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HOW TO MAKE AN END TO SUFFERING

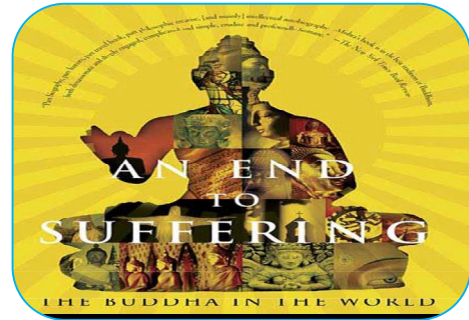
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ABSTRACT:

Do you want to make an end to suffering? If you do, please listen to the Kutaghara Sutta of Sacca Samyutta:

"Bhikkhus, if anyone should speak thus: 'Without having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of Suffering as it really is, without having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering as it really is, without having made the breakthrough to the noble truth of the Cessation of Suffering as it really is, without having made the breakthrough to the noble truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering as it really is, I will completely make an end to suffering' – this is impossible. 'Just as, bhikkhus, if anyone should speak thus, 'Without having built the lower story of a peaked house, I will erect the upper story,' this would be impossible; so too, if anyone should speak thus: 'Without having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of Suffering as it really is ... I will completely make an end to suffering' – this is impossible. 'But, bhikkhus, if anyone should speak thus:



KEY WORDS: *breakthrough , noble truth , penetrated.*

INTRODUCTION:

'Having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of Suffering as it really is, having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering as it really is, having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering as it really is, having made the breakthrough to the noble truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering as it really is, I will completely make an end to suffering' – this is possible. "Just as, bhikkhus, if anyone should speak thus: 'Having built the lower storey of a peaked house, I will erect the upper storey,' this would be possible; so too, if anyone should speak thus: 'Having made the breakthrough to the Noble Truth of Suffering as it really is ... I will completely make an end to suffering' – this is possible. "Therefore, Bhikkhus, an exertion should be made to understand: 'This is suffering.' An exertion should be made to understand: 'This is the origin of suffering.' An exertion should be made to understand: 'This is the cessation of suffering.' An exertion should be made to understand: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.' It is very important to know the Four Noble Truths to escape from the round of rebirths. This fact is clearly shown in the Kotigama Sutta of Samyutta Nikaya: Kotigama Sutta On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling among the Vajjians at Kotigama.

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The Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus thus: “Bhikkhus, it is because of not understanding and not penetrating the Four Noble Truths that you and I have roamed and wandered through this long course of samsara. What four? “It is, bhikkhus, because of not understanding and not penetrating the Noble Truth of Suffering that you and I have roamed and wandered through this long course of samsara. It is because of not understanding and not penetrating the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering ... the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering ... the noble truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering that you and I have roamed and wandered through this long course of samsara. “That Noble Truth of Suffering, bhikkhus, has been understood and penetrated. That Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering has been understood and penetrated. That Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering has been understood and penetrated. That Noble Truth of the Way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering has been understood and penetrated. Craving for existence has been cut off; the conduit to existence has been destroyed; now there is no more renewed existence.” This is what the Blessed One said. Having said this, the Fortunate One, the Teacher, further said this:

“Because of not seeing as they are The Four Noble Truths, We have wandered through the long course in the various kinds of births. “Now these truths have been seen; the conduit to existence is severed; Cut off is the root of suffering; Now there is no more renewed existence.” The Noble Truth of Suffering What is the Noble Truth of Suffering (dukkha-sacca)? In the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, the Buddha explains it in a brief way thus: ‘In short, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering.’ The five aggregates subject to clinging are objects of insight knowledge. What are the five aggregates subject to clinging? which mean the clinging aggregate of materiality, the clinging aggregate of feeling, the clinging aggregate of perception, the clinging aggregate of formations, the clinging aggregate of consciousness. What is the clinging aggregate of materiality? In Khandha Sutta of Khandha Vagga Samyutta (S22, 48) the Buddha taught:

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This is the explanation of the Buddha. The meaning is: ‘Whatever materiality there is, be it past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all these types of materiality that are the objects of clinging or grasping are called the clinging aggregate of materiality.’ In the same way the Buddha explains the clinging aggregates of feeling, perception, formations and consciousness. So you should understand that the dukkha-sacca-dhammas (things pertaining to the Noble Truth of Suffering) not only include the present five aggregates subject to clinging but also the future and past, internal and external, gross and subtle, inferior and superior, far and near five aggregates subject to clinging. Why are these five aggregates subject to clinging? Beings’ mind and bodies are composed of five aggregates. Due to ignorance, worldlings identify materiality as ‘I’, ‘mine’ or ‘myself.’ In this way, craving and clinging towards materiality occur. The same applies to craving and clinging towards feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness. So these five aggregates are subject to clinging for worldlings, who have not seen things or dhammas as they really are. Actually, except supramundane mentality all aggregates are aggregates subject to clinging. Without realizing the Four Noble Truths, one cannot attain Nibbana. If you want to attain Nibbana, you should try to realize the Four Noble Truths. Among the Four Noble Truths, dukkha-sacca is one. dukkha-sacca-dhammas include the aforementioned eleven types of five aggregates subject to clinging. So if you want to escape from the round of rebirths, you should try to understand all of them. The Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering What is the Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (samudaya-sacca)? In the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta the Buddha taught that craving is Noble Truth of the Origin of Suffering (samudayasacca). In Nidana Vagga Samyutta the Buddha taught that the dependent origination is also samudaya-sacca. So ignorance (avijja), craving (tanha), clinging (upadana), volitional formations (savkhara), and kammic force (kamma) are all samudaya-sacca. In short, all wholesome kammic forces that can lead to renewed existence and all unwholesome kammic forces are samudaya-sacca. In the Sacca Vibhanga the Buddha taught samudaya-sacca in five ways: 1. Craving (tanha) is samudaya-sacca. 2. The ten defilements (greed, hatred, delusion, conceit, wrong view, doubt, sloth, restlessness, lack of

moral shame, lack of moral dread) are also samudaya-sacca. 3. All unwholesome states (akusala dhamma) are samudaya-sacca. 4. All unwholesome states and three wholesome roots (alobha, adosa, amoha) that can lead to renewed existence are samudaya-sacca. 5. All wholesome states that can lead to renewed existence and all unwholesome states, or all wholesome kammic forces that can lead to renewed existence and all unwholesome kammic forces are samudaya-sacca. Both dukkha-sacca dhammas and samudaya-sacca dhammas are objects of vipassana insight knowledge, so if you want to practice vipassana to make an end to suffering, first you should try to understand them.

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The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering What is the Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (nirodha-sacca)? In the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta the Buddha taught that the remainderless cessation of craving is nirodha-sacca. In some other Suttas the Buddha taught that the remainderless cessation of dukkha-sacca is also nirodha-sacca. Why did the Buddha teach it in two ways? They are the same. Because of the remainderless cessation of craving, or because of the remainderless cessation of ignorance, craving, clinging, formations and kammic force, the five aggregates (dukkha-sacca) will completely cease without remainder. The five aggregates completely cease without remainder because of the cessation of causes. If the causes completely cease without remainder, the five aggregates will also completely cease without remainder. So they are the same. That is why sometimes the Buddha taught that the remainderless cessation of craving is nirodha-sacca, and sometimes He taught that the remainderless cessation of the five aggregates is nirodha-sacca. Actually Nibbana is nirodha sacca. The two types of cessation arise due to the Noble Path Knowledge, which takes Nibbana as an object. Four types of Noble Path Knowledge, taking Nibbana as an object, destroy defilements without remainder stage by stage. Due to the remainderless cessation of defilements, kamma cannot produce any aggregates after Parinibbana, the final cessation. So five aggregates also cease without remainder. But to understand Nibbana is very difficult for some disciples. Because of this reason the Buddha taught either of the two types of cessation to be nirodha sacca. Sometimes Nibbana is called asavkhata dhatu, unconditioned element. Therefore asavkhata, Nibbana, is a cause, two types of cessation are effects. So Nibbana can be considered either as a cause or as an effect. Nirodha-sacca can be either a cause or an effect. Again, the remainderless cessation of defilements is called Kilesa-Parinibbana = the final cessation of defilements without remainder. The remainderless cessation of five aggregates is also called Kandha-Parinibbana = the final cessation of five aggregates without remainder. Furthermore the remainderless cessation of defilements is also called Saupadisesa-Nibbana = having the substratum of life remaining, which means that although the defilements cease completely without remainder, the five aggregates still exist. The remainderless cessation of the five aggregates is also called Anupadisesa-Nirodha = the final cessation without any substratum, which means the final cessation of the five aggregates without remainder. For example, the Buddha's remainderless cessation of defilements arose in Him when He became the Enlightened One. His Four Noble Paths, taking the unconditioned element (Nibbana) as object, destroyed all defilements stage by stage without remainder at Gaya. Forty-five years later he took Mahaparinibbana, the final cessation of five aggregates without remainder at Kusinara . Nibbana is the unconditioned element, which is the object of the supramundane Four Noble Paths and Fruitions. However before realising Nibbana, during vipassana practice, there are two types of cessation that are taken as object. i.e. the remainderless cessation of defilements and the remainderless cessation of the five aggregates . The insight knowledge that realizes these objects is called Udaya-vaya-bana (the knowledge of the rising and passing away of formations). The Noble Truth of the way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering What is the Noble Truth of the way Leading to the Cessation of Suffering (magga-sacca)? It is the Noble Eightfold Path. Sometimes the Noble Eightfold Path is called 'magga-sacca'. But in the Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta, the Buddha called it 'dukkhanirodhagamini patipada ariyasacca' i.e. the noble truth of the practice leading to the cessation of suffering. These two names have the same

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meaning. There are two types of the Noble Eightfold Path: mundane and supra-mundane. To arrive at the supra-mundane Noble Eightfold Path, you must first develop the mundane Noble Eightfold Path. The supra-mundane Noble Eightfold path, arises only once in any individuals mind stream, and so is not itself developed. The mundane path however is developed gradually according to the cultivation of the individual. In the mundane Noble Eightfold Path, while you are practising vipassanâ, there are five factors of the Noble Eightfold Path present at the same time. For example, if you can discern the five aggregates and their causes, then you must pay attention to the three characteristics of these savkhara-dhammas (conditioned things). Both dukkha-sacca-dhammas and samudaya-saccadhammas are called savkhara-dhammas, formations. By seeing their impermanent nature, you must understand them as anicca. By seeing their nature of being oppressed by the arising and passing away, you must understand them as dukkha. By seeing their nature of not having a permanent self, you must understand them as anatta. While you are contemplating in this way, you know the impermanent nature, unpleasant nature and non-self nature of these savkhara-dhammas. This knowledge is called Right View. The application of the mind to these savkhara-dhammas and the impermanent nature, unpleasant nature and non-self nature of these savkharadhammas is called Right Thinking. Right Thinking always arises together with Right View. The effort you exert to see the impermanent nature, unpleasant nature and non-self nature of these savkhara-dhammas is called Right Effort. Mindfulness on the impermanent nature, unpleasant nature and non-self nature of these savkhara-dhammas is called Right Mindfulness. Concentration on the impermanent nature, unpleasant nature and non-self nature of these savkhara-dhammas is called Right Concentration. So while a meditator is practising vipassanâ, five factors of the Noble Eightfold Path are present. The three of Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood are the training of virtue. Before you practise samatha and vipassanâ, you must have undertaken the training of virtue. Thus altogether there are eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path. But the three factors of the training of virtue arise separate from the other five factors. These three do not arise together with the vipassanâ knowledge. It means they cannot arise together in the same consciousness moment, or within the same cognitive-process, in mundane noble path. At the end of vipassana practice, when a meditator realizes Nibbana, the eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path are present. They are called supramundane Noble Eightfold Path. Realizing Nibbana is called Right View. The application of the mind to Nibbana is called Right Thinking. The effort to realize Nibbana is called Right Effort. Mindfulness on Nibbana is called Right Mindfulness. Concentration on Nibbana is called Right Concentration. The defilements that can cause offences against Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood are destroyed by Path knowledge. So these three factors also arise together with Path knowledge. Thus while a meditator realizes Nibbana, all the eight factors of the Noble Eightfold Path are present. Samadhi Sutta How should you practice to know the Four Noble Truths? Please listen to the following passage from the Samadhi Sutta of Sacca Samyutta: "Bhikkhus, develop concentration. A bhikkhu who is concentrated understands dhammas as they really are. "And what does he understand as it really is? He understands as it really is: 'This is suffering (dukkha-sacca).' He understands as it really is: 'This is the origin of suffering (samudaya-sacca).' He understands as it really is: 'This is the cessation of suffering (nirodhasacca).' He understands as it really is: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.

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(magga-sacca).' "Bhikkhus, develop concentration. A bhikkhu who is concentrated understands dhammas as they really are. "Therefore, bhikkhus, an exertion should be made to understand: 'This is suffering (dukkha-sacca).' An exertion should be made to understand: 'This is the origin of suffering (samudaya-sacca).' An exertion should be made to understand: 'This is the cessation of suffering (nirodha-sacca).' An exertion should be made to understand: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering (magga-sacca).'" So to know the Four Noble Truths you should first develop concentration. There are forty samatha meditation subjects for concentration practice. You may choose any of them. Here I would like to first explain anapanasati meditation, mindfulness of breathing, and then explain how you should try to realize the Four Noble Truths. I should like to explain how to practice according

to the Mahasatipatthana Sutta. In the Sutta, the Buddha says thus: Mindfulness of Breathing ‘Bhikkhus, how does a bhikkhu abide contemplating the body in the body?’ Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu goes to the forest, or to the foot of a tree or to a secluded place. Then he sits down cross-legged, keeps his upper body erect and establishes his mindfulness to the object of his meditation. He breathes in mindfully; he breathes out mindfully. When he breathes in long, he understands: “I breathe in long.” When he breathes out long, he understands: “I breathe out long.” When he breathes in short, he understands: “I breathe in short.” When he breathes out short, he understands: “I breathe out short.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe in experiencing the whole breath (body) clearly.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe out experiencing the whole breath (body) clearly.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe in tranquilizing the whole breath formations.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe out tranquilizing the whole breath formations.” Just like a skilled turner or his apprentice, while he makes a long turn he understands: “I make a long turn.” While he makes a short turn, he understands: “I make a short turn.” In the same way, when a bhikkhu breathes in long, he understands: “I breathe in long.” When he breathes out long, he understands: “I breathe out long.” When he breathes in short, he understands: “I breathe in short.” When he breathes out short, he understands: “I breathe out short.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe in experiencing the whole breath (body) clearly.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe out experiencing the whole breath (body) clearly.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe in tranquilizing the whole breath formations.” He trains thus: “I shall breathe out tranquilizing the whole breath formations.” This is The Buddha’s instruction on mindfulness of breathing, especially for the attainment of jhana. In the passage, the word ‘here’ means in this Dispensation of The Buddha. By the word ‘here,’ dispensations other than the Buddha’s are excluded as they do not teach mindfulness of breathing in the complete way as it is taught in The Buddhadhamma. Outside The Buddha’s dispensation there is no one who can teach anapanasati in the complete way. It is taught only in The Buddha’s dispensation. For it is said: ‘Here we find a true recluse (samana); other schools are empty of recluses.’

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Suitable Places for Meditation the Buddha points out suitable places for meditators in the passage: ‘A Bhikkhu goes to the forest, to the foot of a tree or to a secluded place.’ This makes clear what is an abode appropriate to the meditator for the cultivation of mindfulness. The mind of the meditator has dwelt on visual objects and other sensual objects for a long time before he comes to meditate. He does not like to enter the road of meditation, because his mind is not tamed is not used to living without sensual pleasures. He is like a wild young bull who if he is harnessed to a cart always wants to run off the road. Before he comes to meditate, his mind constantly came into contact with various kinds of sensual objects, such as movies, pleasant music, delicious food, and enjoyable social life. And his mind took great delight therein. But now there are no movies, no music, etc. to please his eyes, ears, etc., and thus his mind is just like a fish taken out from water and put on the dry ground, jumping about in distress and longing for water. Now in-and out breath is just like the dry ground; it is too monotonous and unsatisfying to his mind which is ever longing for sensual pleasures. While sitting, instead of concentrating on the breath, he spends much of his time dwelling in past sensual pleasures that he enjoyed, or in future sensual pleasures that he expects to enjoy. But this is just a waste of time and is not helpful to mental cultivation. Even if he practices in this way for his whole life there will be no improvement for him. The Simile of a Wild Calf Thus, in order to overcome his bad habit he should repeatedly bring his mind back to the breath, keeping his mind on it as long as possible. In this way he begins to develop a new habit of concentrating on the breath. It is just like a cowherd who wishes to tame a wild calf nourished entirely on the milk of a wild cow. He leads that calf away from the cow to a stout post firmly sunk in the ground and then ties it to it. When that calf jumps here and there it finds that it is impossible to run away. Eventually it tires of struggling and crouches down or lies down at that very post. In the same way, he who wants to tame the wild mind that has for a long time been nourished on visible and other sensual objects leads the mind away from them and ushers it into a forest, to the foot of a tree or to a secluded place. Then he ties that mind to the post of the object of foundation of mindfulness, such as the breath, with the rope of mindfulness. His mind will also jump here and there.

When it cannot obtain the objects it had long grown used to and finds it impossible to break the rope of mindfulness and run away, it will finally sit or lie down at that very object by way of access and full absorption. Therefore, the ancient commentators said: As one who wants to break a wild young calf Would tether it to a stout stake firmly, here, In the same way the meditator should tie fast His own mind to the meditation object. In this way this abode becomes appropriate to the meditator. Therefore, it is said, 'this makes clear what abode is appropriate to the meditator for the cultivation of mindfulness.' Mindfulness of breathing is not easy to accomplish without leaving the neighborhood of a village because sound is a thorn to absorption. In a place that is uninhabited it is easy for the meditator to take up this meditation subject. Therefore, The Blessed One pointed out the abode suitable for that with the words, 'goes to the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to a secluded place.' The Buddha is like a master of the science of building sites because he pointed out the suitable abode for meditators.

Here you should also distinguish between the mundane path knowledge and supra-mundane path knowledge. The mundane path knowledge that sees the five clinging aggregates is the insight knowledge of the truth of suffering. The mundane path knowledge that sees the origin of suffering is the insight knowledge of the truth of the origin of suffering. The mundane path knowledge that sees that because of the remainder less cessation of the five causes the five aggregates will cease completely without remainder after Parinibbana is the insight knowledge of the truth of cessation. The mundane path is the path factors of the insight knowledges just mentioned. Right View (sammaditthi) is insight knowledge, and right thought (sammavayama), Right Effort (sammavayama), Right Mindfulness (sammāsati) and Right Concentration (sammāsamadhi) are associated with it. Before practicing meditation you have already observed morality consisting of Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood. Therefore, there are altogether eight factors of the mundane path. Sometimes meditators must contemplate insight knowledge as impermanent, suffering and no self. At that time he also understands the mundane path. So the mundane Right View knows the mundane Four Noble Truths. The supra-mundane noble path that takes Nibbana as object arises together with the path knowledge and the fruition knowledge. At that time supra-mundane Right View knows Nibbana, right thought applies the mind to Nibbana, Right Mindfulness remembers Nibbana, Right Effort is the effort to realise Nibbana, Right Concentration is the concentration on Nibbana, and Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood are also present. When a meditator realises Nibbana, why are Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood also present? The noble path knowledge destroys the defilements that can produce wrong speech, wrong action and wrong livelihood, so Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood are automatically present. Thus having endeavored by way of the Four Noble Truths, a person makes an end to suffering and arrives at peace (Nibbana). This is the doorway to liberation for the meditator devoted to mindfulness of breathing, anapanasati. The way to produce vipassana based on other samatha meditation subjects should be understood in the same way. Therefore, to make an end to suffering, we have to realize the Four Noble Truths. To realize the Four Noble Truths, we have to produce samatha and vipassana systematically in accordance with the Buddha's teaching.

May all of you realize the Four Noble Truths and make an end to suffering as soon as possible!

May all beings be able to live happily and healthily?

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