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RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH: THE WAY TO THE END OF SUFFERING

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Abstract

The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path are a concise summary of the Buddha's teachings. The first addresses the doctrinal side and asks for knowledge as the primary reaction; the second addresses the discipline side in the total sense and urges practice as the immediate reaction. These two ideas combine to form an inseparable whole in the teaching framework known as the dhamma-vinaya, the doctrine-and-discipline, or simply the Dhamma. The fact that the Noble Eightfold Path is the final of the Four Noble Truths and that the comprehension of the Four Noble Truths is the first component of the Noble Eightfold Path, proper perspective, ensures the internal coherence of the Dhamma. As a result, the formula of the Four Noble Truths, including the Noble Eightfold Path, and the Four Noble Truths containing the Noble Eightfold Path allow for the penetration and inclusion of the two principles.

Keywords: The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Noble Path

Introduction

Given this fundamental oneness, it would not be very sensible to ask which of Dhamma's two facets, the theory or the path, is more valuable. But if we did run the danger of being meaningless by posing that query, the road would have to be the solution. The instruction is brought to life by the road, which makes it the most important. The way transforms the Dhamma

into a continuously developing reveal of reality from a set of abstract formulations. It offers a solution to the suffering issue that the instruction begins with.

Additionally, it helps us achieve the teaching's primary objective of suffering freedom in our own lives, where it alone acquires genuine value. While doing the Noble Eightfold Path is more important than

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learning it intellectually, it is necessary to comprehend and follow it effectively and thoroughly. In actuality, the practice is a component of adequately understanding the route. It is a component of the proper perspective, the first path element, and the precursor and guide for the remaining path. Thus, while initial enthusiasm suggests that the process of intellectual comprehension may be set aside as a nuisance diversion, further reflection reveals that it is crucial to the practice's eventual success.

Getting Rid of Pain: The Way

Out of pain comes the desire to find a spiritual way. It doesn't begin with glitz and excitement; instead, it starts with the unpleasant feelings of hurt, letdown, and bewilderment. Suffering, however, must be more than something that is only passively received from without if it is to give rise to a genuine spiritual inquiry. It must cause an internal awakening, a perspective that breaks through our complacent complaisance with how we typically interact with the outside world to see the insecurity lurking under the surface. It can cause a severe personal crisis when this realization strikes, even briefly. It challenges established objectives and moral principles, ridicules our daily concerns, and renders familiar pastimes resolutely unappealing.

Such adjustments are typically not welcomed at first. We fight to chase away unhappiness with fresh endeavors while suppressing our doubts and denying our vision. However, once the torch of investigation is kindled, it never goes out. Suppose we do not allow ourselves to be carried away by superficial adjustments or slouch back into a patched-up version of our natural optimism. Eventually, the original glimmer of insight will flare up again, confronting us with our fundamental predicament. When there are no more options for escape, that's when we're ready to look for a solution to put an end to our unease.

We are confronted with the difficulty of selecting a route that will take us to real enlightenment and freedom once we determine that we have outgrown eclecticism and are ready to commit to one particular path. If we take the time to think about it, it will become evident that finding a solution to alleviate suffering is the most important thing. All issues may eventually be

boiled down to the point of torture, so we need an answer to stop this issue. These two qualifiers are significant. To put an end to suffering ultimately, in all of its manifestations, and finally, the route must go there. Only then can suffering come to an irrevocable conclusion.

Three standards for evaluation can be used in this investigation's three criteria:

¹The teaching must first present a complete and truthful picture of the spectrum of suffering. The road it lays out will most likely be faulty and fail to produce an acceptable resolution if the portrait of pain it presents is inadequate or flawed. To find relief from pain, just as a sick person requires a doctor who can fully and accurately diagnose his disease, we also need a teaching that accurately accounts for our feelings.

²The second requirement requires accurately examining the factors contributing to suffering. A review of the visible signs cannot serve as the end of the lesson. It must correctly define those causes and delve past the level of symptoms to reach the root causes. A teacher's chances of successfully treating a problem are slim if he does an incorrect causal analysis.

³The path itself is directly relevant to the third requirement. It states that the teaching's recommended approach must end suffering at its root. This implies that it must offer a way to end the pain by eliminating its sources. Its worth is eventually zero if it cannot achieve this fundamental resolution. The suggested course could alleviate symptoms and give us the impression that everything is fine. Still, a person suffering from a terminal illness cannot afford to choose cosmetic surgery while the underlying cause of his condition is still alive and well.

In conclusion, three requirements for teaching can be used to support claims that it can lead to the end of suffering: first, it must present an accurate and comprehensive picture of the types of grief; second, it must analyze the causes of suffering precisely; and third, it must give us the tools to eliminate the causes of suffering. Examining the diverse spiritual practices in light of these standards is not the place for it. The Dhamma, the Buddha's teaching, and the remedy it

provides for the issue of suffering are the only things that interest us.

Because it is presented as a message of liberation from suffering that claims to be verified in our own experience rather than as a collection of beliefs about the origin and end of things that need religion, it is apparent from the teaching's very character that it should be relevant to this issue. That message is accompanied by a practice regimen that will end the misery. The Noble Eightfold Path (*ariya atthangika magga*) is followed in this manner. The Buddha's teachings are centered on the Eightfold Path. Even his students praised him, calling him "the arouser of the path unseen before, the producer of the path unseen before, the declarer of the path unseen before, the knower of the path, the seer of the path, and the guide along the path." And he extends an invitation to the seeker with the promise and instruction: "You must exert yourself. Buddhas solely serve as instructors. The path practitioners who meditate are freed from the shackles of evil. The Buddha's description of the variety of suffering, his analysis of its origins, and the program he proposes as a treatment are the three criteria we must evaluate the Noble Eightfold Path against to determine if it meets the requirements for being a viable path to freedom.

Variety of Suffering

The Buddha makes the issue of suffering the core foundation of his teaching, not just a passing reference to it. By stating that existence is inextricably linked to something he refers to as *Dukkha*, Buddha introduces the Four Noble Truths that summarise his teaching. Although the Pali term is sometimes translated as suffering, it refers to something more profound than just affliction and unhappiness.

It alludes to a fundamental unhappiness that permeates everyone's existence, save for the enlightened. Sometimes this unhappiness manifests as sadness, grief, disappointment, or despair. Still, more often, it lingers on the outskirts of our awareness as a generalized sensation that things are never quite right and never entirely sufficient to live up to our idealized expectations of what they ought to be. According to the Buddha, the sole spiritual issue is this truth of

Dukkha. He says he only teaches *Dukkha* and its cessation, or simply suffering and its conclusion. He continues by exposing *Dukkha*'s various overt and covert appearances. He begins with what is close at hand, the suffering that is a part of the actual bodily activity of living. The occurrences of birth, aging, and death, as well as our vulnerability to disease, mishaps, and injuries, as well as hunger and thirst, are examples of where *Dukkha* may be seen. It reappears in our inner responses to unfavorable circumstances and events, such as grief, rage, frustration, and terror sparked by traumatic separations, unpleasant encounters, and unfulfilled desires. According to the Buddha, *Dukkha* may affect even our joys.

According to the Buddha, the cycle of rebirths—also known as *samsara*, or "the wandering" has been going on since the beginning of time. It lacks a starting point and a temporal beginning. No matter how far back in time we travel, we inevitably come across living things—including us in past lives—moving aimlessly between different states of existence. The Buddha talks about other worlds where rebirth might happen, including worlds of anguish, worlds of animals, worlds of people, and worlds of heavenly happiness. But none of these worlds can serve as a last resort. Every plane's life must come to an end.

The Origins of Suffering

As we mentioned, a teaching that claims to relieve suffering must provide a trustworthy explanation for how it came to be. Because if we wish to end the pain, we must deal with its causes and halt it at the source. To complete the reasons, one must understand what they are and how they operate; therefore, the Buddha devotes a significant portion of his teaching to disclosing "the truth of the origin of *dukkha*." He believes the root of the problem is within each of us, in a deep-seated illness that disrupts our mental health and taints our interactions with people and the outside world. The symptom of this disease is our propensity for certain unhealthy mental states known as *kilesas* in Pali, commonly translated as "defilements." The three defilements of greed, aversion, and illusion are the most fundamental. Greed (*lobha*) is a selfish desire that includes the need for material belongings, the impulse to survive, and the

want to enhance one's sense of self through positions of authority and status. Aversion (dosa) is the negation-response, manifesting as hostility, enmity, fury, and violence. Delusion (moha) refers to mental insensibility, a thick veil that obscures accurate comprehension.

The Buddha asserts that there is a single taint that gives rise to all others and a single root that sustains them all. Ignorance, or *avijja*, is this root. A lack of specific expertise or a simple lack of knowledge generally does not constitute ignorance. A significant body of itemized information may coexist alongside ignorance, which can also, in its way, be incredibly clever and resourceful. Ignorance is the primary darkness enveloping the mind and the cause of Dukkha. Sometimes, though, ignorance serves to obfuscate accurate comprehension. Other times, it plays a more active role: it assumes the position of the world's greatest liar, creating many false impressions and concepts that the mind mistakenly views as belonging to the outside world.

Taking Action to Stop the Sources of Pain

Eliminating pain at its source, or eradicating ignorance, will allow us to totally and entirely release ourselves from it. But how can one get rid of ignorance? The response is evident in light of the opponent's character. Knowing things as they are is necessary since ignorance is a situation in which this is not the case. Perceptual knowledge, or knowing while also perceiving, differs from purely conceptual knowledge, or understanding as an idea.

Wisdom (paññā) is the name for this type of knowledge. The warping effects of ignorance can be corrected by wisdom. It lets us understand things directly and quickly, without the usual mental barriers that our brains erect between the real and ourselves, such as concepts, views, and presumptions. These circumstances are essentially cognitive variables or aspects of awareness that form a systematic structure that may be referred to as a route in the truest sense of the word: a course of action leading to a destination. The Noble Eightfold Path, with its eight components—proper perspective, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness,

and right concentration—leads to the cessation of suffering.

The Buddha knows this route as the middle road (*majjhima patipada*). It is the middle path because it stays away from two extremes, two erroneous attempts to find relief from pain. One is an excessive indulgence in sensual pleasures, which aims to slake discontent by granting desire. The satisfaction gained from this strategy is superficial, fleeting, and lacking in genuine fulfillment. The Buddha was well aware of how intensely connected individuals may get to the pleasures of the senses. He understood how sensual desire can have a powerful hold over the human mind. He consistently stressed that giving up sensual desire is a necessary step on the path to the Ultimate because he was aware that this pleasure pales compared to the satisfaction that results from renunciation. Indulging in sense pleasures is therefore described by the Buddha as "low, common, worldly, ignoble, and not leading to the goal."

Self-mortification, which involves trying to find release by inflicting bodily harm, represents the other extreme. This strategy may have its roots in a sincere desire for deliverance, but it operates within the bounds of a false presumption that makes the effort fruitless. The mistake is blaming the body for being enslaved when the true culprit is the mind, a mind consumed by greed, aversion, and illusion. The suffering of the body is not only useless but also counterproductive since it interferes with a vital tool needed to purge the mind of these impurities. The Buddha, therefore, describes the second extreme as "painful, ignoble, and not leading to the goal."

In Conclusion, The Noble Eightfold Path, which stands apart from these two extreme viewpoints, is referred to as the middle path, but not in the sense that it achieves a compromise between the extremes, but rather that it transcends both viewpoints by avoiding the mistakes that each implies. By emphasizing sacrifice and acknowledging the futility of desire, the path avoids the extreme sense of indulgence. Far from being sources of enjoyment, passion, and sensuality are sources of agony that must be put to rest to find relief. However, the act of renunciation does not involve physical suffering. It

involves mental training, which requires a fit body as a solid foundation for the inside effort. Therefore, it is essential to take good care of and maintain the health of the body while also training the mind to produce liberating insight. The Noble Eightfold Road, sometimes called the middle road, "gives rise to vision, gives rise to knowledge, and leads to peace, direct knowledge, enlightenment, and Nibbana."

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