

THE DAWN OF  
**THE TRUTH**



VENERABLE ALAWWE ANOMADASSI THERO

# THE DAWN OF THE TRUTH

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*'Monks,  
the **eye is impermanent, changing,**  
'becoming-otherwise.'  
the **ear is impermanent, changing,**  
'becoming-otherwise.'  
the **nose is impermanent, changing,**  
'becoming-otherwise.'  
the **tongue is impermanent, changing,**  
'becoming-otherwise.'  
the **body is impermanent, changing,**  
'becoming-otherwise.'  
the **mind is impermanent, changing,**  
'becoming-otherwise.'*

*'Monks, the one who accepts these truths  
by faith is called **faith-follower**  
(saddhā'nusārī);  
He is descending into the certainty of  
rightness [the fixed course to rightness]  
(sammatta niyama)], descending into the  
plane of true individuals (sathpurusha)'  
he has gone beyond the plane of the  
worldlings.  
He is incapable of doing any intentional  
deed by which he might be reborn in hell,  
or in the animal birth, or in the ghost  
realm. He is incapable of dying without  
having attained the fruit of  
streamwinning.'*

*'Monks, the one who accepts these truths after pondering over them with some wisdom thus, is called a **truth-follower** (dhammā'nusāriī); He is descending into the certainty of rightness [the fixed course to rightness] (sammatta niyama), descending into the plane of true individuals (sathpurusha), he has gone beyond the plane of the worldlings. He is incapable of doing any intentional deed by which he might be reborn in hell, or in the animal birth, or in the ghost realm. He is incapable of dying without having attained the fruit of streamwinning.'*

### *Stream Winner*

*One who knows and sees these truths thus is called a streamwinner, no longer bound for the lower world, sure of liberation, bound for awakening.  
Kandha Sutra (Samyutta Nikaya)*

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## Introduction

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Sidhartha Gauthama, who was born 2640 years ago, attained Supreme Enlightenment by relinquishing all defilements, 2605 ago at the age of 35 years. During the 45 years that followed, until his parinibbana, the supreme Buddha revealed the reality of existence to the wise, both humans and devas, enabling them to comprehend the Dhamma and cross the ocean of Samsara.

With the arrival of Arahath Mihindu, this sublime Dhamma was introduced to Sri Lanka and there were many blessed ones who were able to reap benefits from that Dhamma and reach the ultimate bliss. Today, that era has re-emerged where the supreme dhamma is radiant.

The reason for this revival is mainly attributed to the dedication of few wise ones who, during the past 50-60 years, uncovered the pure words of the Buddha and passed his supreme dhamma to those who had wisdom to grasp it, as they themselves followed the path they discovered.

(An extract from *Sathyaye Arunodaya*, Ven Alawwe Anomadassi Thero)

Having pursued the dhamma revealed by those noble ones and having understood the true teachings of the Buddha, Ven Alawwe Anomadassi Thero devotes his precious time to pass that sublime teachings to the world in a manner that everyone can understand.

The Venerable Thero affirms that this dhamma, which is beyond logic, is for those who can awaken their wisdom and discover the path to experience the ultimate bliss of nibbana.

With that noble objective in mind, this booklet brings together translations of three salient discourses, made by Ven. Anomadassi Thero maintaining the authenticity of the original Sutras in the Buddhist Cannon.

Theruwān Saranāi!

Lalith Mallawarachchi  
Sydney, Feb 2018  
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# 1. Samādhi Bhāvanā Sūtra: The Discourse on Mental Concentration

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The Samādhi Bhāvanā Sūtra (Anguttara Nikaya) mentions four uses or benefits of mental concentration (samādhi), namely,

- (1) for happiness here and now;
- (2) for the divine eye (clairvoyance and knowledge of the working of karma);
- (3) mindfulness and clear comprehension; and
- (4) spiritual liberation.

The method and benefit for each of these Samādhis are as follows:

<b>Samādhi that brings about</b>	<b>Cultivation (or method)</b>
1 dwelling happily here and now	the four dhyanas
2 knowledge and vision	the perception of light
3 mindfulness and clear comprehension	the notion of impermanence
4 the destruction of mental influxes (cankers)	watching the rise and fall of the aggregates



## **1. Mental Concentration for Happiness Here and Now**

The first method helps to reach the four dhyanas and dwell happily, here and now.

In Salleka Suthra (Majjima Nikaya) it is said,

‘The one who reaches and engages in the first dyana (or *jhana*) may believe that he is free from all depravities, nevertheless, he is still not free as the method is not the accepted practice to discard defilements in the Noble discipline.’

The practitioner experiencing stillness in the first, second, third and fourth dyanas enjoys pleasantness in the present, here & now and dwells therein, not reaching beyond.

## **2. Mental Concentration to Gain the Divine Eye**

The one who practices the second type of mental concentration is able to develop knowledge through perception of light (*aloka Sanna*) by gaining the ‘divine eye’ (*dibba cakku* -the psychic power of clairvoyance and the knowledge of the working of karma and rebirth)

The perception of light is also effective in a more mundane way, such as the overcoming of drowsiness, as prescribed in the Pacalā Sutra.

In psychological terms, the perception of light is also useful in keeping the mind “bright” in a positive sense, which prevents or cures depressive and negative mental states.

In Mahasāropama Suthra (Majjima Nikaya) the Buddha refers to a person who is looking for heartwood in a tree. Through his search the man realises that the leaves, branches or the bark are not heartwood but mistakenly take the sap as heartwood. **Likewise, though this practice helps to cultivate knowledge it’s not the core, or the heartwood of the dhamma.**

The two methods discussed above are familiar techniques in the world, however, the other two, third and fourth below, have been widely confused by the practitioners, for instance, they believe that the state of mindfulness with clear comprehension achieved at the third dyana is the state where one discards cankers.

### **3. Mental Concentration for Mindfulness and Clear Comprehension**

The third method of mental concentration cultivates mindfulness with clear comprehension which enables particular skills such as reminiscence of past births. The

practitioner will experience the origin, persistence and passing away of sensations, perception and mental application; however, it is not to be mistaken as the insight meditation explained in the teachings. The technique aims to observe expressively the arising, persisting and passing away of sensations, perceptions and mental application with mindfulness. The downside in this method is that it's experienced by oneself. The practitioner achieves a state of mindfulness; however, the doer is present. The person can refrain from thoughts of greed or hatred upon sensations & perceptions that originate and observe impermanence to a degree, nonetheless, it's experienced by oneself. The method is noted as mundane observation of impermanence of a thing that exists.

In Pathama Kosala sutra (Anguttara Nikaya) the Buddha describes the notion of impermanence gained through concentration that is pursued by a self. In Udana sutra on the other hand, the blessed one expounds on perception of impermanence gained through the knowledge of cause and effect phenomena. The latter sutra elaborates on how one should

comprehend the cause and effect phenomena to grasp the true nature of impermanence.

The person who attains the state of concentration discussed here is able to grasp sensations, perceptions and mental application expressively enabling him to be free from attachment and aversion. However, the practitioner cannot grasp the formation of the aggregates. Further, the person is still not free from delusion, as the doer is present.

Recognising or naming the occurrences being observed i.e. sensations, perceptions and mental application, involves a doer.

Describing the Path, The Blessed one explained the truth as 'All dhammas arise from causes and cease when the causes are no more'. One cannot experience it through self as he becomes the doer or the experiencer and the identifier, for instance, a person who meditate on four heavenly abodes.

The four heavenly abodes; loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity, are forms of liberation of mind (*ceto vimukti*), however, personality is evident in each of these practices. The practice of loving kindness, for

e.g., radiating thoughts of loving kindness, is a personal effort,

It is also to be noted that doing things with mindfulness and being mindful of things one does, are two different things. What one experiences through self is different to what is experienced by the wisdom. The key difference is that there is 'me' as a doer in the former.

Elaborating on the arising and ceasing nature of five clinging aggregates the Buddha referred to the knowledge of the conditioned, "Bhikkus, there are three characteristics expressed in the conditioned, and the three are, where arising can be seen, ceasing can be seen and what is this becomes that"<sup>1</sup> .

One would expect the third knowledge referred above to be in the middle keeping with the conventional understanding of permanence. However, what is expressed here is that there is only an origination and a cessation and where an existence is perceived, it is in a state (or process) of transformation.

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<sup>1</sup> Uppado pannayathi, Vayo pannayathi, Thithassa annaththan pannayathi

As evident here, this method of concentrating on the origin of sensation, its persistence and passing away is not how the Buddha described the conditioned, rather it's what one experiences by oneself as a mundane practice. It is also evident here that with mindfulness and clear comprehension, the person meditates on what he has formed in mind as sensations, perceptions and mental application, and observing its origin, persistence and cessation.

In Moliya Pagguna Sutra, Bikkhu Moliya Pagguna asked the Buddha 'who is feeling the sensation'? Buddha said to him the question is wrong and that it should rather be asked, what causes sensation.

In our attempt to examine the cause and effect phenomena, we can develop various concepts to identify and describe occurrences, so that we can recollect them in our own thoughts. However, all observations that we make are based on thoughts already conceived by 'myself', for e.g. I can contemplate on a perception that I form by myself. The five clinging aggregates cannot be understood through concepts but only by grasping the process of formation with wisdom.

## 4. Mental Concentration for Spiritual Liberation

The fourth form of mental concentration enables relinquishment of cankers. Here, the practitioner observes arising and passing away of the five clinging aggregates by meditating on,

*This is the form, this is its origin, this is its cessation.....*

*This is the sensation, this is its origin, this is its cessation.....*

*This is the perception, this is its cessation, this is its cessation.....*

*This is the formation, this is its cessation, this is its cessation.....*

*This is the consciousness, this is its cessation, this is its cessation.....*

This is the recommended mental concentration that brings about relinquishment of cankers.

In other words the one who dwells observing arising and passing away of the five clinging aggregates can discard cankers. The five clinging aggregates are formations and not concepts that bring about the notion that 'I' conceive. A concept is helpful to understand and to begin the process; however, if one holds

onto it without examining the cause and effect nature, he won't grasp the origination. If origination is not seen he will seek a state of cessation that he has erroneously imagined, overlooking the origin, which basically is an attempt to seek enlightenment through a notion of 'cessation'.

Susima Suthra (Samyutta Nikaya) refers to a bikkhu named Susima who joined the order to spy on Tathagatha's teachings and to steal his doctrine. He was closely watching the Arahaths and found that they do not possess any abilities or psychic powers as he thought, for e.g. to recollect past lives, about lives of the others or any form of supranormal powers. Bewildered by what he learnt bikkhu Susima questioned the Arahaths, 'how could you claim that you are enlightened without any special powers?'

When this was reported to the Buddha, the blessed one explained to him that one should first cultivate the knowledge of the regularity of the Dhamma (*dhamma thithi Nana*), after which he could comprehend the knowledge of Unbinding (*nibbana*).

Today the common approach often is that we are in search of a *Nibbana*, based on a concept



we have conceived as *Nibbana*. This is clarified in Pacce Paccuppanna sutra, where it says that one should first comprehend the cause and effect phenomena. *Dhamma tithi nana* is the knowledge of cause and effect, and not mere knowledge of passing away of a thing that exists.

The sutra further elaborates that all dhammas, are **impermanent, compounded, arising owing to a cause, perishable, by nature passing away, detached and ceasing<sup>2</sup>**, as the knowledge one gains by grasping the origination. One cannot experience this reality without comprehending the origin or the cause, if not it will simply be a thought. The knowledge of cause and effect is primary; an assumption of a cessation without grasping the origination is only a concept.

In Athamya Suthra, Buddha preaches the knowledges (*Gnanas*) gained by the one who dwells watching impermanence, two of which are **the cause** and **what originates from the cause**, noted as essential to comprehend dhamma (*dhamma tithi nana*)

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<sup>2</sup> anicca sankhata paticcasamuppanna khaya-dhamma vaya-dhamma viraga-dhamma nirodha-dhamma.

The Buddha elaborates this with a stanza in Parayana Wagga, one could dwell watching the nature of things and occurrences in the world to achieve stillness. Though he won't see the truth he will restrain attachments and aversions experiencing the inner peace that eventually paves the way to end suffering, decay & death. However, the practitioner must observe the process of cause and effect; if not the wisdom that is necessary to become unbinding will not develop.

### **The Simile of the Building**

We see a building that exists when we look at one, and even if we say there is no building it's only an imagination, however, if all its components are taken apart a building is not visible.

What was seen earlier has disappeared but the notion that originated when the components came together remains. When conditions come together only a notion of a house originates, nevertheless, what exists out there is not a house but a pile of aggregates (material). Until one comprehends the process of formation that occurs, the notion of a house prevails. Similarly, a notion of a sentient prevails as long as the

formation is not grasped. The notion of a being will not arise if the formation is identified.

The notion of the house suggests that there is a house that exists and it further manifests the notion that there is 'me', who sees the house. However, much we attempt to see that there isn't any external object; it persists as long as there is a notion of me. In the use of a language we refer; to that, this and there, which always relate to the notion of 'me'. We ignore that fact when we are (or I am) seeing the house. If we see the formation of the house with insight, along with the formation of me, we abandon both, the notion of the house and 'me', and therefore nothing remains to measure. One needs to see the origination to understand the cessation.

### **The Simile of the Dog walking on the Footbridge,**

As we see a reflection on the water we can't say there is no dog, neither can we say there is. The sight of the dog in water is a formation due to conditions. We need to comprehend the void in this occurrence. We see the void in what is sighted only when we see how things originate - the conditionality. The reflection in the water is

proof for conditionality. We need to ascertain the reality before we make our conclusions and it is essential that we have a practical approach to our observations.

We need to see arising and ceasing of the five aggregates of clinging i.e. form, sensations, and perceptions and so on, to discard cankers. As discussed we can practice by observing, this is the form, this is its origin and this is its cessation.

The visible experiences form the basis for how we perceive and know things around us. When we hear a sound, say of a bird we perceive it in relation to a visible experience of a bird. We identify what we hear in relation to what we have seen. Same with how we smell (e.g. incense stick), and how we taste or feel. We seem to constantly combine what is sensed, through ear, tongue, body and mind with what is seen (Similarly, the corresponding sensations, perceptions & formations that arise from visual, audible, tactile experiences). We encounter all five aggregates of clinging together as formations, by observing what form is, its origin and cessation; we are able to understand the process.

When we know the form, the eye and eye consciousness with wisdom we see how conventional perception as a being occurs, where a group of aggregates come together.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Chariot Simile: Vajira Suthra**

The notion of a being (sentient) where there is only a bundle of formations is a view (*ditti*), just as a notion of a chariot that arises when one sees a group of components that are assembled in a particular manner. Axle, wheels, cabin and so on are parts that forms the notion of a chariot. However, when all components are together but not assembled to a conventional order, the notion of chariot will not originate. The conditions are there but it's not called a chariot anymore.

When aggregates are seen just as a bundle of formations, the notion of a being is no more. Bikkhuni Vajira has said there is **only a suffering that comes to be, a suffering that stands & falls and it's just the suffering that ceases.**

*'Just as, with an assemblage of parts,  
The word 'chariot' is used,*

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<sup>3</sup> Sathipatthana Suthra (Samyutta Nikaya)

*So, when the aggregates are present,  
There's the convention 'a being.'*

*It's only suffering that comes to be,  
Suffering that stands and falls away.  
Nothing but suffering comes to be,  
Nothing but suffering ceases.'*

By cultivating wisdom and by dwelling in this manner, observing arising ceasing nature of aggregates, one can discard cankers. It can only be achieved by wisdom and not by oneself. The key is to see how things occur in reality with insight.

The process as discussed is different to the worldly practices such as in science, which focuses on observation, experiment and determination. The difference is that the worldly approach has a doer or an experiencer. One needs to examine the arising ceasing phenomenon with penetrative insight in order to cultivate wisdom.

It is to be noted that a person attaining meditative fruition, does not make conclusions as there is no self, engaged in meditation. As a result, there is no declaration of fruition or final emancipation, either.

## 2. Upanisā Suthra: The Discourse on States of Conditionality

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The Buddha has preached that the path to liberation is a process of knowing and seeing. He has further described that the one who progresses in the path discards cankers (mental influxes) and what one should know and see as he or she progresses is the arising and ceasing of the five clinging aggregates.

*“Monks I teach how to discard cankers to those who dwell knowing and seeing! , knowing and seeing what,”*

*This is the form, this is its origin, this is its cessation.....*

*This is the sensation, this is its origin, this is its cessation.....*

*This is the perception, this is its cessation, this is its cessation.....*

*This is the formation, this is its cessation, this is its cessation.....*

*This is the consciousness, this is its cessation, this is its cessation.....”*

## **Mental Concentration**

Samadhi Bhavana Sutra (Anguttara Nikaya) describes four types of mental concentration and their benefits,

(1) Happiness here and now;

In Salleka Suthra (Majjima Nikaya) it is said,

The practitioner experiencing stillness in the first, second, third and fourth dyanas enjoys pleasantness in the present, here & now and dwells therein, however, he or she cannot move beyond and hence cannot discard cankers and be free.

(2) The divine eye (clairvoyance and knowledge of the working of karma);

The one who practices the second method of mental concentration is able to develop knowledge through perception of light (*Aloka Sanna*) by gaining the 'divine eye'.

(3) Mindfulness and clear comprehension;

The third type of mental concentration discussed in the Sutra is about doing things (through thought, speech and action) cultivating mindfulness with clear comprehension.



#### (4) Spiritual liberation.

The fourth form of mental concentration is the noble practice which enables relinquishment of cankers, when the practitioner observes arising and passing away of the five clinging aggregates.

The one who dwells watching the origination and the cessation of the five clinging aggregates discards cankers and liberates himself. Once liberated the person gains the knowledge that he is liberated.

### **States of Conditioning**

The Blessed one preached,

*“Bikkhus, the knowledge of this destruction, in regards to the destruction (of the influxes- cankers) has a necessary condition, I say. It is not without a necessary condition. “*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for the knowledge of the destruction (khaya) (of the influxes)? It should be said: freedom (or liberation) (vimukthi). Freedom, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for freedom?*

*It should be said: dispassion (virāga). Dispassion, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for dispassion?*

*It should be said: revulsion [disenchantment] (nibbidā). Revulsion, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.'*

Revulsion (or disenchantment) referred here is not mere dislike but what one experiences by seeing the truth, where the practitioner comprehends that there is nothing to grasp or hold onto. It's not mere displeasure experienced as a person but by seeing the reality as it is.

*'And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for revulsion?*

*It should be said: the knowledge and vision of reality (yatha, bhūta, ñana, dassana). The knowledge and vision of reality, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for the knowledge and vision of reality?*

*It should be said: mental stillness (samādhi). Concentration, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.*

The state of mental stillness mentioned here is the fourth state of mental concentration described in Samadhi Bhavena Sutra discussed earlier.

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for concentration?*

*It should be said: happiness (sukha). Happiness, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for happiness?*

*It should be said: tranquillity (passaddhi).*

*Tranquillity, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for tranquillity?*

*It should be said: zest (pīti). Zest, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for zest?*

*It should be said: gladness [joy] (pāmojja). Joy, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for gladness?*

*It should be said: faith (saddhā). Faith, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.'*

Any practice that guides one to experience joy and tranquillity first will not help in destruction of cankers (mental influxes), rather the joy and tranquillity experienced as one treads on the path will make way for destruction cankers.

*'And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for faith?*

*It should be said: suffering (dukkha)."*

Pāmojja or pamoda is the feeling of pleasantness one experiences by seeing the arising passing nature of five clinging aggregates, conditioned by the faith, the person develops when he comprehends what suffering is. The faith referred here is not the faith one develops on Buddha as a person but what one gains when the five clinging aggregates are clearly comprehended (as suffering).

## Suffering and Conditions for Suffering

The suffering what we know and experience is tied to our self-view. We all like to escape from the suffering that we are subjected to in our endless cycle of birth and death and seek liberation.

Tathagata preached three forms of suffering or Dukkha. They are Suffering or pain (*dukkha-dukkha*); suffering that arise due to Impermanence or change (*viparinama-dukkha*); suffering that arise due to Conditioned states (*samkhara-dukkha*). Understanding the latter is beyond our easy reach.

We can begin by searching the immediate cause for suffering<sup>4</sup> known as dukkha dukha and viparinama dukha, as birth (*jati*) and noting existence as the cause for birth. Existence (*bhava*) is due to clinging (*upadana*) which is caused by craving (*tanha*) that arises due to sensations. Likewise, we can trace back other causes in sequence: for sensations - contact, for contact - six sense faculties, for six sense faculties-name matter, for name matter -

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<sup>4</sup> Sorrow , Lamentation, Pain, Grief, Despair  
(soka-parideva-dukkha-domanass-upāyāsā)

consciousness and finally for consciousness - ignorance.

In other words, by examining the two types of suffering (dukkha) that are evident and more familiar to us, we could trace their causes or conditionality which reveals Sanskara Dukkha and its root cause, the ignorance.

**It is Sanskara Dukkha that one has to comprehend, the suffering that arise due to conditions. It is defined as the five clinging aggregates<sup>5</sup> which are seen as impermanent since they arise from causes - or are conditioned.**

## **Dependent Origination**

The search for the origination of five clinging aggregates discussed in this sutra leads to dependant origination, ignorance being its origin. **Ignorance is defined as not knowing what suffering is, its origin, the cessation of suffering and the path leading to its cessation.**

**Comprehending the origin of five aggregates of clinging, its formation, results**

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<sup>5</sup> panca updana skanda

**in knowing what suffering is, its origin, cessation and the path leading to its cessation, the four noble truths. Once the truths are known ignorance is abandoned and therefor the formation of five clinging aggregates (suffering) ceases ending in freedom.**

This is different to the third type of mental concentration discussed in Samadhi Bhavana Sutra that describes knowing the rise of sensation, perception and formation etc. that 'I' experience. Further, it's 'me' who sees cessation of the sensation that 'I' experience. The drawback is it doesn't remove 'me' as a aggregate of clinging. The teachings want us to know and see the state of the conditioned.

One should not attempt to discard defilements but search for the origination, it's not mere cessation of things that exist. The notion of existence is one extreme, the eternalist view, and the notion that nothing exists is the other extreme, the nihilist view, Observing cessation of a thing that exists is just a shift from one extreme to the other, from eternalist view to nihilist view, which is the belief of the worldlings.

The Buddha further explained,

*“Suffering, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say.  
It is not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for suffering?*

*It should be said: birth (jati). Birth, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for birth?*

*It should be said: existence (bhava). Existence, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for existence?*

*It should be said: clinging (upādāna). Clinging, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for clinging?*

*It should be said: craving (tanhā). Craving, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for craving?*



*It should be said: feeling (vedanā). Feeling, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for feeling?*

*It should be said: contact (phassa). Contact, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for contact?*

*It should be said: the six sense-bases (salyatana). The six sense-bases, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for the six sense-bases?*

*It should be said: name-and-form (nama,rūpa). Name-and-form, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for name-and-form?*

*It should be said: consciousness (viññana). Consciousness, bhikshus, has a necessary condition, too, I say. It is not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for consciousness?*

*It should be said: formations (sankhara).*

*Formations, bhikshus, have a necessary condition, too, I say. They are not without a necessary condition.*

*And what, bhikshus, is the necessary condition for formations?*

*It should be said: ignorance.”*

## **The Three Marks of Buddhism**

To know impermanence (*anicca*), unsatisfactoriness or suffering (*dukkha*), and non-self (*anattā*) nature of the one needs to comprehend its origination. When the truth, that everything arises due to conditions and cease when the conditions cease to exist, is comprehended the five aggregates of clinging (suffering) will not originate and that is cessation.

The teachings elaborates that due to its conditional nature the five clinging aggregates is impermanent and as it is impermanent it is suffering (*Yada niccan tan dukkan*) - there is nothing to hold on to. If it is impermanent and suffering, the Buddha asked, ‘should one take it as me mine and myself?’

When Ignorance is abandoned, formations cease and thus no further suffering. Therefore the noble practice is not mere disintegration of a body that exists or seeing impermanence of body parts i.e. hair, skin, nails, teeth etc. that are perceptible. **Knowing impermanence is knowing the cause and effect phenomena**, it is knowing that there is no substance in the compounded, formed due to causes, as it ceases when the causes cease to exist.

As described in the Four Foundations of Mindfulness meditation, observing origination of the body (*Kayanupassana*)<sup>6</sup> focuses the notion of a body that exists which is primarily to develop knowledge<sup>7</sup>, rather than a body that is taken as a one that truly exists. This is emphasised under the other three states of mindfulness as well.

When origination is grasped the void in existence is exposed and thus one need not

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<sup>6</sup> Four foundations of mindfulness (Sathara Sathipatthana Bhavana)

<sup>7</sup> .... Or mindfulness is established that 'There is a body', to the extent necessary for knowledge and mindfulness. They meditate independent, not grasping at anything in the world. This too is how a monastic meditates by observing an aspect of the body. ('Atthi kāyo'ti vā panassa sati paccupaṭṭhitā hoti. Yāvadeva ñāṇamattāya paṭis-sati-mattāya anissito ca viharati, .....')

make an effort to discard cankers. The person who dwells observing the truth or the arising ceasing nature of five clinging aggregates can be free from suffering being able to comprehend the path leading to its cessation.

In the parable of the Lute (Veenopama Sutra), it is described how the melody or the sound is not something that exists but which originates only when one plays the Lute. This explains the nature of impermanence or the state of the conditioned. The causality of the five clinging aggregates is grasped only when Buddha's teaching of the dependant origination is comprehended. This is when one develops faith on Buddha and his teachings.

When a teacher explains a child how to do maths correctly by teaching him the fundamentals as well as the right techniques, the child develops faith on the teacher, similarly when one grasps origination of five clinging aggregates as taught by the Buddha he or she develops faith on the Buddha. This faith is known as *Avicca Prasada* in teachings. What one requires to develop is not mere assumptions about the external world but seeing things as they really are.

In Seela Sutra it is explained that all what a person who embarks on the path has to do is observing arising and ceasing of five clinging aggregates. He or she needs to do the same to reach all four states<sup>8</sup> of enlightenment described in the teachings. It is further said that it's the stream winner who can clearly see arising and ceasing nature of five clinging aggregates and thereby discard cankers, till one reaches this state his or her aim must be to comprehend the truth.

When dependent origination is comprehended and the way it occurs due to ignorance and brings about suffering, the person sees origination of the five clinging aggregates (suffering) with wisdom.

### **Water –Cycle Parable**

Using the water –cycle parable below the Tathagatha explained the dependent origination,

*“Just as when the rains fall in huge drops on the mountain-tops, the waters, flowing down along the slopes, fill the mountain clefts, gullies and streams. When the mountain clefts, gullies and streams are full, they fill the ponds.*

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<sup>8</sup> Stream Winner, Once returner, Non-returner and the Arahath

*When the ponds are full, they fill the lakes.  
When the lakes are full, they fill the rivulets.  
When the rivulets are full, they fill the rivers.  
When the rivers are full, they fill the great ocean.  
Similarly the moment one grasps ignorance in its  
true nature, the person's life leads towards  
freedom.'*

*'in the same way, bhikshus,*

*ignorance is the necessary condition for formations,  
formations are the necessary condition for  
consciousness,  
consciousness is the necessary condition for name-  
and-form,  
name-and-form is the necessary condition for the  
six sense-base,  
the six sense-bases are the necessary condition for  
contact,  
contact is the necessary condition for feeling,  
feeling is the necessary condition for craving,  
craving is the necessary condition for clinging,  
clinging is the necessary condition for existence,  
existence is the necessary condition for birth,  
birth is the necessary condition for suffering,  
suffering is the necessary condition for faith,*

He further explained dependent ending:

*"faith is the necessary condition for joy,  
joy is the necessary condition for zest,  
zest is the necessary condition for tranquillity,*

*tranquillity is the necessary condition for happiness,  
happiness is the necessary condition for  
concentration,  
concentration is the necessary condition for reality [  
knowledge and vision of  
things as they really are,  
knowledge and vision of reality  
is the necessary condition for revulsion,  
revulsion is the necessary condition for dispassion,  
dispassion is the necessary condition for freedom,  
freedom is the necessary condition for the  
knowledge of the destruction  
(of the influxes).”*

When ignorance is clearly grasped one comprehends formation of suffering resulting in freedom. It's not observing what is originated by breaking them into parts either as name-matter or elements but seeing how things originate due to ignorance. This is the path to liberation of gaining the knowledge of cessation.

### **The Five Aggregates of Clinging**

It's important that one first understands the five aggregates of clinging. Today our understanding of the five aggregates of clinging and its impermanent, suffering and nonself nature, focuses on things that exist. Buddha compared the knowledge of the five aggregates

of clinging and their impermanent, suffering and non-self-nature to a raft that helps one to cross the ocean of samsara. As it's the person who makes the raft, first he or she needs to gain the knowledge of the Truth, by listening to Dhamma preached by the Buddha. The first state or the foundation of the path is the right view and it is gained only by listening to Buddha's teachings and developing wise attention. Having listened to Buddha's teachings one needs to understand the five aggregates of clinging and dependent origination phenomena perusing with wise attention. The correct understanding of the five aggregates of clinging occurs with understanding of its origin.

Maha Punnama Sutra (Majjima Nikaya) discusses causes for five aggregates of clinging - form, sensation, perception, formation and consciousness. We know that form originates from four great elements and that sensations, perceptions and formations from contact. We also know that sensation is not contact but it originates from contact, sensation is the fruit of contact - the cause, same with regard to perception and formation. Similarly, consciousness is not name-matter but what originates from name matter.



Now that we discussed four of the five aggregates of clinging we need to understand the other, the form, and that it is not four great elements but what originates from that. We need to understand four great elements to clearly grasp the origin of form. This is an area we haven't explored before.

There are a number of Sutras which discuss the four great elements in detail such as maha hatthi padopama sutra, rahulowada sutra and dhatu vibhanga sutra. The four elements are described as earth or solidity (*patavi*), water or cohesion (*apo*), Fire or heat (*tejo*) which are seen as both internal and external. The great elements that are internal for instance, the earth element is described as; belonging to oneself, solid, rigid and clung to. We refer to them as hair, skin, flesh, teeth, bones, and so on. It is further said, whatever else that belongs to oneself, solid, rigid and clung to, is also called the internal earth element.

**In terms of the above definition of the four great elements, we need to understand what is meant by 'clung to'. It is crucial and if not we will continue to hold onto the notion that there are four elements which exist externally.**

We attempt to understand elements that exist externally by breaking them into particles and so on, as we have not understood their true nature of being originated by clinging. However, when we see that the cause for the four elements is clinging we see its connection to dependent origination theory, similar to what we already know about other four clinging aggregates.

We ignore the cause for our notion of the existence of the four elements which is primarily due to clinging; hence we consider that they exist either as external (or internal). This delusion conforms to the theory of dependant origination and how we gradually develop self-view and end in misery. We ignore what was explained by the Blessed One and make our own assumptions - as we understand.

Our understanding today is that the four elements exist independent of 'my' existence. However it's a notion that 'I' create due to the notion of 'me' that exists. Therefore any attempt to see what they are made of by breaking into parts would only be conceptual. We can neither say that things exist nor that things do not exist, we need to examine the Dhamma as taught by

the Tathagatha and understand how things are conditioned.

When we grasp ignorance, i.e. not knowing suffering, cause for suffering, cessation and the path leading to cessation, we grasp the false footing for our fabrications (as the world). Suffering persists until we see that truth.

Buddhism has to be pursued and examined as a phenomenon of cause and effect with the final goal of grasping ignorance. Seeing the origin of the world that develops due to formations as a Dhamma of cause and effect that is built upon a false foundation (not as mere assumptions) is essential. When one begins to know and see as explained in this sutra he or she could comprehend suffering and be free from it.

(Sutra Quotes reference, <http://dharmafarer.org>: Piya Tan, 2009)

### 3. Māgandiya Sutra: The Discourse to Māgandiya

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On one occasion the Buddha was residing in a village named Kammāsadhamma in the Kuru country. A Brahmin called Bhāradvāja has prepared a grass-spread as resting-place for the Buddha in his fire-house. While the Blessed one had his dayrest in a nearby forest grove, the wanderer Māgandiya who visited Bhāradvāja learnt about Buddha's visit and remarked that he would avoid Gauthama as he preaches to destroy births which he thought was detrimental to the existence of the world.

His claim was that the beings who travel on Samsara ends the continuation of their existence when they listen to Buddha's teachings and follow his Dhamma. As these people are not born again, he accused the Buddha, calling him a **Destroyer of Births**.

That evening the Buddha retired to the fire-house, where Bhāradvāja met him. The Buddha, knowing through his divine hearing what has happened earlier, asked Bhāradvāja

about it, to his great surprise. They were interrupted by Māgandiya's arrival.

The Buddha asked Māgandiya, "the sense faculties delight on their respective sense-objects, the eye on visible form, the ear on the sound, the nose on odours, the tongue on flavours, the body on tangibles and the mind on mind-objects. Tathagahatha was able to tame them all, having guarded, protected, and restrained them and therefore teaches the world the Dhamma for its restraint, was it with reference to this that you said: 'The recluse Gotama is a destroyer of growth'?"

"It was with reference to this, Master Gotama that I said: 'The recluse Gotama is a 'destroyer of growth.' As what you preach is not how it is recorded in our scriptures."

"Māgandiya, the visible object is pleasurable and delightful hence people are attracted to it. Having listened to my teachings a person who is attached to the visible form **comprehends its origin, the disappearance, the gratification, the danger, and the escape from it through insight** and discards craving

on visible form and sensual pleasures. He discards any bondage to the form and lives experiencing the inward stillness and tranquillity, what do you say about it?”

Māgandiya said he has nothing to say. His answer was the same when Buddha asked him the question in relation to other sense faculties, ear, nose, tongue, and body as well. The Blessed One stressed that he did not preach to destroy birth but taught the way one can restrain the senses by knowing its origin, the disappearance, the gratification, the danger, and the escape from it, to detach from sense faculties and achieve inward stillness.

*“Māgandiya, formerly when I lived the home life, I enjoyed myself, provided and endowed with the five cords of sensual pleasure: with forms cognizable by the eye...with sounds cognizable by the ear...with odours cognizable by the nose...with flavours cognizable by the tongue...with tangibles cognizable by the body that are wished for, desired, agreeable, and likeable, connected with sensual desire and provocative of lust. I*

*had three palaces, one for the rainy season, one for the winter, and one for the summer. I lived in the rains' palace for the four months of the rainy season, enjoying myself with musicians, none of whom were men, and I did not go down to the lower palace.”*

*“On a later occasion, having understood as they actually are the origin, the disappearance, the gratification, the danger, and the escape in the case of sensual pleasures, I abandoned craving for sensual pleasures, I removed fever for sensual pleasures, and I abide without thirst, with a mind inwardly at peace. I see other beings who are not free from lust for sensual pleasures being devoured by craving for sensual pleasures, burning with fever for sensual pleasures, indulging in sensual pleasures, and I do not envy them, nor do I delight therein. Why is that? Because there is, Māgandiya, a delight apart from sensual pleasures, apart from unwholesome states, which surpasses*

*even divine bliss. Since I take delight in that, I do not envy what is inferior, nor do I delight therein.*” (<https://suttacentral.net>)

Think of a rich householder with great wealth who enjoys sensual pleasures (delighting in forms, sounds, odours, flavours and tangibles) but lives righteously guarding and restraining his thought, speech and action and after his death he is born in haven.” Māgandiya, do you think this person who now enjoys divine pleasures surrounded by a group of nymphs in the Nandana Grove, provided and endowed with the five cords of divine sensual pleasure, will be interested in worldly pleasures anymore? “

“No, Master Gotama, divine sensual pleasures are more excellent and sublime than human sensual pleasures.”

“A person who has subdued sensual pleasures and depravities enjoys and dwells in pure bliss and joy of detachment (*niramisa piti*) will never think of the mundane pleasures experienced in sensual worlds. I who have reached far beyond, the super mundane (*lokottara*), sees the misery



of the worldly beings who are indulged in sensual pleasures and thus preaches them about their suffering, cause for that and the way out of that. “Do you still have concerns about that?”

“Yes, I still do, it is not how it is recorded in our scriptures”, said Māgandiya.

### **The Parable of the Leper**

“Māgandiya, suppose that there was a leper covered with sores and infections, devoured by worms, scratching his wounds with his nails, cauterizing his body over a charcoal pit with glowing embers. His friends, companions, & relatives would take him to a doctor for treatment where he would be cured of his leprosy. Now Māgandiya, if this man who is fully cured sees another person with a wound seeking relief in scratching and cauterizing , would he still wish that he could do that again?”

“No Gautama, cauterizing and scratching is always painful but, earlier while suffering with the wounds he sought temporary relief through that.”

“Yes Māgandiya, his sense perception was distorted due to his wounds and it was pleasurable to him then as he was ignorant of the reality.”

The man when he had the wounds sought such temporary relief, but after being cured his perception became clear and he realised the danger in cauterizing and scratching of the skin, therefore he is not deceived by temporary relief anymore. Now even if two strong men attempt to drag him to the charcoal burner, with force, he will do whatever he can to escape from them. Earlier, he went to the charcoal burner on his own will and won't do it now even when he is forced to do so. “Why is that Māgandiya, didn't he feel the pain earlier “asked the Buddha.

Māgandiya replied, “The pain felt by the body from the charcoal heater is always the same, just that the man did not feel it due to the wound that covered his skin.”

“Similarly Māgandiya, due to ignorance of the reality in sense pleasures, beings develop distorted perceptions of permanence,

happiness and self whereby they attach to the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body. When one is detached and free from sensual pleasures he will not crave just like that person who would not be willing to scratch or cauterize the skin after the wound is cured.

The suffering the beings are subjected to now, was the same in the past, and will be in the future, but our wrongful conceptions deceive us from the reality. The man experienced a scintilla of relief when he cauterized the wound; sensual pleasures are identical to that as there is a touch of pleasure. Only a Buddha sees this and reveal to the world.”

“Do you think that any person, whether a man, king or anyone who is indulged in pleasures will abandon those and seek relief?, no Māgandiya, not until one begins to observe arising ceasing of the five clinging aggregates and see with wisdom the origin, the disappearance, the gratification, the danger, and the escape from sensual pleasures. As long as one is attached to the eye, ear, nose, tongue & body, he will be attracted to visible form, sound, odour, taste and tangibles”

The Buddha then exulted as follows,

<i>arogya parama labha</i>	“The greatest of all gains is health
<i>nibbana paraman sukhan</i>	Nibbāna is the greatest bliss,
<i>ashtangikocha maggan</i>	The eightfold path is the best of paths
<i>kheman amatha gamini</i>	For it leads safely to the Deathless.”

“This is so great and its rightly said acclaimed Māgandiya, as it is said exactly like that in our books.”

The Buddha asked, “How is it said in your books Māgandiya, can you explain?”

While running his fingers over his hands and the body Māgandiya replied, “as I hear from my teachers that stanza confirms that physical health is the supreme gain.”

“This solemn utterance was pronounced by the previous Arahaths (perfectly enlightened ones)” the Buddha Remarked; “but now it has come down to worldlings and misconstrued by different teachers through generations. They believe that *Arogya Parama Labha* (greatest of

all gains is health)' means physical wellbeing is the supreme gain."

## **The Parable of the Blind Man**

"I will explain this to you with another parable, A blind person hears about cleanliness and purity in wearing white clothes. He goes to a tailor and asks him to make a white dress. The tailor tricks him by making a dress with dirty & oily cloth which the blind person wore with pride not being able to see what he is wearing. However much his friends tried to convince him that he was wearing a dirty dress he did not believe."

The belief of the wrong interpretation is like the blind persons belief that he is wearing a white dress. Mere physical wellbeing does not receive attention of the Noble eye, but of the worldly beings. It's not what the noble ones consider as being healthy.

"Master, Gauthama, I am so impressed please teach me your Dhamma", pleaded Magandiya.

The Buddha explained, "There is a blind person and his relatives take him to a good eye doctor who examine him and prescribe treatments he should follow. If the blind person fails to follow the doctor's instructions he won't be cured and

it would only be a stress to the Doctor. Similarly Māgandiya, I am inconvenienced by your responses, even though I was trying to explain Dhamma to you all this time, you did not agree with me.”

Māgandiya looked helpless and begged again to Buddha to preach to him

“Māgandiya, friends and relatives of that blind person takes him to a good eye doctor; he follows the instructions this time and gains his eyesight. Now he realises that his dress is not white as he thought and would throw it away with disgust. Moreover, he will become so angry with the tailor who deceived him.”

Similarly by gaining the clear vision in Dhamma, one realises what good health means and that it is experienced only by attaining Nibbana.

**Blindness is the ignorance or delusion.  
Gaining the eye sight is seeing the truth.  
The dirty dress is five clinging aggregates;  
consciousness is the tailor who deceives  
the blind man. Worldly beings are deceived  
until an enlightened person comes along to  
cure their blindness and show them the  
truth.**

Worldly beings should understand how they create suffering by clinging onto five clinging aggregates. Until one sees the truth he or she won't see five clinging aggregates. The Blessed one has preached that **Five Aggregates of Clinging are suffering or *Dukkha*, identifying them as diseases, tumours, and darts. Therefore he preached that by cessation of these one becomes truly healthy which he hailed as the supreme gain.**

What gets discarded by following Buddhist teachings is the falseness or delusion & craving, not what Māgandiya believed as the Truth. His view was in accordance with the worldly belief of one extreme, that there is a person who goes from one life to another, the eternalist view. The other extreme is the belief that there is no life after death, the nihilist view. **The Buddha rejected both these views and preached the Middle Path, the Noble Eightfold Path<sup>9</sup> or *ashtangikocha maggan*, as referred in the stanza above with the Right View as the forerunner.**

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<sup>9</sup> Right View, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Action, Right Effort, Right Livelihood, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration

“When one is blind he tries to fit everything to his frame of mind. Teachings of the Buddha are beyond worldly beliefs,” the Buddha concluded.

“I have confidence in Master Gotama thus: ‘Master Gotama is capable of teaching me the Dhamma in such a way that I might rise up from this seat cured of my blindness.’”

*“Then Māgandiya, you should associate with true men. When you associate with true men, you will hear the true Dhamma. When you hear the true Dhamma, you will practise in accordance with the true Dhamma. **When you practise in accordance with the true Dhamma, you will know and see for yourself thus: ‘These are diseases, tumours, and darts; but here these diseases, tumours, and darts cease without remainder.** With the cessation of clinging (as me, mine & myself) comes cessation of being; with the cessation of being, cessation of birth; with the cessation of birth, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.’”*



*When this was said, the wanderer Māgandiya said: “Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent, Master Gotama! Master Gotama has made the Dhamma clear in many ways, as though he were turning upright what had been overthrown, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, or holding up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see forms. I go to Master Gotama for refuge and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of bhikkhus. I would receive the going forth under Master Gotama. I would receive the full admission.”* (<https://suttacentral.net>)

Māgandiya who hated to see Buddha before, rejoiced in Buddha’s teaching and requested to join the order as he saw the truth through dhamma and developed faith on the Buddha.

Buddha advised that Māgandiya will have to become a novice first and undergo four months’ of probation period before he can be ordained as a monk to which he agreed exclaiming, “Master, the Blessed one, I am ready to be on probation even for four years.” Then not long after going into solitary retreat, Māgandiya attained Arhathood.

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