

Section 10: The Profound Greatness of the Buddha's Teachings

In this section, we will delve into the profound and transformative Dhamma — the sublime teachings of the Blessed One. These teachings are not merely words; they are the timeless, unshakable truths that lead us to liberation from suffering. The Dhamma shines with unparalleled clarity, offering a path that transcends all suffering, reveals the true nature of existence, and leads beings to the ultimate peace of Nibbāna.

The teachings of the Buddha are not of ordinary origin. They arise from the depths of the Buddha's perfect wisdom and compassion. His words are infused with boundless love, understanding, and insight into the hearts and minds of all sentient beings. His guidance speaks to us not just as a doctrine, but as a living, breathing way of life, guiding us step by step toward our highest potential.

Hearing and learning the Dhamma is essential for those of us walking the noble path. It is the means by which we purify our minds, understand the nature of suffering, and cultivate the noble qualities of wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline. Through the Dhamma, we learn how to live in harmony with the world and how to transcend the pain and confusion that bind us.

May we take to heart the Buddha's timeless wisdom, let it awaken within us a deep yearning for peace, and strive to embody it in our every thought, word, and deed!

Dhamma is the Right Course

*“If through desire, hate, fear, or delusion
one transgresses against the Dhamma,
one's fame diminishes like the moon
in the dark fortnight.*

*If one does not transgress the Dhamma
through desire, hate, fear, or delusion,
one's fame becomes full like the moon
in the bright fortnight”ⁱ*

*“Therefore, one desiring the good,
aspiring for greatness,
should revere the good Dhamma,
recollecting the Buddhas' teaching:”ⁱⁱ*

Dhamma Factorsⁱⁱⁱ

These are **the four Dhamma factors**, primal, of long standing, traditional, ancient, unadulterated and never before adulterated, which are not being adulterated and will not be adulterated, which are not repudiated by wise ascetics and brahmins.

One should dwell free from longing
with a heart of good will.

One should be mindful and one-pointed in mind,
internally well concentrated.

The Dhamma is the Teaching of the Buddha

The Dhamma is the profound teaching of the Blessed One, the truth discovered by Him upon His awakening as a Samma Sambuddha. It is the path to freedom, leading to liberation from all worldly suffering.

In the following extract, we find a **clear definition of the Dhamma** and the reason why it was revealed.

“The Buddha’s teaching is called the Dhamma, a word that can signify both the truth transmitted by the teaching and the conceptual-verbal medium by which that truth is expressed in order that it can be communicated and made comprehensible. The Dhamma is not a body of immutable dogmas or a system of speculative thought.

It is essentially a means, a raft for crossing over from the “near shore” of ignorance, craving, and suffering to the “far shore” of transcendental peace and freedom ... Because his aim in setting forth his teaching is a pragmatic one—deliverance from suffering... Being struck by the arrow of craving, afflicted by ageing and death, humanity is in urgent need of help. The remedy the Buddha brings as the surgeon for the world (MN 105.27) is the Dhamma, which discloses both the truth of our existential plight and the means by which we can heal our wounds”.

Bhikkhu Bodhi ^{iv}

Dhamma will not decay

“The beautiful chariots of kings wear out,
This body too undergoes decay.
But the Dhamma of the good does not decay:
So, the good proclaim along with the good.” ^v

The Wheel of the Dhamma

The Dhamma is often referred to as the "**Wheel of the Dhamma**" (*Dhamma Chakka*), symbolizing the teachings of the Blessed One that cannot be reversed. Why? Because it is the Truth, set in motion by the Buddha. The following sutta explains this: ^{vi}

*“...Bhikkhus, **possessing five qualities**, the Tathāgata, the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One, sets in motion the unsurpassed wheel of the Dhamma. This wheel cannot be turned back by any ascetic, brahmin, deva, Māra, Brahmā, or by anyone in the world. What five? Here, the Tathāgata is one who knows what is good, who knows the Dhamma, who knows the right measure, who knows the proper time, and who knows the assembly. Possessing these five qualities, the Tathāgata sets in motion the unsurpassed wheel of the Dhamma, a wheel that cannot be turned back by anyone in the world.”*

Dhamma is the Vehicle of the Buddha

The Buddha appears in the world as a beacon of light, revealing the Truth – the Dhamma – to those lost in the fog of delusion, unaware of the path leading beyond the suffering of Samsara. With the Dhamma as his divine vehicle, he guides all beings across the turbulent waters of Samsara, from the near shore of suffering to the far shore of liberation. Through his

teachings, the Buddha offers us the means to transcend the endless cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, leading us to the peaceful shores of freedom and enlightenment.

In Dhammapada the following verse shows that all the Buddha's appears in the world, teaches Dhamma for the purification of the minds of beings:

Not to do any evil -to embrace the good;
to purify one's mind - this is the instruction of the Buddhas.^{vii}
(*Sabbapāpassa akaraṇam- Kusalass upasampadā*
Sacitta pariyōdapanam -Ētam Buddhāna sāsanaṃ)

Why the Buddha Came into the Human World?

In many scriptures, we find the Blessed One explaining that the purpose of his appearance in the human world is to teach the Dhamma to both humans and devas. **His mission is to show them the way to overcome suffering and break free from the cycle of rebirth**, which only leads to more suffering. The following excerpts from the scriptures highlight the central purpose of the Buddha's presence in the world.

The Buddha's Message of Suffering and Liberation

The Buddha understood deeply the immense suffering caused by birth, old age, sickness, and death. He wanted humanity to recognize that suffering is an inescapable part of life. He proclaimed:

*“Bhikkhus, if these three things—**birth, old age, and death**—did not exist in the world, the Tathāgata, the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One would not arise, and the Dhamma he teaches would not shine in the world...”^{viii}*

The Path to Overcome Suffering

But the Buddha did not leave humanity without hope. He showed that there is a way to transcend suffering. He explained:

“The Tathāgata, the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One...is the one who embodies the realization of true knowledge and liberation, the fruit of stream-entry, the path to arahantship, and the ultimate freedom from suffering.”^{ix}

The Buddha's Compassion for All Beings

The Buddha's care for the welfare of all beings shines through in his teachings. He said:

“Bhikkhus, there is one person who arises in the world for the welfare of many, for the happiness of many, out of deep compassion for the world. That one person is the Tathāgata, the Arahant, the Perfectly Enlightened One, who brings good, welfare, and happiness to devas and human beings alike.”^x

Through his wisdom, compassion, and guidance, the Buddha revealed the path to liberation and peace, offering a light for all who seek to overcome suffering.



The Samma Sambuddha ^{xi}

The Dhamma – Teachings That Lead to a Complete and Pure Life

In the following sutta, the Buddha explains:

*“Here, Upāli, the Tathāgata arises in the world—an arahant, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One. Having realized with his own direct knowledge the nature of this world, he makes it known to others. He teaches **the Dhamma that is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end, with the right meaning and phrasing**. Through this, he reveals the perfectly complete and pure spiritual life.”* ^{xii}

The Buddha’s teachings guide us to a life of purity, offering a path that leads to true understanding and liberation.

“A bhikkhu who enters an empty hut
with mind at peace finds
a superhuman delights
they rightly discern the Dhamma.”^{xiii}

Why the Buddha Taught the Dhamma?

The Blessed One’s universal compassion (*mahā karuna*) for all beings inspired him to teach the Dhamma, for the welfare and happiness of many. His deep concern for the suffering of the world motivated him to share the path of liberation. The following passage illustrates how his kindness and compassion led him to teach:

“ The Tathagata, awakened, who endured what is hard to endure, two thoughts occur: safety the first thought mentioned; seclusion the second... he dispeller of darkness, free of fermentation, the great seer who has gone beyond, reached attainment, gained mastery

crossed over the poisons; who's released in the ending of craving: that sage bears his last body, has shaken off Māra, I tell you, has gone beyond aging. As one standing on a rocky crag would see the people all around below, so the wise, with the all-around eye having scaled the tower made of Dhamma, having crossed over sorrow, gaze on those overwhelmed with sorrow, conquered by aging and death.”^{xiv}

Standing high on a rocky mountain –
you can see the people all around.
In the same way, the all-seer, so wise-
having ascended the Temple of Truth,
Rid of sorrow, looks upon the people-
Swamped with sorrow, oppressed by aging and death.^{xv}

The Buddha, having attained enlightenment, saw the suffering of all beings and, moved by boundless compassion, shared his wisdom to guide them towards the cessation of suffering.

The Buddha Acts Like a Skilful Surgeon

In the *Sunakkhatta Sutta* (MN:105), the Blessed One compares himself to a skilful surgeon. Just as a surgeon uses a knife to remove poison from a wound caused by an arrow, the Buddha, as a spiritual surgeon, removes the poison of craving from the minds of others. In this simile, the arrow represents craving, the poison symbolizes ignorance (not knowing the Four Noble Truths), the knife represents Noble Wisdom, and the surgeon is the Buddha, the Fully Enlightened One. With great compassion, the Buddha, having seen the suffering of beings, steps forward to relieve them from the pain and misery of Samsara.

The Buddha said:

“Suppose, Sunakkhatta, a man is wounded by an arrow smeared with poison. The surgeon would cut around the wound with a knife, then use a probe to locate the arrow. After removing the arrow, the surgeon would expel the poisonous substance, leaving only a trace of it behind.

He would then say: ‘Good man, the arrow has been removed, and the poison has been expelled, leaving no trace to harm you. Eat only suitable food, wash the wound regularly, and anoint its opening to prevent pus and blood from covering it. Take care of the wound, and ensure it heals properly.’

“It is possible, Sunakkhatta, that a bhikkhu here might reflect: ‘Craving has been compared to an arrow by the Recluse; the poisonous substance of ignorance is spread by desire, lust, and ill will. That arrow of craving has been removed from me, and the poisonous substance of ignorance has been expelled. I am fully intent on Nibbāna.’ A person truly intent on Nibbāna would not pursue things unsuitable for one on the path to Nibbāna. Because they do not pursue unsuitable things, lust would not invade their mind. And because their mind is free from lust, they would not encounter death or suffering.”^{xvi}

People Delight to Hear the Dhamma

When the Buddha, with his boundless wisdom and infinite compassion, teaches the Dhamma, his words resonate deeply with all who listen. It is said that four extraordinary things unfold when the Tathāgata speaks: People, who are often caught in the web of attachment, conceit, excitement, and ignorance, find themselves drawn to his teachings. As the Buddha reveals the path to freedom from these very burdens, hearts are awakened, and listeners eagerly open their minds, seeking understanding. In the presence of the Tathāgata's words, they delight in the wisdom that leads to liberation, finding joy in the removal of their afflictions and the blossoming of true insight. ^{xvii}

Dhamma has One Taste: The Taste of Liberation

The Blessed One taught the Dhamma for the liberation of beings. Just as the vast ocean has but one taste—salt—the Dhamma too has one taste: the taste of liberation, the deliverance from suffering. As the Buddha proclaimed:

“...this Dhamma and discipline has but one taste, the taste of liberation.”^{xviii}

The Path to Liberation: Understanding the Four Noble Truths

The Four Noble Truths, revealed by the Blessed One on the night of his enlightenment, are the very heart of his teaching. These truths illuminate the path to liberation, guiding us out of the depths of suffering and into the light of freedom. The Dhamma, like a sweet and nourishing fruit, offers us the taste of liberation, a freedom that transcends all worldly pain. When we wholeheartedly embrace and follow the path laid out by the Buddha, we are assured of the ultimate goal—freedom from suffering.

In essence, the Four Noble Truths are: ^{xix}

1. There is suffering in this world,
2. It arises from craving,
3. When craving is abandoned, suffering ceases,
4. The way to freedom is through the Noble Eightfold Path. ^{xx}

By understanding and practicing these truths, we are set on a journey to lasting peace and liberation.

The Importance of Understanding the Four Noble Truths

In the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (DN:16), the Blessed One emphasized the profound significance of understanding the Four Noble Truths. He said:

“...It is through not understanding, not penetrating the Four Noble Truths that both I and you have long wandered through the cycle of birth and death. But through understanding and penetrating these same truths, the craving for becoming is cut off, the root of becoming is destroyed, and there is no more rebirth.”

*“Not seeing the Four Noble Truths as they are,
Having long traversed the round from life to life,*

*These being seen, becoming's supports pulled up,
Sorrow's root cut off; rebirth is done."*

"Bhikkhu, not knowing suffering, not knowing the origin of suffering, not knowing the cessation of suffering, not knowing the way leading to the cessation of suffering: this is called ignorance, bhikkhu, and it is in this way that one is immersed in ignorance" ^{xxi}

Venerable Sāriputta further highlighted the importance of these truths with the following simile:

"Friends, just as the footprint of any living being that walks can fit within the footprint of an elephant, and the elephant's footprint is considered the largest and most significant, so too, all wholesome states can be included within the Four Noble Truths." ^{xxii}

In these teachings, the Buddha and his disciples underscored that understanding the Four Noble Truths is not just important—it is essential for the cessation of suffering and the attainment of liberation. All paths to wisdom and freedom are contained within them.

Knowing the Four Noble Truths: The Foundation of the Holy Life

The Buddha instructed the Sangha on the essential practice of reflecting on the Four Noble Truths:

"Bhikkhus, when you reflect, you should contemplate: 'This is suffering'; 'This is the origin of suffering'; 'This is the cessation of suffering'; 'This is the path leading to the cessation of suffering.' Why is this important? Because such reflection is beneficial, fundamental to the holy life, and leads to disenchantment, to detachment, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, and ultimately to Nibbāna." ^{xxiii}

Understanding and contemplating the Four Noble Truths is the very essence of the spiritual path, guiding one toward ultimate liberation.

Realizing the Four Noble Truths: The Path to Nibbāna

Attaining Nibbāna is only possible through the direct realization of the Four Noble Truths. The following sutta emphasizes this profound truth:

"Bhikkhus, all ascetics and brahmins in the past who fully awakened to reality did so by realizing the Four Noble Truths as they truly are. All ascetics and brahmins in the future who will fully awaken to reality will do so by realizing the Four Noble Truths as they truly are. Likewise, all ascetics and brahmins in the present who have fully awakened to reality have done so by realizing the Four Noble Truths as they truly are." ^{xxiv}

Thus, the realization of the Four Noble Truths is the key to awakening and the gateway to ultimate liberation.

The Noble Eightfold Path: The Journey to Liberation

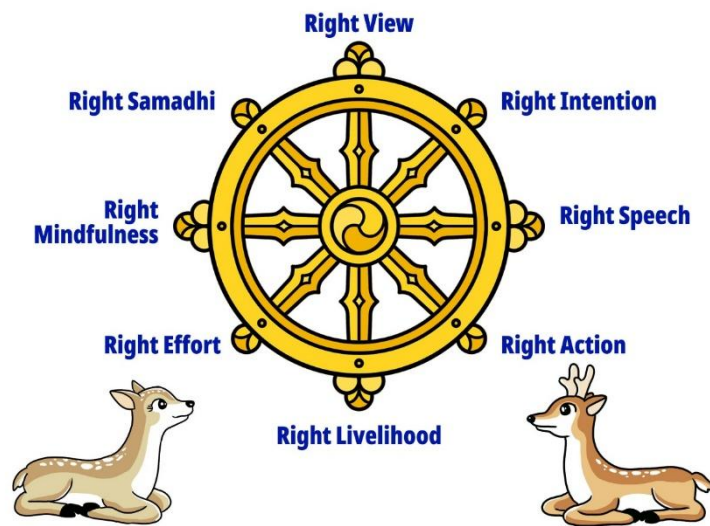
The Noble Eightfold Path, the fourth of the Four Noble Truths, is the sacred road that leads to the culmination of the spiritual journey. Known as the *Middle Way*, it is the noble path that

transcends extremes and fulfills the highest purpose of life—the complete liberation from the endless cycle of suffering in *Samsāra*.

In his first discourse, the Blessed One expounded this profound path with these words: ^{xxv}

"And what, bhikkhus, is that middle way, realized by the Tathāgata, which gives rise to vision, which leads to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to Nibbāna? It is this Noble Eightfold Path: right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right samadhi."

This timeless path, illuminated by the Buddha, is the way to true awakening—the path to ultimate freedom and peace.



Factors of The Noble Eightfold Path ^{xxvi}

The Noble Eightfold Path: An Ancient and Timeless Way

The Noble Eightfold Path is not a new teaching but an ancient and timeless road walked by the Perfectly Enlightened Ones of the past. The Buddha himself affirmed this in the following words:

"Bhikkhus, I have seen the ancient path, the ancient road traversed by the Perfectly Enlightened Ones of the past. And what is that ancient path, that ancient road? It is none other than this Noble Eightfold Path... Having directly realized this, I have proclaimed it to the bhikkhus, the bhikkhunīs, the male lay followers, and the female lay followers. As a result, this holy life has flourished and prospered, becoming well-established, widespread, and renowned among both devas and humans." ^{xxvii}

This sacred path, rediscovered and illuminated by the Blessed One, continues to guide countless beings toward true liberation and the highest peace—Nibbāna.

The Noble Eightfold Path: The Divine Chariot to Liberation

The Noble Eightfold Path is not merely a guide to right living—it is the Great Vehicle, the supreme chariot that leads beings toward ultimate freedom. Once, when Venerable Ānanda asked the Blessed One to reveal a divine vehicle within this Dhamma and Discipline, the

Buddha proclaimed:

“...this Noble Eightfold Path is known as ‘the divine vehicle,’ ‘the vehicle of Dhamma,’ and ‘the unsurpassed victory in battle.’” ^{xxviii}

The Buddha then described this path as a majestic chariot, perfectly equipped for the journey to liberation:

*“Its qualities of faith and wisdom
Are always yoked evenly together.
Shame is its pole, mind its yoke-tie,
Mindfulness the watchful charioteer.*

*The chariot’s ornament is virtue,
Its axle jhāna, energy its wheels;
Equanimity keeps the burden balanced,
Desirelessness serves as upholstery.*

*Good will, harmlessness, and seclusion:
These are the chariot’s weaponry,
Forbearance its armour and shield,
As it rolls towards security from bondage.*

*This divine vehicle unsurpassed
Originates from within oneself.
The wise depart from the world in it,
Inevitably winning the victory.”* ^{xxix}

The Noble Eightfold Path is the chariot of wisdom, powered by virtue and mindfulness, rolling steadily toward Nibbāna. Those who embark upon this great journey are destined to reach the highest peace, free from the fetters of Samsara.

The Noble Eightfold Path: The Straight and Fearless Way

Once, a devata approached the Blessed One, seeking guidance on how to escape from the enchanting Nandana Grove, filled with celestial nymphs. In response, the Buddha revealed the path that leads beyond all distractions and delusions:

*“The straightway—that is its name,
And ‘fearless’ is its destination.
The chariot is called ‘unrattling,’
Fitted with wheels of wholesome states.*

*A sense of shame is its leaning board,
Mindfulness its upholstery;
I call the Dhamma the charioteer,
With right view running out in front.*

***Whoever travels in such a vehicle—
Whether woman or man—
Will, by means of this noble path,
Draw ever closer to Nibbāna.*** ” xxx

The Noble Eightfold Path is the unwavering road to liberation, the fearless way that leads beyond all suffering. It is the chariot of wisdom, driven by the Dhamma itself, guiding those who embark upon it toward the ultimate goal—Nibbāna.

The Noble Eightfold Path Encompasses the Entire Spiritual Journey

The Noble Eightfold Path is the complete framework for the spiritual life, encompassing three essential divisions: **virtue (sīla), unification of mind (samādhi), and wisdom (paññā)**. These three pillars serve as the foundation for liberation, guiding one toward the highest goal—freedom from suffering.

In the Cūḷavedalla Sutta (MN: 44), Venerable Bhikkhunī Dhammadinnā explained how the Blessed One categorized the three divisions of the Noble Eightfold Path:

“...The Noble Eightfold Path is encompassed by the three aggregates. Right speech, right action, and right livelihood fall under the aggregate of virtue. Right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration belong to the aggregate of concentration. Right view and right intention are included in the aggregate of wisdom...”

Rebirth: A Fundamental Truth in the Buddha’s Teaching

The cycle of rebirth (*saṃsāra*) is a central truth revealed by the Blessed One, and understanding this process is essential for those who seek liberation. The Dhamma teaches that beings are bound to be reborn again and again due to their cravings and attachments. The ultimate purpose of the Buddha’s teaching is not only to guide beings toward restraint in this life but also to help them break free from the endless cycle of birth, aging, and death. The Buddha emphasized that true wisdom lies in seeing the dangers of continued existence and striving for the cessation of rebirth:

“Cunda, I do not teach you a Dhamma for restraining the corruptions that arise in the present life alone. I do not teach a Dhamma merely for their destruction in future lives, but one for their restraining in this life as well as for their destruction in future lives...” xxxi

By cultivating wisdom, virtue, and meditative insight, one gradually weakens the forces that perpetuate rebirth. Those who fully realize the Four Noble Truths uproot the causes of existence and attain the supreme peace of Nibbāna—where the cycle of rebirth is finally brought to an end.

Dhamma is Beneficial

Dhamma is beneficial to one who follows it accordingly, as it brings favourable results—wellbeing and happiness in this life and lives to come, it is the ultimate way to freedom. The Buddha says:

“And what, bhikkhus, is the Dhamma and beneficial? Right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right samadhi, right knowledge, and right liberation”^{xxxii}

Dhamma should be practice accordingly

“When the Dhamma is rightly expounded
those people who practice accordingly
are the ones who will go beyond
the realm of Death so hard to cross”^{xxxiii}

The Dhamma Possesses profound and Extraordinary Qualities.

The Dhamma is distinguished by six primary qualities

The Buddha described these six qualities as follows:

“...Mahānāma, you should recollect the Dhamma in this way: ‘The Dhamma is well expounded by the Blessed One—directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see, applicable, and to be personally experienced by the wise...’”^{xxxiv}

When a noble disciple recollects the Dhamma, his mind is not overwhelmed by lust, hatred, or delusion. Instead, his mind becomes steady and aligned with the Dhamma. A noble disciple with a steady mind gains inspiration in the meaning, inspiration in the Dhamma, and joy connected with the Dhamma. With the arising of joy, rapture follows. For one experiencing rapture, the body becomes tranquil. With a tranquil body, one feels pleasure. And for one experiencing pleasure, the mind becomes unified (samādhi).^{xxxv}

The Buddhist pay homage to the Dhamma by reflecting the **six qualities of the Dhamma**: *svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo sandiṭṭhiko, akāliko, ehipassiko, opanayiko Paccattam veditabbo viññūhiti*

1) well expounded-explained (svakkhato) 2) directly visible-can be experienced in this life (sanditthiko) 3) gives immediate results (akaliko) 4) invites people to come and see (ehipassiko-) 5) applicable- every step takes towards liberation (opanayiko) 6) to be personally experienced by the wise (paccattam veditabbo vinnuhiti)

Eight Astounding and Remarkable Qualities of the Dhamma

The Buddha described eight extraordinary qualities of this Dhamma that bring delight to his followers: ^{xxxvi}

1. Just as the great ocean gradually slopes, inclines, and deepens without sudden drops, so too, in this Dhamma and discipline, the attainment of final knowledge occurs through gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress—not abruptly.
2. Just as the great ocean remains stable and never overflows its boundaries, so too, when the Buddha has established a training rule for his disciples, they do not transgress it, even at the cost of their lives.
3. Just as the great ocean does not tolerate a corpse but swiftly carries it to the shore and washes it away, so too, the Saṅgha does not associate with those who are immoral, of bad character, or engaged in corrupt conduct. Such a person is swiftly removed, and even if seated among the Saṅgha, he is far from it, and the Saṅgha is far from him.
4. Just as the great rivers lose their former names and identities when they merge into the great ocean, so too, when individuals from the four social classes—khattiyas, brahmins, vessas, and suddas—renounce the household life and enter the Dhamma and discipline proclaimed by the Tathāgata, they abandon their previous names and social distinctions and are simply known as ascetics following the Sakyan son.
5. Just as no matter how many streams flow into the great ocean or how much rain falls upon it, no decrease or filling up can be observed, so too, even if countless bhikkhus attain final Nibbāna in the nibbāna element without residue, there is neither depletion nor increase in the Nibbāna element.
6. Just as the great ocean has only one taste—the taste of salt—so too, this Dhamma and discipline has only one taste: the taste of liberation.
7. Just as the great ocean contains numerous precious treasures—such as pearls, gems, and rare substances—so too, this Dhamma and discipline is abundant with treasures of wisdom, including the four establishments of mindfulness, the four right efforts, the four bases of spiritual power, the five faculties, the five strengths, the seven factors of enlightenment, and the noble eightfold path.
8. Just as the great ocean is home to mighty beings—creatures with bodies extending for hundreds or even five hundred yojanas—so too, this Dhamma and discipline is the dwelling place of great beings: the stream-enterer, the one practicing for the fruit of stream-entry; the once-returner, the one practicing for the fruit of once-returning; the non-returner, the one practicing for the fruit of non-returning; and the arahant, the one striving for full liberation.

The Dhamma is Directly Visible (Sandiṭṭhiko Dhammo)

This is yet another marvellous quality of the Dhamma. When one follows the Dhamma, one knows for oneself that it is being practiced as the Buddha taught.

When people asked how the Dhamma is directly visible, the Blessed One explained:

“...When there is lust, hatred, delusion, or any bodily, verbal, or mental misconduct within you, you know: ‘There is lust, hatred, and delusion within me.’ And when there is no lust, hatred, or delusion within you, you know: ‘There is no lust, hatred, or delusion within me.’ In this way, the Dhamma is directly visible, immediate, inviting one to come and see, applicable, and to be personally experienced by the wise.” xxxvii

The Path to Learning and Practicing the Dhamma

Training in and learning the Dhamma is a continuous process. The culmination of this training is liberation—the attainment of final knowledge and the realization of noble attainment as an Arahant. The Buddha often described learning and practicing the Dhamma as a gradual process. The following passages from the suttas illustrate this principle:

Gradual Training

The Buddha emphasized that final knowledge is not attained instantly but unfolds step by step through dedicated practice:

“Bhikkhus, I do not say that final knowledge is attained all at once. On the contrary, it is achieved through gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress.”^{xxxviii}

Gradual Practice

The following passage outlines the step-by-step progression of training in the Dhamma:

“And how is final knowledge attained through gradual training, gradual practice, and gradual progress?”^{xxxix}

Here, one who has **faith** in a teacher seeks him out. Upon **visiting** him, he pays **respect**; in showing respect, he **listens attentively**. By listening, he **hears the Dhamma**; having heard the Dhamma, he **memorizes** it. He then **examines** the meaning of the teachings he has memorized. Through examination, he gains a **reflective acceptance** of those teachings. When this reflective acceptance arises, **zeal springs up**. With zeal, **he applies his will**. Applying his will, he **scrutinizes the Dhamma**. With scrutiny, he **strives diligently**. Through resolute striving, he **realizes** with his own body the supreme truth and sees it by penetrating it with wisdom.”^{xl}

Gradual Learning

In the Cankī Sutta (MN:85), the Blessed One elaborates on the gradual process of learning and training in the Dhamma, culminating in liberation. The key stages are summarized as follows:

1. First, one must establish faith in the Dhamma, which requires finding a suitable teacher.
2. With faith in the teacher, one visits him.
3. Upon visiting the teacher, one pays respect.
4. Through respect, one develops attentiveness to the teacher’s words.
5. By attentively listening, one hears the Dhamma.
6. Having heard the Dhamma, one memorizes it.
7. One then examines the meaning of the teachings.
8. Through examination, one gains a reflective acceptance of the teachings.
9. With reflective acceptance, zeal arises.
10. With zeal, one applies effort and willpower.
11. With applied effort, one scrutinizes the Dhamma.
12. Through scrutiny, one strives for realization.
13. Through resolute striving, one directly realizes the supreme truth, seeing it through the penetration of wisdom.

This structured approach underscores the importance of persistence, dedication, and step-by-step cultivation in the journey toward liberation.

A Disciple's Journey in Learning the Dhamma

The path of learning and training in the Dhamma is one of dedication, perseverance, and deep reflection. In the following sutta, Venerable Ānanda beautifully describes the process of mastering the Dhamma as he understood it from the Buddha's teaching: ^{xli}

1. A bhikkhu first learns the Dhamma—comprising discourses, mixed prose and verse, expositions, verses, inspired utterances, quotations, birth stories, profound accounts, and questions-and-answers.
2. He shares the Dhamma with others, teaching it in detail just as he has heard and learned it.
3. He encourages others to recite the Dhamma, ensuring they learn it thoroughly and preserve its purity.
4. He himself regularly recites the Dhamma with precision, deepening his understanding.
5. He reflects upon the Dhamma, examines its meaning, and contemplates it deeply as he has heard and learned it.
6. During the rains retreat, he resides in a monastery where learned elder bhikkhus dwell—those who are well-versed in the teachings, heirs to the noble heritage, experts in the Dhamma, the discipline, and the deeper principles. From time to time, he approaches them with humility and asks: **“Bhante, how is this? What is the meaning of this?”**

The venerable ones then reveal to him what was previously unclear, illuminate what was obscure, and dispel his doubts about intricate aspects of the teaching. Through this sincere inquiry and guidance:

- He hears teachings he had not heard before.
- He does not forget the teachings he has already learned.
- He recalls and contemplates familiar teachings.
- He gains deeper insight into what he had not previously understood.

Thus, a disciple walks the noble path of learning, not merely accumulating knowledge but cultivating wisdom, deepening faith, and moving ever closer to liberation.

The Importance of Reciting the Dhamma

Recitation plays a vital role in learning and training in the Dhamma. It ensures the preservation, understanding, and transmission of the teachings. The Buddha emphasized this by saying:

“...Cunda, all of you to whom I have taught these truths, realized through super knowledge, should come together and recite them—aligning meaning with meaning and expression with expression—without discord. In doing so, this holy life will endure and remain firmly established for a long time, for the benefit and happiness of the many, out of compassion for the world, and for the welfare, benefit, and happiness of both devas and humans...”^{xlii}

The things that should be recited are the 37 factors of enlightenment. ^{xliii}

Through diligent recitation, the Dhamma is safeguarded, enabling future generations to walk the noble path toward liberation.

Understanding the True Goodness of the Dhamma

To walk the noble path and fulfill the spiritual life, one must clearly distinguish between the true Dhamma (Dhamma-truth) and what is not Dhamma (adhamma). Recognizing this difference is essential for one's progress toward liberation.

Thus, the Buddha proclaimed:

“Bhikkhus, what is non-Dhamma and harmful should be understood, and what is the Dhamma and beneficial should also be understood... And what, bhikkhus, is the Dhamma and beneficial?” ^{xliv}

It is:

- Right View,
- Right Intention,
- Right Speech,
- Right Action,
- Right Livelihood,
- Right Effort,
- Right Mindfulness,
- Right Samadhi
- Right Knowledge,
- and Right Liberation.”

By cultivating and embracing these ten qualities, one walks firmly on the path of truth, dispelling ignorance, and illuminating the way to ultimate freedom. The true Dhamma is not merely to be known—it is to be realized, lived, and embodied in every thought, word, and action. ^{xxlv}

Wrong View Is Not the Dhamma

The Blessed One clearly taught that non-Dhamma is the direct opposite of the Dhamma. Venerable Ānanda later explained this profound truth to the Saṅgha:

“...Friends, wrong view is non-Dhamma, while right view is the Dhamma. The numerous harmful and unwholesome qualities that arise due to wrong view led to suffering. Conversely, the countless wholesome qualities that flourish through the development of right view bring true benefit...” ^{xlvi}

In this way, Venerable Ānanda emphasized that the Dhamma—the noble path with its ten factors—supports and fulfills the spiritual life. On the other hand, non-Dhamma leads one astray, bringing harm and hindrance to spiritual progress. Recognizing this distinction is essential for those who seek liberation.

With that note we will end this section. The next section (11-1) will focus on Advice and Guidance to the Sangha

End Notes: Section 10

- ⁱ AN4:19
- ⁱⁱ AN4:21
- ⁱⁱⁱ AN4:29
- ^{iv} MN: Introduction, p. 16
- ^v SN3:3 (3Aging and Death sutta)
- ^{vi} AN5: 131 (Kings suttas -Continuing to Turn the Wheel.
- ^{vii} Dhp:183
- ^{viii} AN10: 76 (Incapable sutta)
- ^{ix} AN1: 175 -186 suttas.
- ^x AN1:170.1
- ^{xi} AI generated image.
- ^{xii} AN10:99 (Upāli sutta)
- ^{xiii} Dhp:361.
- ^{xiv} Iti:38.
- ^{xv} Iti:38..
- ^{xvi} MN:105
- ^{xvii} AN4: 128 (Astounding sutta)
- ^{xviii} AN8:19 (9Pahārāda sutta).
- ^{xix} Dhammachakkappavattana sutta- Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma: SN: 56: Saccasamyutta.
- ^{xx} In the above sutta gives a detail descriptions of the Four Noble Truths, more details regarding the Four Noble Truths see SN: Saccasamyutta.
- ^{xxi} SN56: 17 (Ignorance sutta).
- ^{xxii} MN: 28
- ^{xxiii} SN56: 8 (Reflection sutta)
- ^{xxiv} SN56: 6 (6 Ascetics and Brahmins sutta)
- ^{xxv} SN56: 11 (Setting in Motion the Wheel of the Dhamma)
- ^{xxvi} Source: <https://buddhism.net/>
- ^{xxvii} SN12: 65. (The city sutta)
- ^{xxviii} SN45:4 (The Brahmin sutta)
- ^{xxix} SN45:4 (The Brahmin sutta).
- ^{xxx} SN1:46 (6 Nymphs sutta)
- ^{xxxi} DN: 29 (Pasadika Sutta) * This sutta was addressed to Venerable Chunda, younger brother of Venerable Sāripta.
- ^{xxxii} AN10: 113 (Non-Dhamma sutta)
- ^{xxxiii} AN10: 117 (Saṅgārava sutta)
- ^{xxxiv} AN11: 11 & 12 (Mahanama)
- ^{xxxv} Ibid.
- ^{xxxvi} AN8: 19 (Pahārāda sutta
- ^{xxxvii} AN6:47 & 48.
- ^{xxxviii} MN: 70 (Kīṭāgiri Sutta, para. 22-23)
- ^{xxxix} MN: 70 (Kīṭāgiri Sutta, para. 22-23).
- ^{xl} MN: 70 (Kīṭāgiri Sutta, para. 22-23).

^{xli} AN6:51 (Ānanda sutta)

^{xlii} DN: 29 (Pasadika Sutta, para-17)

^{xliii} Bodhipakkhiya-dhamma- 37 factors pertaining to enlightenment-for further information: **see:**

DN:29, SN: Suttas of Mahavagga, DN:16 (Mahaparinibbana sutta).

^{xliv} AN 10:113 ,114 & 115.

^{xliv} AN 10:113 ,114 & 115.

^{xlvi} AN 10:113 ,114 & 115.