verbal sins such as speech, lying, that divides people, harsh speech, and foolish speech,
4. ***Sammā kammanta*:** Right action is abstaining from violent transgressions such as murdering, stealing, and engaging in sexual misbehavior,
5. ***Sammā ājīva*:** Right livelihood is avoiding engaging in commercial activities that directly or indirectly cause harm to other people, such as the sale of weapons, slaves, animals destined for slaughter, poisons, or alcoholic beverages,
6. ***Sammā vāyāma*:** Right effort is giving up negative thoughts that have already emerged, hindering negative states from emerging in the future, and maintaining positive states of mind that have already surfaced are all aspects of this practice,
7. ***Sammā sati*:** Right mindfulness is mindful of one’s body, feelings, thoughts, and phenomena (the elements or constituents of the existing world), and
8. ***Sammā samādhi*:** Right concentration is single-mindedness.

These eight components are broken up into three sections, which are together referred to as the Threefold Training of the Path: (1). The appropriate perspective and the right way of thinking are necessary components of wisdom or *paññā/ prajñā*. (2). Proper words, proper actions, and the right livelihood are the three components that morality or *sīla/ sīla*. (3). The right kind of effort, the right kind of mindfulness, and the right kind of focus are all necessary components of meditation or *samādhi*. Training in Buddhism means growing oneself in order to lead a life that is correct and beautiful, pursuing the road that helps us get the cessation of suffering. The first step in the approach of the Four Noble Truths is to recognize and confront one's difficulties head-on. A person will gain a progressive

understanding of the common characteristics of the issues *dukkha* if they continue to live with the suffering, tension, and stress, as well as any mental illness, and attempt to understand them. The second step is to reflect on one's challenges and look for the root reasons for those challenges, known as *dukkha samudaya*. These root causes include desire, hatred, and delusion. A life free from suffering (also known as *dukkha nirodha*) is the third objective, and it is one that every human being strives towards. The fourth teaching is that by applying the appropriate techniques, all the causes of mental illness, including stress, anxiety, and other forms of mental anguish, can be eradicated (*dukkhanirodha magga*). The truth, putting this knowledge into practice in day-to-day life can also be a huge aid in lowering stress and increasing the effectiveness of all actions. For example, in the case of, we want to get something like a computer and a car. If we contemplate our greedy mind as the truth of the Origin of suffering, it is called that we apply the *Samudaya Saccā* in daily life. Therefore, it is the most important thing that the Buddha's sacred teachings need to be understood deeply, not as tenets of belief, but as classifications of one's experiences.

CONCLUSION

The primary objective of Buddhism is to launch a transformational process that will assist people in becoming less capable of inflicting mental illness, misery, and stress on themselves and others. The Great Master diagnosed the illness or sickness (*dukkha* or suffering), identified its cause (*dukkha samudaya*), explained that the sickness could be treated (*dukkha nirodha*), and showed the way sickness could be treated (*dukkha nirodha magga*). It can be said that the teachings of the Buddha can be boiled down to their most fundamental form, which is the four noble truths. It is considered the Buddhist foundation of philosophy and thought. The teachings of *Cattāri Ariyasaccāni* or the Four Noble Truths make a clear distinction between two groups of causes and effects: the causes that result in suffering, and the causes that result in happiness. The teachings aim at nothing less than enabling us to accomplish our greatest ambition, which is to be joyful and to remove suffering. They do this by demonstrating to us how to discern these in our own lives so that we might achieve this. From the Buddhist viewpoint, happiness and peacefulness one receives are due to one's cultivating experience. Because the Buddha's teachings are based on his personal experience. In other words, the Enlightened One is considered a great physician, or the spirit's healer. Rather than as someone who spoke of supernatural powers or was a metaphysician. Therefore, for the sake of our growth, we make use of these Four Noble Truths. We will apply them to everyday occurrences in our daily lives, as well as everyday preoccupations and attachments that our minds have. We can gain insights into our attachments by conducting an investigation using these realities. In short, the contemplation of the Four Noble Truths can take a lifetime. They call for a constant state of vigilance on the part of the individual, and they give the setting for an investigation that can last a lifetime. The final goal of the practice is the attainment of perfect happiness, the breaking of the wheel of existence through the realization of *Nibbāna*.

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⁷ Bhikkhu Bodhi; in 2005; *In the Buddha's words: "An Anthology of Discourse from Pali canon"*; Boston: Wisdom Publications; p. 161.

⁸ Bhikkhu Ñānamoli & Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans; in 1995; *"A New translation of Majjhima Nikāya – The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha"*; Kandy, in Sri Lanka: *"Buddhist Publication Society"*; pp.100-102.