

III.

THE MOST EXCELLENT TRUTH
OF THE ANNIHILATION OF SUFFERING
NIBBĀNA

Everything is Anattā, not the *I*, and does not belong to my innermost essence, the whole external world as little as my corporeal organism together with consciousness. I am beyond all this, beyond the world. This was one of the truths which the Buddha had to tell us.

The second was this: All these alien things in which I see myself involved, for me are nothing but one endless chain of misery. Hence, the best thing I can do, if at all possible, is to free myself from them again.

From this, however, followed the necessity of getting a clear idea of the relationship in which we stand to these alien things, above all, of how we have come to them, and of how we ever and always keep on coming to them. This we now know. Taken as a whole, the case presents itself thus.

We grasp the world; we thirst and desire to remain in unbroken contact with it. This end alone is served by our "body endowed with six senses" constituting the apparatus for *contact* with the world of forms, sounds, odours, sapids, tangibles and ideas, on which account precisely, we could call it the six-senses-machine. This apparatus works in such fashion, that, when an organ of sense encounters a corresponding object, consciousness is immediately aroused, and reciprocally, consciousness already aroused is affected. In this consciousness we then first of all, and in fact, in the form of sensation and perception, are brought into *contact* with the object and thereby with the world.

Because thus our corporeal organism is the apparatus enabling us to come into contact with the world, therefore all our thirst is concentrated on maintaining and using this organism, as well as on replacing it, at the moment of its dissolution in death, by a new one. This is attained by a grasping of a new germ taking place in consequence of this thirst, which germ then develops again into a new organism.

Thus it is now; thus it has been through all the long past; and thus it will be on through all the future. Ever and again in our inscrutable essence, or what, as we know, is the same thing, out of the "Nothing" in consequence of the activity of the six-senses-machine there flames forth "consciousness, invisible, infinite, all-penetrating,"* in which we experience every single effect of the world and

* With this passage we shall deal later on.

thereby the world itself in its entirety, just by its coming into our consciousness. Everything, "water, earth, fire, air, long and short, small and big, the beautiful and the ugly,"¹⁹³ for us is present only with and in this our consciousness, which it enters by means of the organs of sense. In exactly the same way, particularly the bearer itself of these organs of sense, the vital body, enters into the consciousness, and in this way we receive our earliest knowledge also of it.*

By means of this consciousness at the same time is determined the direction in which the further activity of the six-senses-machine shall run its course.

But from all eternity consciousness has not sufficed to enlighten us as to the real nature of the processes, the bare knowledge of the existence of which it transmits to us. On the contrary, it becomes for us a direct instrument of delusion, inasmuch as we hold the corporeal organism to be our true essence, and its activity as the six-senses-machine to be the only adequate expression of this our essence, so that we regard ourselves as belonging to this world, and everything that is agreeable to our senses and in harmony with them, as furthering our true welfare, but everything repugnant to them as a hindrance to this true welfare. The immediate consequence of this is, that as soon as, through any organ of sense, an agreeable object in the form of an agreeable sensation, is presented to us, immediately craving for this object arises. If, however, the object presented evokes a disagreeable sensation, with equal promptness, detestation arises in us; thus precisely that which the Buddha understands as thirst. According to this, precisely in consequence of the state in which it finds itself, namely, of ignorance, our consciousness incessantly perpetuates itself. For the thirst, ever born anew from this ignorance, in our approaching death, brings about a fresh grasping and thereby creates new organs of sense, which have as their consequence the new up-flaming of consciousness.**

In another manner our relation to the world admits of being made as vividly evident:

* According to this, the element of consciousness stands between us and the world, or, as Schopenhauer says, imperfectly cognizant of the psychical processes: "Between things and ourselves there always stands *the intellect*." The element of consciousness is thereby as different from *me*, as from the *phenomena*; it stands *in the middle*.

** But why do I know nothing of the *immeasurable duration* of this process of consciousness? A curious question indeed! Why do you not know anything about the time you spent at the beginning of your present existence in the maternal womb? Why do you not know anything of your earliest childhood, or of your own existence every night, while you are lying in deep sleep? Why do you preserve in memory only the main events of your present life, so that a thousand scenes are forgotten for one that is remembered, and of the course of your own life you hardly know any more than of a novel you once read? Why, the older you grow, do events more frequently pass by without leaving a trace in your memory? Why is extreme age, an injury to the brain, or madness, able to take the memory entirely away? Because originally we do not possess the faculty of cognition and especially of memory, but have to acquire and learn them with much effort. Indeed, these faculties are even so essentially strange to us, that, despite the beginninglessness of our world-pilgrimage, we have not been able to develop them beyond the modest degree in which we possess them at present. For, on account of the trouble of developing them, we have always been content

We are nothing of what we appear to be, therefore we are in the most complete sense *without quality*, and thereby for knowledge, which can only have qualities for its object, we are *nothing* at all. But we are nothing only *for knowledge*; in ourselves we are the most real thing of all, for we are the very opposite of everything we have seen arise and pass away for countless milliards of years, yea, for eternities.

In the heavenly clearness of this "Nothing," from immemorial time and still to-day, consciousness flames up, as symptom that a something is disturbing this heavenly clearness, that a *contact* with something alien has set in. For only in consequence of irritation by some foreign body is consciousness aroused; where nothing is of what we might become conscious, there is also no ground for the arising of a consciousness.* "And of what does he become conscious? He becomes conscious of pleasure, and he becomes conscious of pain, and he becomes conscious of the absence of both pleasure and pain."¹⁹⁴ This means, the becoming conscious happens in the form of *sensation*. We feel something, a sensation, which immediately takes the form of *perception*; we perceive, what is felt through sensation, to be this corporeal organism, which at bottom is nothing but a collection of activities of will, and the external world made known to us through it. And because thus in the light of consciousness, what stirs within us and arouses consciousness, is recognized as a collection of motions of will, all of which have for their object, connection with the world, therefore we imagine ourselves to consist in them and express this in the sentence: I am nothing but will.

In truth, I am will just as little as I am consciousness. So far as the latter is concerned, as sufficiently follows from the foregoing, it is only the consequence of the former, and therefore inseparably bound up with it. It flames forth, as often as a piece of willing in the form of one of the six activities of sense manifests itself in me, and only then. As regards this willing, however, it is a mere emotion, a mere craving for something alien, which arises within my inscrutable essence, not because this kind of activity is peculiar to this my essence, so that it is *forced* to act in this way, but it is only able to rise, because the aroused element of consciousness is not giving clear light, and in consequence hangs over me like a dim cloud, so that objects do not appear to me as they really are. As soon as this state of *ignorance* is removed by the rise of knowledge in consciousness, and the cloud of ignorance thereby dispersed forever, the motion of willing *cannot* rise any more. Whoever as a child, ignorant of the effect of heat, once has put his hand on a heated stove and burnt himself severely, in future, as long as the remembrance of this lasts—and probably it will remain alive during his whole

to possess just as much of them as was needed for the maintainance of our life. But if we display the same energy with which one who wishes to master the piano, every day for hours, through many years, practises at his instrument, and pursue the right method, then we also, like the Buddha, may recover the back-going memory of our countless existences in the past.

* "To be conscious means: There are Objects for me" (Schopenhauer).

life—cannot any more will to touch a heated stove; *this* motion of will is extinguished in him for his whole life. Of course it follows, precisely from this example, as, moreover is self-evident, that mere abstract knowledge of the evil consequence of willing is not sufficient to remove it, but that direct actual knowledge of this must be obtained. I may explain to a child the pain which results from touching a hot stove as minutely as I please; curiosity will nevertheless at last lead it to touch the stove. Only after, in this way *directly* for itself, it has experienced the consequences of this its willing, does it possess actual knowledge in this direction. This direct, immediate knowledge of the perniciousness of a certain act of willing is thus the unfailing grave of the same. To this, there is no exception. To him who might answer that he knows very well the evil consequences of a certain direction of will, but notwithstanding is not able to crush it out, the reply must be made that in that case his knowledge is not yet sufficiently strong and direct. The stronger an inclination is, all the more, precisely through this its intensity, is real und complete cognition of its perniciousness made difficult. *The will falsifies cognition*, finding always new resources against confuting arguments, thereby overcoming them, let the resource appear ever so destitute of foundation to any third party. In short: Man makes a fool of himself. He does not *want* right insight when he is admonished to fight his passions. If this holds good, generally, during the times when these are slumbering, when the passions really break over him, the little morsel of insight he actually possesses, wholly disappears before his desires. Then these bury all reason beneath them. “To these five enjoyments of sense, o Brahmin, has the Brahmin Pokkharasāti, the Opamañña from Subhagavana, abandoned himself; enticed and blinded, he has fallen a prey to them, without seeing their misery, without thinking to escape from them. That he might understand or recognize or realize the supramundane deliverance, the highest *knowledge*,—this is impossible.”¹⁹⁵ Thus the generally known impossibility of changing one’s will, that is, one’s character, only proves our lack of knowledge of the way by which may be overcome the turbidity of cognition produced by the violence of willing. But if there is such a way—and there is one, which the Buddha points out to us in his Excellent Eightfold Path, as we shall see in detail later on—then we can translate ourselves into a state wherein our attitude towards our whole willing is as estranged and objective, as, for instance, that of a man who loves his life, towards a cup full of poison set before him, or to a poisonous snake shut up in a box. Then, just as clearly as this man perceives all the consequences of a drink from the cup, or of grasping the poisonous snake, we perceive the abysses into which our thirst for existence and welfare will inevitably lead us, if we yield to it. And then it is as impossible that this thirst should rise any more within us as that this man can will to drink from the cup of poison, or to lay hold of the poisonous snake:

“Just as if, Sunakkhatta, there were a drinking-vessel, with fine, aromatic contents, of pleasant taste, but impregnated with poison, and there came a man, who wants to live and not to die, who desires well-being and abhors woe. What do

you think, Sunakkhatta? Would the man empty the vessel, of which he knows: 'If I drink this, I must die or suffer deadly pains'?"

"Certainly not, Lord."

"Even so, Sunakkhatta, that a monk who bewares of the six domains of the senses and has discovered that *Grasping is the root of Suffering* ... might bring his body near to grasping, and let his mind cleave in any way: such a possibility there is not.

"Just as if, Sunakkhatta, there were a poisonous serpent, hissing angrily, and there came a man who wants to live and not to die, who desires well-being and abhors woe. What do you think, Sunakkhatta? Would the man stretch out his hand or his thumb towards the serpent, the poisonous, angrily hissing one, of which he knows: 'If this bites me, then I must die or suffer deadly pains'?"

"Certainly not, Lord."

"Even so also, Sunakkhatta, that a monk who bewares of the six domains of contact and has discovered that *Grasping is the root of Suffering* ... might bring his body near to grasping and let his mind cleave in any way: such a possibility there is not."¹⁹⁶

Thus all willing is unfailingly, of itself, killed by knowledge, by insight. Accordingly, the possibility of all willing is actually conditioned by the absence of this knowledge or insight, that is, by ignorance. But what is united with my essence only *conditionally*, what clings to me only *conditionally*, what only *conditionally* can rise out of me, that, for this very reason, I can also lose without myself being hurt thereby in my real constitution. It is nothing *essential*, but merely a quality adhering to me only *under certain conditions*, which falls off from me, when the condition is removed under which alone it is able to exist. Though thus on one hand, willing is self-evidently a quality of mine, as rising within me, on the other hand, it is equally clear that it represents only an *inessential* quality, which I can cause to disappear from me by removing its condition.

But if willing is not essential to me, then, of course, neither is my organism, which only arises in consequence of grasping caused by this willing, and fundamentally is nothing but the tool thus formed for the satisfaction of my willing. And just as little is this the case with my consciousness, which on its part only flames up, following upon the activity of the organism, and so, just as little with sensation, perception and the activities of the mind, which only become possible for me as consequence of the activities of the senses and of the element of consciousness aroused by them.* Thus, these also are mere *inessential* determinations of mine. Thereby, however, everything cognizable in me is recognized as inessential, and therewith also, from this point of view, the truth of the Buddha's words is confirmed: "This does *not* belong to me, this am I *not*, this is *not* my Self." Thereby, of course, he only wishes to say that the five groups

* They are especially conditioned by the corporeal organism, as, "conditioned by a tree, a shadow might originate." Compare above.

constituting my existence are *indeed qualities of mine, but no essential ones*. Therefore they may easily be removed. In my deepest essence I am in no wise affected thereby; I am then indeed *poorer*, but not *less*, yet once more to repeat this much-used word. I then become without qualities, and so, without will, consciousness, sensation, body? By no means. That would not be quite correct. For we connect expressions like "being without qualities, without will, consciousness, sensation or body," with the idea of something defective or insufficient, quite in harmony with the remark just made, that whoever becomes thus, becomes poor, inexpressibly poor, utterly poor; he indeed loses *everything in the widest sense of the word*. But this poverty, closely regarded, as we also already know, is only poverty in—*suffering!* In giving up will, body, consciousness, and sensation, we become inexpressibly poor in *suffering*. For all will, all corporeality, all consciousness, all sensation, as already sufficiently explained, are only directed towards contact with the world. We strive for this contact by means of our will, achieve it by means of our corporeal organism, and experience it in the form of sensation and perception. This world, however, is the world of transitoriness, of decay, and thereby of suffering. Accordingly, all will, all consciousness, and all sensation are only a will for, and a consciousness and a sensation of, *suffering*, and thereby themselves full of suffering. The annihilation of all willing, all consciousness, and all sensation, is therefore not the loss of anything good, but the getting rid of a burden, of an immense burden, as least for him who has penetrated the whole truth.* The holy disciple as it is said in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*,¹⁹⁷ penetrates *contact*, that means, he looks upon it as a fostering soil, like the body of a flayed cow, that is still alive, which, wherever it may be, near a wall, near a tree, in the water, in the field, everywhere, with its bare flesh provides an object for the attacks of flies and mosquitoes, worms, and whatever crawls and flies. Whoso thus has penetrated contact, has penetrated all sensation; for him nothing more remains to be done; he wants no more contact with the world, and thereby, since there is no willing for any other object, he wants nothing more at all. Above all, he wants no more consciousness, since all consciousness consists only in becoming conscious of this painful contact in the form of sensation. Herein especially he recognizes the truth of the words: "To be conscious is to be sick, to be conscious is to be pain-stricken."¹⁹⁸ He recognizes only too clearly how just it is to designate consciousness as an evil, which in its intensity may well be compared with the punishment of the criminal who receives a hundred blows every morning, midday and evening as described in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*.¹⁹⁹ Thus having reached the insight that here "*naught else but suffering perishes*,"²⁰⁰ he wishes to become perfectly *free* from will, from consciousness, and thereby from sensation, in short, from all qualities whatsoever. Our only fit and proper state, is therefore that of *freedom* from all these

* In the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, XXII, 22, it is said: "What now, ye monks, is the burden? The five Grasping groups, ought to be replied. Which five? They are the body-grasping-group, the sensation-grasping-group, the perception-grasping-group, the mentation-grasping-group, the consciousness-grasping-group—this, ye monks, is called the burden."

qualities and determinations, with which we find ourselves encumbered at present, and which thus are not only inessential, but, at bottom, even unnatural to us.*

Only now, for the first time, do we know in its full content what the word *liberty* means.

Liberty is a negative conception, not a positive one. It indicates only that we are set free from something, more exactly, from some hindrance or limitation, but not what we then are, when in this manner we are freed. The highest liberty, "holy liberty" consists in being liberated from *all* limitations, not only from those imposed upon us by the external circumstances surrounding us, but, above all, from those that are by law of nature given together with, and in, our personality, thus, from the limitation of ever and again being born, of being ever and again subjected to illness, old age and death; in short, from being ever and again entangled in this unwholesome *Becoming*. Only when we have shaken off from us *these* limitations, are we really free. Now these limitations, as in general all others, are nothing but the consequences of our willing, which precisely in order to attain its sole object, contact with the world, is directed, and must be directed towards our organism built up from the matter of this world and therefore subject to its laws. This willing therefore also builds up this organism by the bringing about of *grasping*, and then uses it as its tool. Liberty is therefore fundamentally nothing but liberty from willing. Whoso is able to free himself from his will, in the very act frees himself also from his organism, together with consciousness. For in his approaching death, since will is wanting, no new grasping is brought about, and thereby no new organism endowed with consciousness is built up. Thereby all the five groups at which grasping can take place, for him have disappeared forever, so that the entire truth of the sentence becomes clear to us: "The five groups of grasping, monk, are rooted in willing."²⁰¹ According to this, the problem of freedom in general coincides with that of the freedom of the will in particular. *This* problem, however, after the foregoing, solves itself in the most simple manner: because we *are* not will, but only *possess* will, which consists in innumerable, single motions of will rising incessantly, and since this will, in addition, is something that is not essential to us, because only present within us under a certain condition, therefore we can not only change it as we please, by modifying or annihilating this condition, namely, that of ignorance, but also completely remove it. To be sure, this in practice is not quite as simple as perhaps it may seem when thus put in words, since it can only be realized in

* It follows from the foregoing, that it is one and the same thing "to renounce the transitory phenomena of the world" and "to renounce sensation once for all." For only in relation to these transitory phenomena can sensation at all take place, which, just because of the transitoriness of what is felt, must, in the end, be always painful. Hence we may establish the following equation: capacity of sensation=capacity of suffering; and: real sensation=real suffering; we experience suffering, or we experience nothing at all. When, therefore, we wish to maintain at least our capacity of sensation or of consciousness, we wish nothing more or less than to maintain our capacity to suffer.

a certain quite definite manner, which we shall deal with later on; but it is not this that is in question here, but only that it is possible to realize it at all.

With this, however, we have already disposed of the third excellent truth, which therefore, will be intelligible to us without further ado:

“This, ye monks, is the most excellent truth of the annihilation of Suffering: it is the entire and complete annihilation of this same thirst, its abolition, rejection, putting away, extirpation.”²⁰²

But since in the second as well as in this third of the excellent truths, *thirst* is always named as the positive cause of the circle of our rebirths, while we, instead, in what has gone before, have repeatedly spoken of *will* or *willing*, it will be convenient at this point to determine the exact relation in which these two concepts stand to one another. To begin with, it is clear that both mean fundamentally the same thing, as in fact we find in the Suttanipāta,²⁰³ in the exposition of the causal nexus, where instead of thirst, as elsewhere, *will* is said to be conditioned by sensation, and to proceed from it. But on the other hand, every one will feel that the two conceptions are by no means exactly identical. They therefore must represent nuances of the same fundamental thought; and such really is the case.

If we closely look at our will,* we see it acting in a twofold manner. On one side, it acts as willing determined by consideration and reflection, and then, on the other hand, as *inclination* making itself felt in spite of consideration and reflection. Our whole willing, almost, is more or less the outcome of such inclinations within us. Thereby it takes a quite definite direction, and is, from the outset, more or less determined, so much so, that the will of every man, taken as a whole, represents a summation of certain dispositions of will, called his qualities of character, or, in their totality, as simply his character. It is just this kind of willing manifesting itself as inclination peculiar to each man, which the Buddha in the most vivid manner designates by the expression, *thirst*. Just as physiological thirst is not dependent on our arbitrary choice, in the same way we see the thirst for existence and well-being that animates us, ever and again welling up out of us with irresistible might, so much so, that instead of its being subject to the domination of our reason, that is, of our cognition, without ceremony it forces this latter into its own service.**

It is this willing manifesting itself as inclination in particular, which at the moment of death ever and again drives us to a new grasping of a new germ, brings

* That we are at all able to look at it, is of itself a proof that it has nothing to do with our true essence. For, what in us is cognizable, is *anattā*, not the I. Will, like all our other determinants, is closely cognizable, therefore it also is *anattā*!

** The word *tanhā*, thirst, is identical with what Schopenhauer designates as will, thus consciously amplifying the normal content of this conception, where only “will led by cognition . . . and expressing itself under the guidance of reason,” is understood. Thus the Buddha already had penetrated “the identity of the essence of every striving and operating force in nature whatever with will.” Therefore he created a special word “to designate the conception of this genus,” in contrast to the species of volition in its narrower sense. To us who have not recognized this identity, such a word is wanting.

about another such new grasping and thus ever and again chains us to a new organism. Hence it is this which must be completely eradicated, root and branch, during our present lifetime, if at death we want to get out of the circle of rebirths. Motions of pure willing rising on account of a certain sensation or perception, thus, such as involve neither attraction nor repulsion, both characteristic of every inclination, cannot lead to any such grasping, since, the same as during the lifetime, they also vanish at the moment of death along with the respective sensation and perception which aroused them, without leaving a trace. We must therefore become quite *free from inclinations*, or, what, as we saw above, amounts to the same thing, entirely *free from character*,* and thereby *from qualities*.

Now, however, the question arises as to how it comes about that our willing has developed to inclinations and thus has become determined, or, how we may have acquired our individual character. For it is clear that this also must be based upon a purely natural process, since, as we have seen, all willing of any kind, as in general *all* determinants within us, have nothing to do with our essence which is not subject to the laws of arising and passing away, but this willing also is *anattā*, that is, inessential, and thereby subject to the said laws.

In order to understand the change from pure willing to the impetuosity of an impulse, and thereby to a quality of character, we must first of all look closely at the fact that we may gradually become slaves of our will even in domains where this will before had no power over us. One who before was free—take notice of this word!—from the passion for smoking tobacco, allows himself to be determined by another's example to try it himself. He smokes once, and still feels himself entirely free to repeat it or to leave it alone in the future. He smokes a second time and already feels the temptation to do it again at the next opportunity. He must already put forth his strength to withstand this temptation, though this is not yet difficult. But instead of resolving to exert his strength, he yields and goes on smoking. With each repetition, his inclination becomes stronger, until at last it becomes a proper passion, to fight against which seems entirely hopeless. Or a boy belonging to an industrious family may early lose his parents, under whose guardianship he was orderly and diligent. He is brought to depraved relatives. Instead of being given the opportunity of learning some proper trade, he is taught to beg and to steal. There can be no doubt that in time he will become a lazy fellow; nay, this distaste for work will later on become a deeply rooted inclination. In both cases it cannot be said that the disposition to this later and seemingly ineradicable inclination was born with the child. On the contrary, the germ of it has only been sown in this life and then, as the result of *habit*, developed into a permanent disposition of will. How many young people through bad example, through enticement, or in consequence of unfavourable external circumstances have come upon the path of lying, or stealing, or a dissolute life, and in consequence of long-continued activity in

* Here again distinction is made between being *without* character, and being *free* from character. A man without character has not yet got one; whereas the man free from character has one no longer.

these directions have become habitual liars, thieves, debauchees, who under contrary circumstances would have become decent people, and therefore were *not* bad by nature! They also had not brought into the world with them these later characteristics of their willing, but on entering life were still *free* from them, they being only the result of a gradual habituation to them. This power of habit gradually to create irresistible inclinations, everyone will find at work in his own daily life; the emptiest trifles, the most wretched relationships, in consequence of the power of habit may force us completely under their spell, so that at last we foolishly break out into lamentations over the invincibility of our willing, and make the excuse that we were unable to act otherwise for want of another kind of will, instead of remembering that we ourselves by our thoughtless yielding to its first motions, have given ourselves over into bondage to this will.

“Suppose, Udāyī, a quail, bound with a strip of rotten bast, precisely thereby comes to sorrow and death: If now, Udāyī, some one said: ‘But the band of rotten bast, with which this quail is bound, and through which it comes to ruin, sorrow and death, this for it is no strong band, but a weak band, a rotten band, a brittle band,’—would this man speak rightly?”

“Certainly not, Lord. For the band of rotten bast, Lord, with which this quail is bound, and through which it comes to ruin, sorrow and death, this is for it a firm band, a sound band, a tough band, no rotten band, but a heavy fetter.”

“Even so also, Udāyī, many a fool, admonished by me to abstain from this and that, has said: ‘Why trouble about this and that small trifle? Too punctiliously exact is this ascetic!’ And he does not desist from it, and makes the monks diligently training themselves, distrustful of me. To him, Udāyī, this becomes a firm band, a sound band, a tough band, no rotten band, but a heavy fetter!”²⁰⁴

Thus it is *habit* that leads willing during the course of life upon certain paths, and creates certain definite dispositions of will. These dispositions, thus originated, later on determine the nature of the new grasping in death, with the result, that the creature which grows out of the newly laid hold of germ *corresponding to these dispositions*, brings with him into the world those habits which he developed in the former existence, as a present predisposition, as a particular trait of character. This habit which has become *a trait of character* is further yielded to in the new life, whereby it grows still stronger. This goes on through a series of existences following each other, until the peculiarity of character at last attains such strength, seems so intimately interwoven with us, that we no longer see any possibility under normal circumstances of liberating ourselves from it. On the contrary, on this ground we imagine ourselves to consist in it, and then, also on this ground, we coin the phrase: “I am will, through and through,”—a saying, which, after what we have been considering in our previous pages, is only correct in the same sense that a piece of cloth also may be wet through and through, but nevertheless does not consist of water.

That our characteristic peculiarities originated in this way, is expressed in the words already known to us: “Owners of their deeds, Brahmin, are beings, heirs of their deeds, children of their deeds, creatures of their deeds, slaves of

their deeds. Deeds cut off beings, according to their depravity or their excellence," as the Buddha explains in the following example:

"There, O Brahmin, some woman or man has met an ascetic or a priest, without asking him: 'What is wholesome, Sir, what is unwholesome? What is right and what is wrong? What may be done and what may not be done? What, in doing it, may long time make for my suffering and misery? And what again, in doing it, may long time make for my joy and welfare?' There such action, thus performed, thus carried out, causes him when the body is dissolved, after death, to go downwards, upon the evil track, into the depths, into a hell-world. Or, if he does not come there, but reaches mankind, he will be lacking in understanding, where he is newly born. This is the transition, Brahmin, which leads to lack of understanding . . . There again, O Brahmin, some woman or man has met a priest or an ascetic and asked him: 'What is wholesome, Sir, and what is unwholesome? What may be done and what may not be done? What, in doing it, may long make for my suffering and misery? And what again, in doing it, may long make for my joy and welfare?' There such action, thus performed, thus carried out, causes him, when the body is dissolved, after death, to go upwards, upon the good track, into a heavenly world; or if he does not come there, but reaches mankind, then he will be intelligent, wherever he is reborn. This is the transition, O Brahmin, which leads to knowledge."²⁰⁵

By way of habit repeated through endless time the fundamental error in particular of mankind also has reached its granite-like strength, the error namely, that at least the mental capacities must be the immediate efflux of our essence: "Also an inexperienced, average man may well become weary of the body built up from the four chief elements. But what is called 'thought' or 'mind' or 'consciousness,' of this the average inexperienced man cannot get enough, he cannot break loose from it. And why not? *For a long time the inexperienced average man has held fast to it, has cherished and cultivated it, thinking: 'This belongs to me, this am I, this is myself,'* in correspondence with which fundamental error, egoism is the most prominent fundamental property of will. It is only the consequence of this correct insight into habit as power forming the character, that, where *we* speak of character or the characteristic directions of will, the Buddha knows only of "worldly attitude," "worldly longing," "worldly obstinacy, obduracy, irritability."²⁰⁶ In its contents, however, this worldly attitude represents willing that has become impulse, thus, thirst in its sixfold activity as thirst for forms, sounds, odours, sapids, tangibles and ideas.²⁰⁷ Venturing a bold expression, we might say that the thirst filling us and gushing forth anew in every new sensation is willing grown petrified in consequence of habit. For this reason exactly, is its eradication so very difficult, and the share which habit has in our willing, must have had a decisive influence upon the outlining of the Path established by the Buddha for the annihilation of thirst, as we shall see later.

After this elucidation of the relationship in which thirst stands to will, the third of the four excellent truths, to which we may now return, is entirely clear:

In thirst, our will must be annihilated, as far as it has won power over us. With this annihilation, the chain binding us to the world and thereby to suffering, is finally cut through: we are delivered. For, to repeat it once more: If I have no will, no more thirst for the world, then in coming death, for want of a will, no grasping of a new germ will take place, and thereby also the six-senses-machine as the apparatus serving for contact with the world will not be built up again. But where there is no contact, there is also no sensation, and thereby no more suffering. The whole chain of suffering that we have come to know in detail as the chain of causal nexus, the *paṭiccasamuppāda*, is abolished forever.*

“Suppose, ye monks, the light of an oil-lamp is burning, generated by oil and wick, but no one from time to time pours in new oil and attends to the wick; then, ye monks, according as the old fuel is used up, and no new fuel added, the lamp for want of nourishment will go out. Even so, ye monks, in him who dwells *in the insight into the transitoriness of all the fetters of existence*, thirst is annihilated; through the annihilation of thirst, grasping is annihilated; through the annihilation of grasping, becoming is annihilated; through the annihilation of becoming, birth is annihilated; through the annihilation of birth, old age, sickness, death, pain, lamentation, suffering, sorrow and despair are annihilated. Such is the annihilation of the whole chain of suffering.”²⁰⁹

Here we see again, how thirst is annihilated, namely, by means of *insight*. Whoso recognizes ever more clearly and clearly, that everything in the world at last must perish, and hence that only suffering can result from its possession, will find ever fewer objects adapted to the activities of sense, until at last he reaches the general insight that “nothing is worth relying on,”²¹⁰ that nothing in the world deserves to be seen, heard, smelt, tasted, touched or thought, but that all seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking, are in themselves activities full of suffering, because all these functions fundamentally bring only suffering to us. He recognizes: “To whom the eye is pleasing, to him suffering is pleasing. To whom the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, the organ of thought is pleasing, to him suffering is pleasing.”²¹¹ Whoever has recognized this, really recognized this, is seized with disgust for everything, “he is disgusted with the eye, with forms, with visual consciousness, with visual contact, with sensation, with thirst; he is disgusted with the ear, the nose, the tongue, the body, the organ of thought; he is disgusted with sounds, odours, sapids, tangibles, thoughts; he is disgusted with auditory consciousness, with olfactory consciousness, with gustatory consciousness, with tactile consciousness, with mental consciousness; he is disgusted with visual contact, with auditory contact, with olfactory contact, with gustatory contact, with tactile contact, with mental contact; he is disgusted with sensation; he is disgusted with thirst.”²¹² Thus thirst also is definitively extinguished. For what should he long who has recognized as full of suffering all actual and possible objects that can ever offer themselves to his six senses, who, therefore, wherever in the world he may look,

* “It would be nonsense to assume that they would have sensation without contact.”²⁰⁸

sees streaming towards him only an ocean of suffering? Suffering *cannot* be desired, for suffering we *can* have no longing, because, this, indeed, would be against our real essence, "which craves well-being and shuns woe." Hence every kind of thirst, as soon as the full insight has dawned upon us that everything that can ever become an object of our will, is only masked suffering, must un-failingly be extinguished simply *for want of proper nourishment*.

This extinction of every thirsting will may be also ascertained, without further ado, by the fact that one brings about no longer any productive activities in a restricted sense, to wit not any creative actions of thinking serving to the gratification of a thirst. Indeed, "this very fact of no longer producing with one's thinking, of no longer contriving anything makes evident that one is no more thirsting; this being rid of every thirsting volition again makes evident that one is no more attached to anything."—Now every thirsting is lastly a thirsting for *consciousness*, in consequence of which any attachment culminates in an attachment, in a clinging to a germ in the moment of death, for the purpose of building it up to a new *apparatus of consciousness*. Herewith it is therefore quite sure from the very moment in which one has stopped forever all creative actions of thinking that, in want of any thirsting for consciousness,—at the dying moments too one will no more cling to a germ for the purpose of building up a new *apparatus of consciousness*. The delivered one knows therefore for certain at his very lifetime, that after death he will be rid of a body, rid of consciousness and therewith rid of sensations; furthermore does he know for certain that this state will be unchangeable and therefore in truth an eternal one because of the impossibility that there could arise to all eternity a thirsting will for changing this state, every emotion of such a volition presupposing a sensation as its indispensable condition and with that a corporeal organism.

More closely with regard to a *delivered one*—be it remembered well: it is from *that* point of view that the Buddha describes the situation!—his stepping out of the world at the moment of death is going on as follows: Having stopped forever the productive activities in a restricted sense—to wit the creative actions of thinking—already by the deadening of the thirsting will, at the dying moments in-and exhaling breaks off first. Herewith the five outer senses do not work any longer, while thinking may still continue. Finally however mental perception comes to a stillstand too, and last of all "sensations are growing cold." Therewith the productive activities have been "annihilated completely without any remainder" and with them likewise "completely without any remainder" every consciousness. With consciousness however dwindling away to the dying saint the corporeal organism, which in truth he had experienced solely in his consciousness, dwindles away too: "In consciousness stands the universe!"²¹³ Along with the complete disconnexion from the corporeal organism the bridge to the world is broken down forever and therewith every new contact with the world made impossible eternally; therewith likewise every new sensation—therewith every new thirsting will—therewith every

new attachment—therewith every new Becoming—therewith every new rebirth and therewith every new suffering. Hence the formula of the causal nexus, without further words, is intelligible in its second part also, when it tells us:—

“Inasmuch as that is not, this is not. If this is removed, then that disappears. Thus, namely:—

“By the entire and complete annihilation of ignorance, the productions, the Saṅkhārā, are annihilated.*

“By the entire and complete annihilation of the productions, consciousness is annihilated.

“By the entire and complete annihilation of consciousness, the corporeal organism is annihilated.**

“By the entire and complete annihilation of the corporeal organism, the six senses are annihilated.

“By the entire and complete annihilation of the six senses, contact is annihilated.

“By the entire and complete annihilation of contact, sensation is annihilated.

“By the entire and complete annihilation of sensation, thirst is annihilated.

“By the entire and complete annihilation of thirst, grasping is annihilated.

“By the entire and complete annihilation of grasping, Becoming is annihilated.

“By the entire and complete annihilation of Becoming, birth is annihilated.

“By the entire and complete annihilation of birth, old age and death vanish, together with sorrow and affliction, pain, grief and despair.

“Thus comes about the annihilation of the entire Sum of Suffering.”²¹⁴

Because thus the whole circle of rebirths within the world, upon the next approaching death, is broken through forever in consequence of the impossibility of a new birth, therefore the saint has also escaped forever the consequences of all his former evil deeds, in so far as these deeds would only mature after his death, let them have been ever so bad. For in leaving the world, he of course also escapes from the law of Karma, which dominates it. Thus the 294th verse of the Dhammapada says:

* When it is said: “Through the annihilation of ignorance the Saṅkhārā are annihilated,” then, of course, as we said above, and wish to emphasize once more only because of the importance of the problem, this does not mean that the acquisition of knowledge is *immediately* followed by the annihilation of the Saṅkhārā, but in dependence on the annihilation of ignorance as *immediate* consequence, the *actual* thirst for existence is abolished and so every new grasping upon the coming death is made impossible; therefore when the latter happens, *new* organic processes and with them new consciousness and a new corporeal organism are no more able to arise, and so on, as said above.

** If the formula of the causal nexus is to be *completely* understood, in its first as well as in its second part here dealt with, we must look at it from *the standpoint of the being entering the world, as also from that of the saint leaving it*. For the latter, first of all, the organic processes cease; in consequence of this, consciousness; therewith also for him disappears his body, and so on.

machine. Whoever really does not wish to see any more, is not in the least concerned if everything in his body perishes that makes possible the activity of seeing; and whoever does not want any more to hear, smell, taste and touch, clings to his body only so far as it is the necessary tool for thinking that alone is still held to be indispensable. But whoever, in addition, becomes weary of all thinking, has lost all interest in the continuous existence of his body, which is now of no more use to him; the six-senses-machine in its entirety, has become superfluous for him. It is with him as with a painter who has become weary of painting and lost all pleasure in it. As such a painter for this reason becomes indifferent towards his brush and palette, and carelessly casts them aside, since now they are even a nuisance to him, in the same way, to him who has become weary of all the activities of sense on account of their pain-producing character, the organs of sense and thereby the entire corporeal organism becomes a nuisance; he regards them as a burden, yea, as the burden of which to get rid is deliverance. This is all the more true in that he resembles the said painter in this point also, that just as the painter in his pure entity is not touched by his abandonment of the profession, that has become distasteful to him, but on the contrary, only now for the first time becomes fully and undisturbedly conscious of his entity; in the same way the more he cuts himself loose from all activities of senses, to his own surprise he directly recognizes that thereby he is in no way impaired in his essence, but merely gets free from disturbing accessories. This consciousness is growing in him into such a superior power that he shrinks back—as it were—from his body afflicted with the six senses, in consequence of which he inwardly *detaches* himself from the same. It is therefore a mere *detachment* taking place within him: "Filled with horror he shrinks back; because of his shrinking back he delivers himself," the passage from the Majjhima Nikāya quoted above²¹⁷ goes on. If, nevertheless, he again takes up activities of the senses, then he immediately feels the sensations aroused through them as not belonging to him, as something that he can omit, unhurt thereby in his integrity; he feels them as a *delivered one*. "If now a pleasant sensation is felt, then one recognizes: 'It is transitory,' 'it is unappropriate,' 'it is unpleasant.' If a painful sensation is felt, then one recognizes: 'It is transitory,' 'it is unappropriated,' 'it is unpleasant.' If now a sensation neither pleasant nor unpleasant is felt, then one recognizes: 'It is transitory,' 'it is unappropriated,' 'it is unpleasant.' If now a pleasant sensation is felt, then one feels it as a *delivered one*. If now an unpleasant sensation is felt, then one feels it as a *delivered one*. If now a sensation neither pleasant nor unpleasant is felt, then one feels it as a *delivered one*."²¹⁸

Because one thus confronts one's own sensations as a delivered one, therefore they cannot take one captive any more. "Through the eye and forms sight-consciousness arises; the conjunction of the three gives contact; through contact arises a sensation of pleasantness or unpleasantness, or of neither pleasantness nor unpleasantness. If struck by a pleasant sensation, one experiences no joy, no satisfaction, no attachment, and feels no motion of desire. If struck by an

unpleasant sensation, one neither grieves nor mourns nor laments, he does not beat his breast all distraught, feels no motion of aversion. If struck by a sensation neither pleasant nor unpleasant, one understands the arising and passing away of this sensation, its comfort and misery and overcoming according to reality, and feels no motion of ignorance.”*²¹⁸

In consequence of the activities of sense, consciousness also, of course, still continues to flame up, but only so that it looks down with equanimity upon the things through which it was aroused. Yea, because we have become entirely estranged from our own sensations, and can as with a searchlight illuminate the objects arousing them with the light of pure cognition, according to which they *all*, at bottom, conceal within themselves corruption, and thus, are disgusting, therefore we have it in our power to turn pleasant and unpleasant sensations arising within us into their contrary and thus, especially, to experience pleasant sensations as unpleasant ones. Or we may behave with complete indifference, thus, with absolute equanimity towards all sensations, according as we allow cognition to play upon the objects arousing sensation.

“But how, Ānanda, may a saint dominate his senses? There, Ānanda, a monk has seen a form with the eye, has heard a sound with the ear, has smelt an odour with the nose, has tasted a flavour with the tongue, has touched something touchable with the body, has thought an idea with the organ of thought, and thus he is moved pleasantly, is moved unpleasantly, is moved partly pleasantly and partly unpleasantly. And if he wishes: ‘The repugnant, I will perceive unrepugnant,’ then he perceives unrepugnant. If he wishes: ‘The un-repugnant, I will perceive repugnant,’ then he perceives repugnant. If he wishes: ‘The partly repugnant and partly un-repugnant, I will perceive unrepugnant,’ then he perceives un-repugnant. If he wishes: ‘The partly un-repugnant and partly repugnant, I will perceive repugnant,’ then he perceives repugnant. If he wishes: ‘The repugnant and the un-repugnant; both I will banish from me, and I will remain with equal mind, thoughtful and clearly conscious,’ then he remains with equal mind, thoughtful and clearly conscious. Thus, Ānanda, does a saint dominate his senses.”²¹⁹

Thus sensations are still felt, but they have lost all power over us. We are not indeed yet free *from* them, but stand *towards* them as *free men*.

“This is a monk, who bears cold and heat, hunger and thirst, wind and rain, mosquitoes and wasps and vexing crawling things. Malicious and spiteful words, painful feelings of the body striking him, violent, cutting, piercing, disagreeable, tedious, life-endangering, he patiently endures. He is entirely free from greed, hate and delusion, disjoined from misconduct. Sacrifices and gifts, service and greetings he deserves, as the holiest state in the world.”²²⁰

Of him hold good the impressive words: “Those who cause me pain and those who cause me pleasure, towards all of them I behave in the same way;

* The like, of course, holds good, as there is further set forth, with regard also to the sensations aroused through the activity of hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and thinking.

affection or aversion I know not. In joy and sorrow I remain unmoved; in honor and dishonor; everywhere I am the same. This is the perfection of my equanimity.”²²¹

Nothing is able to arouse in him a motion of desire or of repulsion; only the totally pure “meditative contemplation”—(ñāṇadassana)—remains. For through what might such a saint still be influenced, after he has become free from all former determinations and independent of all external impressions? Whatever motion of willing he wishes to arouse, that he allows to arise, and whatever again he wishes to subside, that he allows to subside. He has realized *the most perfect freedom of will*.*

It may even happen, that such a delivered one, during his lifetime, may realize not only freedom *in* willing, but also perfect freedom *from* willing, and thereby absolute freedom from cognition and from sensation, to be sure, not at once, in a moment, but in successive upward stages, as a man climbs the steps of a ladder,—so powerful are the influencing elements of the world, that stream in upon us through the five external senses, that even the delivered one can only completely stop them one after the other, though, as we have seen, even if they press in on him, in each case they fall off from him without leaving a trace. This way of the delivered one, leading to perfect liberty *from* volition also, and thereby at the same time from the whole world, is as follows.

Willing effectuates itself in the activities of the six senses. Of these, the delivered one may, according as he pleases, entirely stop those of the five external senses, and to this extent abolish all willing. He is then, on the outward side, entirely blind and deaf, insensible to every smell, every taste, every touch, thus, in so far, has already left this world.

“At that time, Pukkusa, the prince of the Mallas, a disciple of Āḷāra Kālāma, was travelling on the highway from Kusinārā to Pāvā. Now Pukkusa, the young Malla, saw the Exalted One sitting under a tree. Having seen the Exalted One, he came near, saluted the Exalted One respectfully and sat down aside. Sitting aside, Pukkusa, the prince of the Mallas, spoke to the Exalted One thus:—

‘Astonishing, sir, extraordinary it is, sir, how deep, sir, is the peace in which pilgrims may abide. One day, sir, Āḷāra Kālāma was wandering along the road, and had turned aside from the way and sat down under a tree near by, to stay there till evening. There, sir, about five hundred carts came past Āḷāra Kālāma. Now, sir, a man, who was following the traces of this caravan of carts, came to Āḷāra Kālāma and asked: ‘Sir, did you see about five hundred carts come past?’—‘Nothing have I seen, brother.’—‘But surely, sir, you heard their noise?’—‘No noise have I heard, brother.’—‘Then you were sleeping, sir?’—‘I did not sleep, brother.’—‘How then, sir; and were you conscious?’—‘Certainly, brother.’—‘So then, sir, conscious and with waking senses, you have neither seen the five hundred carts that came past you, nor heard their noise; but your mantle,

* Accordingly, a saint may also be defined as a man who has realized freedom of will, or, what is the same thing, simply as a *free man*.

sir, is quite covered with dust.’—‘So it is, brother.’ Thereupon, sir, this man thought thus within himself: ‘Magnificent it is, incredible, indeed, how deep is the peace in which pilgrims are able to abide, since one, conscious and with waking senses, needs neither to see five hundred carts passing by him, nor to hear their noise.’ And having thus made known his great admiration for Ālāra Kālāma, he went on his way.”

“Now what think you, Pukkusa: Which may be more difficult to carry out, which more difficult to effect—that a person, conscious and with senses awake need neither see five hundred carts passing right by him, nor hear their noise, or that one, conscious and with senses awake, in a thunderstorm, in a whirling hurricane, while the lightnings are flashing forth, and the thunderbolts are crashing, need neither see, nor yet hear the noise?”

“How, sir, could five hundred carts be compared with that, or even six, seven, eight or nine hundred, even a thousand or a hundred thousand carts? Much more difficult would it be to carry out this, to effect this,—that one conscious and with senses awake in a thunderstorm, in a whirling hurricane, when the lightnings are flashing forth, and the thunderbolts are crashing, need neither see, nor yet hear the noise!”

“Now at one time, Pukkusa, I was staying near Ātumā, in a barn. Just then in a thunderstorm, in a whirling hurricane, when the lightnings were flashing forth and the thunderbolts were crashing, not far from the barn two peasants, brothers, were struck by the lightning, and four draught-oxen. Then, Pukkusa, a great crowd of people came from Ātumā, and stood round the two peasants, brothers, and the four oxen, killed by the lightning. Now, Pukkusa, I had come out of the barn, and was pacing up and down in front of the threshing-floor under the open sky. And a man out of this great crowd of people came towards me, bowed and stood aside. And to the man, who stood there, Pukkusa, I spoke thus: ‘Why, brother, has that great crowd gathered there?’—‘Just now, sir, in the hurricane, amidst the rain pouring down with flashes of lightning and crashes of thunder, two peasants have been killed, brothers, and four draught-oxen. Therefore this great crowd has assembled. But you, sir, where have you been?’—‘Just here, brother, I have been.’—‘Then surely, sir, you have seen it?’—‘Nothing, brother, have I seen.’—‘But, sir, you have surely heard the noise?’—‘Nothing, brother, have I heard of the noise.’—‘Then, sir, were you sleeping?’—‘No, brother, I was not asleep.’—‘How now, sir; were you conscious?’—‘Certainly, brother.’—‘Then, sir, conscious and with senses awake in the hurricane, amidst the rain pouring down with flashes of lightning and crashes of thunder, you neither saw, nor yet heard the noise?’—‘Certainly, brother.’—Then, Pukkusa, the man began to wonder: ‘O, how strange, how wonderful, how deep indeed must be the peace wherein pilgrims are able to abide, since one of them, being conscious and awake, here in the hurricane, amidst the rain pouring down with flashes of lightning and crashes of thunder, need neither see, nor yet hear the noise!’ And having thus shown his great admiration for me, he turned round and went off.”²²²

But *internally* he has not yet entirely come to rest. For the organ of thought is still agitated and unable at once to come to peace, in the same way that a pendulum set swinging, still for a time goes on swinging. But as the man who has his senses under his control, is able to think whatever he pleases,—“whatever thought he wishes to think, that he thinks; and whatever thought he does not wish to think, that he does not think,”²²³—already, as soon as he has retired from the outer world, he has, “so to say, bound” his mind to a certain definite thought, concentrating it, for example, on the representation of ‘earth,’ taking up the representation ‘earth,’ as his sole object. “In the representation ‘earth’ his mind is elevated, rejoiced, becomes appeased, delivered.”²²⁴ This deliverance has especially also for result that soon he contemplates the representation ‘earth’ with complete equanimity, and thereby can dismiss it from his consciousness as the last reflection of the material world, while he immerses himself in the perception of ‘*boundless space*.’

“And the things of the sphere of boundless space, perception of the sphere of boundless space, and concentration of mind, contact, sensation, perception, activities of the mind, cognition, will, resolution, energy, reflectiveness, equanimity, recollectedness,* all these things, one after the other, he has brought into order, these things he knowingly causes to arise, knowingly causes to continue, knowingly causes to disappear. And he recognizes: ‘Thus these things, not having been, come to appear; and having been, again disappear.’ And he is not inclined towards these things, and not disinclined towards them; not adhering, not attached, he has escaped from them, has fled from them, without allowing his mind to become restricted. For he knows that there is still a *higher freedom*; and as he develops it, he notes that it exists.

“And again, ye monks, Sāriputta, after having entirely overcome the sphere of boundless space, in the representation ‘Boundless is the sphere of cognition’ has won to the realm of boundless cognition. And the things of the sphere of boundless cognition, perception of the sphere of boundless cognition, and concentration of mind, contact, sensation, perception, activities of the mind, cognition, will, resolution, energy, reflectiveness, equanimity, recollectedness, all these things, one after the other, he has brought into order, these things he knowingly causes to arise, knowingly causes to continue, knowingly causes to disappear. And he recognizes: ‘Thus these things, not having been, come to appear; and having been, again disappear.’ And he is not inclined towards these things, and not disinclined towards them; not adhering, not attached, he has escaped from them, has fled from them, without allowing his mind to become restricted. For he knows that there is still a *higher freedom*; and as he develops it, he notes that it exists.

“And again, ye monks, Sāriputta, after having completely overcome the sphere of boundless cognition, in the representation ‘Nothing (more) is there’

* All these functions have, of course, only the representation of infinite space for their object.

has won to the sphere of Nothingness;* and the things of the sphere of nothingness, perception of nothingness and concentration of mind, contact, sensation, perception, activities of the mind, cognition, will, resolution, energy, reflectiveness, equanimity, recollectedness, all these things, one after the other, he has brought into order, these things he knowingly causes to arise, knowingly causes to continue, knowingly causes to disappear. And he recognizes: 'Thus these things, not having been, come to appear; and having been, again disappear.' And he is not inclined towards these things, and not disinclined towards them; not adhering, not attached, he has escaped from them, has fled from them, without allowing his mind to become restricted. For he knows that there is still a *higher freedom*; and as he develops it, he notes that it exists.

"Again, ye monks, Sāriputta, after having completely overcome the sphere of nothingness, has won to the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.** And from this conquest thoughtfully he returns. And when he has thoughtfully returned from this conquest, he perceives the things that are overcome, dissolved and transformed: 'Thus these things, not having been, come to appear; and having been, again disappear.' And he is not inclined towards these things, and not disinclined towards them; not adhering, not attached, he has escaped from them, has fled from them, without allowing his mind to become restricted. For he knows that there is still a *higher freedom*. And as he develops it, he notes that it exists.

"And again, ye monks, Sāriputta, after having completely overcome the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, has won to the *abolition of perception and sensation*, and having by wisdom sighted this, the influences

* On this height, the delivered one has only the cognition of being quite alone and loosened from everything. Not only nothing of the noisy unrest of the corporeal world comes to him, or perhaps rather, into him, but internally he is now entirely absorbed by being conscious of the most lofty and sublime loneliness, and thereby of the most majestic peace. He has shaken off everything, and thereby also his own corporeal organism, which he uses only in his organ of thought, and even in this, only for the recognizing of the immense voidness in contrast to which he sees himself. This brings to him the further sublime insight: "I am not anywhere whatsoever, to any one whatsoever, in anything whatsoever; neither is anything whatsoever mine, anywhere whatsoever, in anything whatsoever."²²⁵

** In connection with the realm of nothingness, it is said in the 9th Discourse of the Dīgha Nikāya: "As soon, Poṭṭhapāda, as the monk has obtained perception *within himself*, he is able to proceed further, step by step, to the boundary of perception. If he has reached the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, he says to himself: 'To suffer thoughts is worse for me, not to suffer thoughts is better for me. If I should now go on thinking and acting, then this perception would perish within me, and another, grosser perception would arise. How now, if I should try to think and to act no more?' And thus he thinks no more and acts no more. Because he thinks no more and acts no more, also this perception perishes and another, grosser perception does not arise." — This state is described in the 106th Discourse of the Majjhima Nikāya, as follows: "There, Lord, a monk has proceeded thus: 'What is, what, has become, shall not be, shall not be for me, shall not become, shall not become for me: I put it away; thus he wins equanimity.'" With this he also ceases to think at all, just perceiving: "Peaceful am I, extinguished am I, *no more a grasping one am I*." The activity of perception, taking place even now *in full consciousness*, is thereby reduced to the smallest

upon him are at an end.* And from this conquest he thoughtfully returns. And having thoughtfully returned from this conquest he perceives the things that are overcome, dissolved and transformed: 'Thus these things, not having been, come to appear; and having been, again disappear.' And he is not inclined towards these things, and not disinclined towards them; not adhering, not attached, he has escaped from them, has fled from them, without allowing his mind to become restricted. For he knows that *there is no higher freedom.*"²²⁷

Such an one has thus, already in this present life, actually realized complete deliverance from everything that is *anattā*, not the *I*, that means, from the components of his personality, and thereby from the world. He has completed the gigantic task, he has burst all the fetters, "whether refined or gross."²²⁸ He has completely annihilated all the activities of the senses, for *they* are the fetters, hence, all seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking, and thereby for a time completely thrown aside the six-senses-machine. He has gained the highest, the holy freedom. To be sure, thereupon these activities of the senses rise again, since the capacity of life of the six-senses-machine still remains, and call him back again into the world. But now he stands entirely estranged from both his own sense-activities as well as the world. For now in the most immediate manner imaginable, he has directly experienced that he does not consist in them.

possible residue, namely, to the perception that there is no perception left! This state is therefore called the realm of "neither-perception-nor-non-perception"—*nevasaññāna-saññāyatana*m.

* The Pāli term designating this state is *nirodha-samāpatti*, attainment of abolition, and *saññāvedayitanirodha*, abolition (*nirodha*) of perception and sensation. It may last for full seven days. In the 43rd Discourse of the Majjhima Nikāya it is said: "In the case of a man dead, expired, and in the case of a monk attained to the ceasing of perception and sensation—what is the difference between these two?"—"In the case of a man dead, expired, the processes of the body—*Sankhārā*—are perished, come to an end; the processes of speech are perished, come to an end; the processes of mind are perished, come to an end. Vitality is exhausted, heat extinguished, the senses shattered. And in the case of a monk attained to the ceasing of perception and sensation the processes of body, speech and mind are perished, come to an end; but vitality is not exhausted, heat not extinguished, the senses are not shattered."—In the 50th Discourse of the Majjhima Nikāya, this state, as it appears from without, is described as follows: "The venerable Sañjīva was in the habit of resorting to the forest or to the foot of a tree or to some solitary place, and with but little difficulty there attained to the ceasing of perception and sensation. Now it happened once that the venerable Sañjīva was seated beneath a certain tree absorbed in the attainment of the ceasing of perception and sensation, and some cow-herds and goat-herds and husbandmen wayfarers happened to see the venerable Sañjīva where he sat beneath the tree, and, seeing him, they cried: 'Wonderful indeed, extraordinary indeed! That ascetic is sitting there dead! Come, let us give him to the fire!' And those country folk gathered together some grass and sticks and dried cow-dung, and, heaping the stuff over the body of the venerable Sañjīva, set it alight and went their way. And when night was gone, rising from his absorption, the venerable Sañjīva shook his garments, and, suitably attiring himself, took mantle and alms-bowl and entered the village to go the usual morning round for alms of food. And those cow-keepers and tenders of goats and farmers and passers-by, observing the venerable Sañjīva upon his begging-round, exclaimed: 'How wonderful, how extraordinary! There is that ascetic we saw sitting dead; he has come alive again!'"²²⁶

For it goes without saying that after having freed himself from every kind of sensation, he had not become nothing—taking this word in the sense of *absolute* nothing—and then again arisen anew; but he had remained what he is from all eternity, while *these productions* which run their course on him or before him or in him, or whatever we like to call it, incessantly „not having been, come to appear, and, having been, again disappear.” Yea, it is he himself who “*knowingly causes them to arise, knowingly to remain, and knowingly again to perish,*” and thus, if it is permissible to use such a humble comparison, he plays catchball with the world, which he can make disappear and rise again before him according as he chooses. He has experienced in himself the full truth of the famous words of the monk Assaji, in which the doctrine of the Buddha seems to be summed up:

“The [painful] things arising from a cause,
 Their cause the Perfect One has told,
 And their annihilation too.
 This the great ascetic teaches.”²²⁹

From this standpoint he now of course knows immediately that he himself will die just as little as in truth he ever has arisen. What is to perish and die, are only these productions which as the machinery of his personality, not having been, come to appear; and having been, again disappear; and are only the components of *anattā*, of not-the-*I*. His ostensible, up to the present moment ever repeated new dying during the endless Saṃsāra which soon will come finally to rest, now reveals itself as a gigantic and incessant self-mystification, resting upon the delusion that his real essence has something in common with the components of his personality. This delusion he now has entirely destroyed; yea, he has discovered that every kind of reflection of a positive content about himself or his relation to the world, by natural necessity must be illusionary, thus, a mere imagination, a mere opinion, since his own essence does not enter into this thinking, but is only realized, when this thinking also, in the state of the annihilation of perception and sensation, is completely abrogated. Further, he has discovered that, as soon as this thinking, as a mere imagining, begins anew, we again find ourselves plunged into the domain of the laws of arising and passing away, and thereby of death, thus, of self-mystification. From his own experience he understands the truth of the description of this perpetual self-mystification, as it is given in a significant legend of the Saṃyutta Nikāya.²³⁰

The demon Vepacitti, together with his legions, is vanquished by the gods in battle, and bound in fivefold fetters. As often as he thinks: “The gods are right, and the demons are wrong,” he finds himself free from the five fetters, and enjoying heavenly pleasures; and as often as he again thinks: “The demons are right, and the gods are wrong,” he again finds himself bound in the fivefold fetters and deprived of the heavenly pleasures. “So feeble,” it goes on, “are the fetters of Vepacitti, but far more feeble still are the fetters of death. To imagine, causes us to be bound by death; not to imagine, causes us to be freed from the Evil

One." "‘I am,’ is imagination, ‘I am not,’ is imagination, ‘I shall be,’ is imagination, ‘I shall not be,’ is imagination; ‘I shall be possessed of form,’ is imagination, ‘I shall be without form,’ is imagination; ‘I shall be conscious,’ is imagination; ‘I shall be unconscious,’ is imagination; ‘I shall be neither conscious nor unconscious,’ is imagination." Thus a monk, who once has experienced the abolition of perception and sensation and thereby the total ceasing of all imagination, imagines nothing more about himself, even after having returned from this state to the world: "This, ye monks, is a monk who does not imagine anything, does not imagine anything of anything, does not imagine anything about anything."²³¹ He only cherishes the one purely negative thought, because rejecting *everything*: "This does not belong to me, this am I not, this is not my self."*

For the rest, deliverance is not dependent on our being able to effect at will the abolition of perception and sensation during our lifetime, and thereby to leave the world entirely—to realize this, requires extraordinary faculties of concentration, as we shall see later on—but deliverance is exclusively conditioned by this, that in consequence of the advent of the complete knowledge that all is full of suffering and conditioned by thirst, this same thirst is completely destroyed. Every one who has attained to this, already during his lifetime takes up this position towards his own personality, especially towards the activities of the senses, and therewith towards the world, like him who has attained to the abolition of perception and sensation. For, just because he has no longer any kind of desire for sense-activity and the world, thereby the chain is broken that bound him to these, and ever and again caused to arise in him the delusion that in some way they belonged to him, were it only in the sense that he himself in himself truly is not touched by their loss, but at least he needs them for his happiness; in consequence of which delusion he is unable to win to the full, pure view of Anattā, and to take his stand as a complete stranger, and thereby as a free man opposite the world, including the elements of his own personality. And because he has now recognized as such the chain that fetters him to his personality and to the world, that is, the thirst for them, and broken it, he knows just as well as he who is able to win the abolition of perception and sensation, that in the moment of his coming death, through the absence of this thirst and the grasping conditioned by it, no more rebirth will lie before him, but eternal deliverance from the world, *absolute freedom from sensation* forever will supervene. "And thus he recognizes: 'These six senses will come to perfect, complete and entire abolition, and nowhere, in no place, will other six senses arise.'²³² "Within the delivered one the knowledge of his deliverance arises: 'Rebirth is annihilated, fulfilled is the holy life; done, what was to do; I have nothing in common with this order of things,' thus he knows."²³³

* Compare also Majj. Nik. 8th. Discourse: "Of the many different teachings, Cunda, that appear in the world and deal now with the consideration of the self, now with the consideration of the world, everywhere holds good, wherever they appear, arise, spring up, the following truthful, perfectly wise judgment: 'This does not belong to me, this am I not, this is not my self.' Thus are they to be got rid of, thus are they to be put from you."

According to this, we did not at all need here the special case of a delivered one who already during his lifetime has been able to free himself from sensation. If, nevertheless, we have dealt with it, this has happened because it is precisely in such an one that the effects of deliverance, already during his lifetime, stand out with special clearness and distinctness.*

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Now many a reader will perhaps wonder to himself that in what has passed in our previous pages, in the course of our exposition of the Buddha's doctrine of deliverance, we have not devoted a single word to the concept *Nibbāna*, which yet, as everybody knows, constitutes the final goal of his teaching. "Nibbāna is the kernel of the holy life, brother Visākha, Nibbāna is its purpose and its goal."²³⁴ But this surprise is unfounded. For in dealing with the state of the perfectly delivered one after death, and even during his lifetime, we were speaking about nothing but Nibbāna. For Nibbāna and eternal deliverance are synonymous concepts which in so far coincide, that they have no sort of positive, but only a purely negative content. As by *deliverance* we simply think of *freedom*, without thereby giving any definition of what the delivered one really is after his deliverance, so Nibbāna literally only means *extinguishing*. And as we recognized deliverance to be liberation from the thirst dwelling within us for the five groups of grasping, as for the painful components of our personality, and precisely therefore, as the final complete liberation from these groups of grasping themselves, occurring in death, and thereby from the whole world, even so Nibbāna means nothing else but the extinguishing of this thirst, and thereby, ultimately, the extinguishing of our personality and of the world at the death of the saint. "Nibbāna, Nibbāna, so they say, friend Sāriputta; what now means Nibbāna, friend?" "That which is the vanishing of desire, friend, the vanishing of hate, the vanishing of delusion; that, friend, is called Nibbāna."²³⁵ Only we must keep clear in mind, that desire, hate and delusion represent the three modes

* Besides this, the state of the abolition of perception and sensation may be attained not only by a perfect saint, thus, by one who has annihilated forever every kind of thirst for existence (Becoming), in every possible form so that he faces everything with the most perfect equanimity, more especially his own capacity for realizing this last and highest state of the abolition of perception and sensation during his present lifetime; but it may be reached also by him who has lost all thirst for existence, *with the exception* of that final residue whereby he still feels "love and joy and inclination" towards the perfect equanimity he has won thereby, and to the capacity for the abolition of perception and sensation thereby arising within him. Such a person, in the latter state, may attain a transitory or temporary deliverance; but as long as this last residue of thirst, thus, the satisfaction felt over this all-embracing equanimity he has won, is not yet annihilated, he does not yet possess *eternal* deliverance, since even this last residue of thirst at death must manifest its consequences, that is to say, it must lead to a new, even if a "best grasping."

of manifestation of thirst.* Accordingly in the Canon we find frequent, direct mention of *taṅhā-nibbāna*, *thirst-extinction*.

Because thus Nibbāna is nothing else but deliverance, like this, it becomes equally evident during the saint's lifetime.

"Visibly-present Nibbāna, they say, dear Gotama; how now, dear Gotama, is Nibbāna visible and present, inviting to come and see, is it a guide, and can be experienced by the wise in his own interior?"

"Inflamed by desire, evil-disposed by hate, confused by delusion, overcome, entirely influenced internally, O Brahmin, we think of hurting ourselves, we think of hurting others, we think of hurting both ourselves and others, and feel mental pain and grief. But if we have abandoned desire, abandoned hate, abandoned delusion, then we do not think any more of hurting ourselves, nor of hurting others, nor of hurting both ourselves and others, and we do not feel mental pain and grief. Thus, O Brahmin, Nibbāna is visible and present, inviting to come and see, is it a guide, and can be experienced by the wise in his own interior.

"In so far, O Brahmin, as a person experiences the complete and entire disappearance of desire, the complete and entire disappearance of hate, the complete and entire disappearance of delusion, so far, O Brahmin, is Nibbāna visible and present, inviting to come and see, is it a guide, and can be experienced by the wise in his own interior."²³⁶

Thus also according to this, at the death of the saint, nothing of his self is extinguished, for in spite of his entry upon extinction, Nibbāna, he still continues to live on here below. Only desire, hate and delusion are extinguished, of which no thinking man will maintain that they constitute his essence. All that is extinguished, as their epitome, is the flaring flame of thirst to remain in contact with the world.** We know of course, that in consequence of the extinction of this thirst, in the approaching death, the body also endowed with the six senses, must definitively perish, without a new one being formed; but this *complete* extinction, this *Parinibbāna*, touches the saint just as little as Nibbāna, the extinction that happened during the lifetime. If thirst for the world were something he could lose without any hurt to himself, as being something alien

* Thirst arises always out of sensation, to wit, out of a pleasant sensation as desire, out of an unpleasant one, as hate or detestation, and out of a sensation neither pleasant nor unpleasant, in this manner, that one indeed approaches the object arousing sensation, but only to find that it has no relation to our will. So also the objects neither pleasant nor unpleasant, in our *delusion* are exclusively regarded from the point of view of thirst, instead of our making clear to ourselves that they too are *anattā*, and therefore need not concern us at all. "To the pleasant sensation, the inclination to desire adheres, to the unpleasant one, the inclination to hate, and to the sensation neither pleasant nor unpleasant the inclination to ignorance."²³⁶ Thus in the Canon the regularly recurring tripartite division "Desire, Hate and Delusion," represent the three possible modes of manifestation of thirst.

** That this extinction is nothing more than the extinction of *will*, is beautifully expressed in v. 283 of the Dhammapada, where instead of *nibbuta*, extinguished, *nibbāna*, devoid of will, is the expression used.

alternative, which always stands open to every one, is this: Either we do *not* renounce the activities of the senses, but accept it in the bargain that we must ever anew let ourselves be subjected to the process of birth, ever and again fall a prey to the troubles and sorrows of life, all possible diseases, lastly to old age and death; yea, and with the certainty, in the course of endless Samsāra through immeasurable spaces of time, of sinking down again into the abysses of existence, the animal realm and the worlds of the hells; or else we renounce all activities of sense forever, thereby divesting ourselves of the body forever, and in requital therefore, escape forever from all sorrow of no matter what kind.

But clear as these alternatives may be, the "ignorant worldling" may not yet be able to come to a definite decision. For there still remains for him, in so far as he tries to keep to a standpoint of pure cognition, one great objection which he does not find refuted in the foregoing exposition. He knows himself as a being "that desires weal and shuns woe."²⁴¹ Now in what has gone before he indeed sees a possibility of escaping evil, but it would seem to him, only at the price of all well-being also coming to an end for him forever. He has a feeling as if such a state could not possibly be agreeable to him, certainly not as agreeable as residence in this world, where beyond doubt there is also some pleasure for him, as the Buddha himself admits: "It is not, ye disciples, as if the joy of corporeality, of sensation, of perception, of activities of the mind, of cognition were not there; for then beings would not let themselves be swept away by corporeality, by sensation, by perception, by activities of the mind, by cognition."²⁴² Certainly, this pleasure at last, ever and always is changed again to pain: "If pleasure has arisen, pain arises, say I, Punna,"²⁴³ and certainly at the end of all, it is always pain that predominates: "Suffering predominates."²⁴⁴ Yet, nevertheless, that other side of our nature which craves well-being, to some extent at least, is taken into consideration.

The Buddha does not mistake the weightiness of this objection. He even concedes that despite all our recognition of suffering, it would be impossible to overcome the thirst for the world, if the desire for well-being could only be satisfied in the world and by its means, if therefore this same desire were not taken into account, and even to an incomparably higher degree, in the striving for release from the world. "Unsatisfying are sensual enjoyments, full of torment, full of despair, misery is predominant in them;—if, Mahānāma, the noble disciple, wholly wise, thus rightly sees according to reality, in perfect wisdom, but outside sensual enjoyments, outside evil, finds no happiness, nothing better, then he certainly does not turn away from these sensual enjoyments. But when, Mahānāma, the noble disciple with true wisdom thus according to reality perceives: 'Unsatisfying are sensual enjoyments, full of torment, full of despair, misery is predominant in them,' and outside sensual enjoyments, outside evil, finds happiness and something better, then, verily, he follows no longer after sensual enjoyments. I also, Mahānāma, before my full Awakening, being incompletely awakened and still only striving for awakening, according to reality

thus perceived: 'Unsatisfying are sensual enjoyments, full of torment, full of despair, misery is predominant in them,' but not finding happiness or aught better outside sensual enjoyments, outside evil, I knew not to turn away from following them. But when, Mahānāma, with true wisdom I thus according to reality perceived: 'Unsatisfying are sensual enjoyments, full of torment, full of despair, misery is predominant in them,' *and outside sensual enjoyments, outside evil, had found happiness and something better*, then I knew to turn away from sensual enjoyments.'²⁴⁵

To what an extent the Buddha acknowledges the justice of the desire for well-being, together with the unfoundedness of the fear that it might not be satisfied in deliverance from the world and on the way thereto, may be seen in more precise form, especially from the following passage:

"Poṭṭhapāda, I preach to you the doctrine that shall release you from the possession of the material, the mental, the bodiless self—[meaning, the *assumed* possession of such a self]*—through following which, all defilement shall fall from you, your purity increase, and even here on earth you shall behold the fulness and perfect unfolding of wisdom through your own knowledge, and attain to enduring possession thereof. Now, Poṭṭhapāda, it may be that you are thinking: 'Defilement certainly may vanish, purity may increase, and even here on earth one may see the fulness and perfect unfolding of wisdom through one's own knowledge, and attain to enduring possession thereof, but that must be a very dreary life.' But the matter is not thus to be regarded, Poṭṭhapāda; rather will all that I have mentioned happen, and *then only joy, pleasure, quietude*, earnest reflection, complete consciousness *and bliss* ensue."²⁴⁷

The climb upwards to the heights of deliverance, to Nibbāna, the nearer we come to the goal, brings all the greater bliss in its train, a bliss of whose depth the worldling can form no conception. Here we give the special description of that blissful state entered by the aspiring disciple, when in time he succeeds in liberating his mind from all the disturbing influences of the external world, and thereupon enters into the four contemplative visions, of which we shall speak later on.²⁴⁸

"Endowed with these things not to be found in the average man: the treasure of moral purity, of watchfulness over the senses, of thoughtful and complete consciousness and contentedness, the monk chooses out for himself some solitary spot—the foot of a forest tree, a cleft in the rocks, a mountain cave, a place of burying, a thicket or a couch of straw in the open field. And having

* "Poṭṭhapāda, if others should ask me: 'But what, friend, is the possession of the material, the spiritual, the bodiless self, from which you wish to liberate us through your doctrine?' then I should answer: 'Friend, it is only from the by you *assumed* possession of the material, the spiritual, the bodiless self that I seek to free you by preaching my doctrine."²⁴⁶ Thus here again the Buddha wishes to liberate us from the *delusion* of the existence of a self either corporeal (coarsely material), spiritual (subtly real), or having its abode in the world of non-corporeality, in which self we might consist, in short, from the delusion of thinking ourselves to consist of anything at all belonging to the world.

returned from his begging round and partaken of his meal, he sits down with legs crossed under him, body held upright, and deliberately practises Recollectedness. Putting away worldly craving, he abides with thoughts free from craving; he cleans his mind of craving. Putting away anger and ill-will, he abides benevolent-minded. Kind and compassionate towards everything that lives, he clears his mind of all anger and ill-will. Putting away sloth and torpor, he dwells vigilant and alert. Wholly conscious and recollected, he clears his mind of sloth and torpor. Putting away inner unrest and anxiety, he dwells in quietude. His inward thoughts quieted, he clears his mind of inner unrest and anxiety. Putting away doubt, he dwells delivered from doubt. No longer questioning what things are good, he clears his mind from doubt.

“With this, O king, it is the same as (with the abandonment of the following burdensome things): Suppose that a man, having borrowed a sum of money, should engage in business, and that his ventures should succeed, so that he should be able to wipe out his original debt, and with what remains over take to himself a wife. Such a man would rejoice thereat and be glad in mind, saying: ‘I that aforetime borrowed money to engage in business have succeeded in my affairs and have cancelled my debt, and, over and above, have got me a wife.’

“Or suppose, O king, that a man has been sick, in great pain, seriously ill, unable to partake of food, exceedingly weak of body; and that after a time he recovers from that sickness, takes his food again, and becomes strong of body. Such a man would rejoice thereat and be glad in mind, saying: ‘I that aforetime was sick, suffering and weak, behold! I now am cured of that illness again, and strong in body!’

“Or suppose, O king, that a man who has been bound in prison, after a time is released safe and sound, without loss or damage to any of his property. Such a man would rejoice thereat and be glad in mind, saying: ‘I that aforetime was bound in prison am now restored to liberty with all my property intact!’

“Or suppose, O king, a man to be a slave, not his own master, at the beck and call of another, unable to go about at will. And suppose that after a time this man is free from servitude, becomes his own master, is no more thrall to another, is a freedman, able to go whithersoever he will. Such a man will rejoice thereat and be glad in mind, saying: “I that aforetime was slave and servant of another now am a freedman and can go whithersoever I choose!”

“Or suppose, O king, that a man with much goods and wealth is upon a long desert journey, and that after a time, safe and sound, he leaves the desert behind without having suffered the loss of any of his goods. Such a man would rejoice thereat and be glad in mind, saying: ‘I that aforetime was toiling through the desert am now returned in safety with all my goods untouched!’

“Even thus, O king, as a debt, as an illness, as imprisonment, as thralldom, as a desert journey, does the monk regard these Five Impediments—(of the pure “meditative contemplation”—*ñānadassana*—)—while as yet they are not banished from within him. But, like a cancelled debt, like recovery from illness,

like release from prison, like being a freedman, like safe soil—even so does the monk regard the banishing of these Five Impediments from within him.

“As soon as he perceives them to be eradicated from his internal nature, joy and pleasure are awakened within him, his body comes to rest, in possession of this rest, he feels happiness, and when he feels at ease, his mind also reaches concentration. Being detached from the pleasures that are evoked by the objects of senses, from those things that are pregnant with evil, and exercising energetic thinking and meditation, in the joy and bliss that are born of detachment from the pleasures evoked by the objects of senses, he attains to the First Stage of Contemplative Vision, and this body he soaks, saturates, fills and penetrates with the joy and bliss that are born of detachment, so that there is no single part of the body that is not penetrated with the joy and bliss that are born of detachment.

“Just as, O king, a competent bath-attendant sprinkles the soap-powder upon a platter, and kneads and works the water into it until the entire lump of soap is thoroughly blent and pervaded with moisture without and within, so penetrated with the moisture that not a drop falls—even thus, O king, does the monk completely soak, saturate, fill and penetrate the body with the joy and bliss that are born of detachment.

“Again, O king, stilling thinking and meditation, through deep inward quietude the mind emerging sole, having ceased from thinking and meditation, in the joy and bliss that are born of concentration, the monk attains to the Second Stage of Contemplative Vision, and this body he soaks, saturates, fills and penetrates with the joy and bliss that are born of concentration, so that there is no single part of the body that is not concentrated with the joy and bliss that are born of concentration.

“Suppose, O king, that there is a pool of water over a spring, with no inlet of water from any other quarter whatsoever, east, west, north, or south, and suppose that never a cloud in the rainy season unloads its burden into it; then that pool with the cool spring-waters welling up beneath will be soaked, saturated filled, penetrated with these same cool waters, so that there will be no part of the pool that will not be penetrated by the cool spring-waters—even thus does the monk completely soak, saturate, fill and penetrate the body with the joy and bliss that are born of concentration.

“Again, O king, after letting the joy fade away the monk dwells indifferent, collected of mind, clearly conscious and in the body tastes the bliss of which the Noble Ones say: ‘The man of indifferent and collected mind lives in bliss,’ and so he attains to the Third Stage of Contemplative Vision, and this body he soaks, saturates, fills and penetrates with a bliss beyond joy, so that there is no part of the body that is not penetrated with that bliss beyond joy.

“Suppose, O king, that there is a pond of lotuses, blue and red and white, all growing and thriving in the water, immersed in the water, deriving their sustenance from the covering waters; from head to root those lotuses will be soaked, saturated, filled and penetrated by the cool water; there will be no part

of them that will not be penetrated by the cool water—even thus does the monk completely soak, saturate, fill and penetrate this body with a bliss apart from active joy.

“Again, O king, after giving up all bliss as well as all suffering, after the disappearance of previous mirth and melancholy, in the perfect purity of reflective indifference, which is superior to all suffering and to all bliss, the monk attains to the Fourth Stage of Contemplative Vision, and he seats himself and envelops this body in cleansed and purified thought, until there is no single part of the body that is not enveloped in cleansed and purified thought. Just as a man might sit down and envelop himself, head and all, in a clean white cloth, so that no part of his body remains uncovered by the clean white cloth, so the monk sits down and completely envelops this body in cleansed and purified thought.”²⁴⁹

Certainly, this well-being is of quite another sort from sensual well-being. It is “the welfare of detachment, of solitude, of quietude, of awakening,” the welfare that is followed by no kind of suffering, on which account, of it the words hold good: “It is to be cultivated, and cherished and increased. One has not to guard oneself against such well-being, say I.”²⁵⁰ Who once has enjoyed this well-being, has, “beyond the sensual enjoyments, beyond the evil, found happiness and what is better.” For him “sensual weal becomes filthy weal, vulgar weal, unholy weal,”²⁵¹ which in face of that “heroic weal” he can easily renounce, yea, which for him, stands opposed as a miserable caricature to that real well-being in his innermost nature. “What do you think, O Brahmin? If a fire were kindled, fed with hay and wood, or if fire were kindled and fed with hay and wood soaked with rain,—which of these two would possess flame and splendour and light?”—“If it were possible, Gotama, to kindle fire by means of hay and wood soaked with rain, then this fire also would possess flame and splendour and light.”—“But it is impossible, O Brahmin, it could not be that fire should be kindled, fed with hay and wood soaked with rain, except by magical might. As if, O Brahmin, fire should be kindled, fed with hay and wood soaked with rain, just so, Brahmin, appears to me a happiness fed with the five enjoyments of the senses.”²⁵²

But this “perfect well-being” is not yet everything. “There are, Udāyī, still other things, that are better and more excellent, for the attainment of which the monks who stay with me lead the holy life.”²⁵³ For above this “visible well-being,” stand the “peaceful states”²⁵⁴ which supervene when the striving disciple, leaving the whole corporeal world far below him, enters that sublime state of mind, where to his mental eye only the realm of boundless space, then that of the infinity of cognition presents itself, which opens out into direct knowledge of the immense void he then alone sees around him: “Empty is this of myself, and of aught pertaining to myself.” Upon these lonely heights, inexpressible peace comes over him—“here is no suffering, here is no vexation”²⁵⁵ until at last, with the annihilation of every kind of perception and sensation, he has become tranquillity itself. Whoso once has experienced this state within himself, is lost to the turmoil of the world, even if he again awakes to it: “His

mind inclines to solitude, bends towards solitude, sinks itself in solitude.”²⁵⁶ The only longing of which such an one is still capable, can only be to let this state of absolute peace become eternal, fully to realize Nibbāna. For to him, this is highest blessedness.

Thus Nibbāna shows itself to be *eternal rest*, “eternal stillness.”²⁵⁷ the “GREAT PEACE”²⁵⁸ whose realm the delivered one enters even during his lifetime, which he completely realizes at death, and in which he has taken possession forever of everything “that is true and real.”* This GREAT PEACE stands above all “perfect well-being,” above all “blissful rest” that can be won here below. All this is “insufficient,”²⁵⁹ for it has the defect that it is “produced,” is “compounded;” but “what is in any way produced, what is compounded,—this is changeable and must perish.”²⁶⁰ Therefore it does not definitely lead beyond transitoriness, and thereby beyond suffering; *eternal*, because unchanging, rest alone, is the state free from suffering. For where no change occurs, nothing more, not even the redeemed one himself, any longer, through grasping, can arise: “That’s no longer to be found with him by which he might arise. And because he does not arise, how should he pass away? Because he does not pass away, how should he die? Because he does not die, how should he tremble? Because he does not tremble, for what should he long?”²⁶¹ He has „become still.” But “having become still, he does not incline; not inclining, he neither comes nor goes; neither coming nor going, he neither appears nor disappears; neither appearing nor disappearing, there is no here nor there nor between; this is the end of suffering,”²⁶² yea, it is pure blessedness. “Bliss is Nibbāna, bliss is Nibbāna,” Sāriputta exclaims;²⁶³ and even more, it is the highest bliss: “Hunger is the worst disease; the productions are the worst suffering. Having recognized this, verily one reaches Nibbāna, *highest bliss*.”²⁶⁴ For rest, peace, and blessedness, are fundamentally the same: “Whoso is impregnated with goodness, the monk cleaving to the doctrine of the Buddha, he turns towards the *peaceful state*, where transitoriness finds *rest*, to *bliss*.”²⁶⁵

But here once more “normal” understanding will again be inclined to protest. How can bliss exist, where absolute rest reigns of such sort that nothing more of any kind is even felt? Thus it will question, in entire agreement with that contemporary of Sāriputta, who in reply to the latter’s exclamation ‘Bliss is Nibbāna, bliss is Nibbāna,’ full of astonishment, asked: “How can there be bliss, where there is no sensation?” And like this questioner, the modern sceptic also will

* Like a stone out of place, a hint of this eternal rest, this eternal peace, is also to be found in the Catholic church, when we hear, quite contrary to its doctrine of eternal *life*, its prayers before the open grave: “Lord, give him eternal rest.”—Here also it becomes apparent, that the opposite of life is not death. Death belongs to life, just as much as birth. It is nothing but the actual *moment* of our great life in all the worlds, in which the corporeal organism hitherto used, is let go, and grasping of a new germ of new life takes place. The opposite to life is really *rest*—since life is movement—namely, rest from the unceasing motion of the five groups. But this rest is only definitively reached with holiness, from which the self-deception involved in such expressions as “rest of the grave,” “rest of the dead,” becomes at once evident.

probably at first not understand the reply of Sāriputta: "This, precisely, O friend, is bliss, that here there is no sensation."²⁶⁶ Therefore we will briefly deal with this.

Everything occurring to us and in us, is willing. We will to see, to hear, to smell, to taste, to touch, to think—of course, pleasant things only,—or what is the same thing, we wish to generate within us a pleasant consciousness in the form of the sensation of pleasant objects, which consciousness is the sole object of the activities of the senses. But consciousness aroused in the end always disappoints expectation: Suffering ultimately predominates every time; the painful impressions of consciousness are far more numerous and also more intense than the pleasant ones. Thereby new willing is excited within us, namely, the desire or will to know the causes of those unpleasant impressions of consciousness, and how to eliminate them, so that only the pleasant ones may remain. This willing also always remains unsatisfied; we never succeed in finding out beyond question the cause of suffering. This is shown in the history of medicine in respect of the suffering associated with disease, no less than in the history of religions and philosophy with regard to suffering conditioned by the laws of nature. The answers given by the religions to the question as to the cause of suffering, are nearly all of the same kind as that with which the Bible solves the problem: We suffer, because our ancestress Eve was so thoughtless as to take a bite at the apple against the bidding of a god, whereby, of course, every possibility of freeing ourselves from suffering is cut off in advance. Hardly more satisfactory are the answers given by the philosophers of the older and later times. Only two men have discovered the true and ultimate cause of all suffering, the Buddha and Schopenhauer, though the latter, only in a manner purely theoretical. Both say: Thou sufferest, because thou willest. For everything that thou canst ever will, thus all objects of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, thinking, yea, even the organs of this willing, in their innermost nature are transitory, hence, do what thou wilt, always inevitably perish. If therefore thou wishest to do away with suffering, thou must altogether do away with willing. But this is impossible, Schopenhauer proceeds. For it is precisely in this willing that your real essence consists, which in it manifests itself, in it appears. As long as this your essence does not one way or another change of and by itself, you thus will be abandoned to suffering. You cannot flee from yourself.

This is quite wrong, the Buddha says. You *are* not will, but in you there arise merely motions of will as in the darkened heavens flame forth lightnings. And just as those flashes of lightning, though arising in space, have nothing in common with it, so the motions of willing that arise in you have nothing in common with your true self. For this very reason not only can you cause new willing to arise within yourself, but you can also annihilate old willing, yea, every kind of willing, and thereby every kind of suffering, by especially developing within yourself the will to insight into the painful nature of all that has arisen. When this will is fully satisfied, and thus complete insight attained, then no other further willing of any kind can possibly exist within you; it is killed by this insight.

In harmony with this declaration, my striving for insight and the removal of the cause of suffering, already roused and active in me, now takes this direction pointed out to me by the Buddha. More and more do I understand the correctness of his explanations, for which very reason the Buddha for me far outshines Schopenhauer, and at last appears to me as the highest of gods and men. But this insight, being not yet perfect, and, above all, not always present to me, is not sufficient to kill my willing grown to the intensity of thirst. At first I rather behold, as fruit of this partial insight, only a new kind of volition growing out of me, directed towards the overcoming of the former willing, thus, towards *detachment*. Thereby the unconcern with which up till now I had abandoned myself to those motions of willing that affirmed the world and myself, has disappeared, and in its stead there has entered what is called the *self-division* of the will, with all the inward dissension which this brings with it, the motions towards detachment waging unremitting warfare with those of desire. And only by incessant, and hard, and painful resistance to the latter, can we help the former to victory. But if we follow the latter, then as a new kind of suffering, there now enters *remorse of conscience*,—conscience, according to what we have been considering in our previous pages, being nothing but the struggle of our innermost essence against what we have already understood as bringing about suffering and as therefore unwholesome for us.* But if we do not yield in this struggle, if at all costs we deepen the insight we already have gained, then with its growth the new will risen in us directed towards the overcoming of the thirst that animates us, will be more and more realized, the thirst will become weaker and weaker; we notice that it is less and less able to overcome us; yea, there may even be times, when temporarily it goes entirely to sleep, and we are rid of its fetters. Then we experience a hitherto unknown feeling of relief, the highest and purest bliss of life, as Schopenhauer calls it, which we have just learned to know as the well-being of detachment, the well-being of appeasement. To whomsoever this comfort has once been given, such an one henceforth knows no other kind of willing than to obtain this independence forever.²⁶⁷ That is to say, the will for the overcoming of his will as it presents itself in the form of thirst, becomes at last so strong that it takes complete possession of him, even as formerly did this thirst. He goes on living only for the sake of *its* realization. Certainly, he thereby gives himself over again into the servitude of the will, he sacrifices everything to it, as before to thirst. But this new will, in an essential point, is distinguishable from the thirst still dwelling within him. The latter can

* Just because conscience is nothing but the reaction of already acquired knowledge as to the wholesomeness or unwholesomeness of a deed, contemplated or already carried out, it is different in nearly every man. There may even be men, within whom there is no stirring of conscience at all. These are those within whom there is no living insight into the law of Karma. One may also have a *false* conscience, namely, when that insight is a false one, when one holds as unwholesome something that in truth is wholesome; or the reverse. Thus the convinced adherent of one religion, in the face of a deed he has carried out, may be pricked by a bad conscience, whereas the same deed, committed by an adherent of another religion of opposite teachings, in the latter arouses a good conscience.

never hope to be satisfied,—‘thus do I stagger from desire to enjoyment, and midst enjoyment for desire I starve,’²⁶⁸ holds good of him—for which reason we can never escape from suffering. But this new will, directed towards the overcoming of all willing, the will for *holiness*, and it alone, can ever be fully satisfied, and is fully satisfied in the delivered one, who in Nibbāna experiences that mighty triumph of the complete and eternal satisfaction of his will, *the no longer having any will*, and thereby the highest bliss.

For if happiness, as we saw at the commencement of this work, is nothing but satisfaction of will, if happiness and satisfaction of will are identical concepts, then the complete, perfect and permanent satisfaction of the will for holiness which alone predominates in the striving sage, that is, the will for will-lessness, precisely for this reason must be purest bliss. *He alone of all the milliards and milliards of beings, who since ever the world began, have striven in vain for the ideal of all happiness, “has got all his will.”** This idea must be thought out to the end, to obtain at least a glimpse of the immense and unparalleled idea lying within it.

Now we may completely understand the powerful words: „For the denying of the will (*chandapahānattha*), is the holy life lived under the Exalted One: *chanden’ eva chandaṃ pajahati*, just through will is will denied: for if through will holiness—(that is just will-lessness)—is reached, then the will for it is satisfied.”*²⁶⁹

According to this, will-lessness, absolute freedom, inexpressible peace and purest bliss, are merely synonymous expressions descriptive of the state of Nibbāna, in contradistinction to the complete lack of liberty, the continual unrest and thereby the ceaseless suffering of man, who still tarries in the world. Further, Nibbāna is also called the state of *health*, in contradistinction to the state of sickness wherein *we* still tarry. Yea, personality, with its five elements, is compared by him who has reached Nibbāna to a knacker’s shirt, blackened with oil and soot, which only a totally blind man could take for a white garment.

“As if, Māgandiya, there was a man born blind and unable to see things black or white, blue or yellow, red or green, unable to see smooth and rough,

* “Who has got all his will and his desire, has got peace.” (Master Eckhart)

** The bliss of absence of will may also be paraphrased thus: Certainly there is no longer any happiness for me, if I have no longer any willing, since every happiness consists precisely in the satisfaction of will. But then I no longer miss this happiness, because I no longer have any kind of will requiring to be satisfied. Which is in the happier state: He who in drinking cool water enjoys the happiness of quenching his thirst, or he who is not at all troubled by any thirst requiring to be quenched? In addition, from this idea it follows that happiness and peace are synonymous conceptions: Peace is reached by the pacifying of will, for which very reason we speak of the “pacification” of will. On the other hand, pacification of will means happiness; therefore peace is the same as happiness; and thereby the highest peace, attained through extinguishing all tormenting desires, is the highest bliss. With this, the negative character of all happiness also is established, since it consists merely in the removal of the disturbance caused by the non-satisfaction of our will. This removal is experienced as all the more happy, the more intense was the unsatisfied will, and along with it, the disturbance conditioned thereby.

unable to see sun and moon and stars. And he heard the words of a man able to see: 'Truly decent, my good man, is a white garment, very fine, without spots and clean.' And he tried to get one. And then another man should deceive him with the shirt of a knacker, blackened with oil and soot, saying: 'There, good man, you have a white garment, very fine, without spots and clean.' And he should take it and put it on, and thus clad he should with pleasure utter the joyous words: 'Truly decent is this white dress, very fine, without spots and clean.' And his friends and comrades, relatives and cousins should call for an expert doctor, who should give him a remedy, make him void upwards and downwards, and use ointments, balsam and sneezing-powder. And he should undergo this treatment, and then his eyes should open, and become cleared. And as he begins to see, his joy and pleasure in the knacker's shirt, blackened with oil and soot, should vanish, and he should take that other man for his enemy, and perhaps wish for his death as expiation, saying: 'For a long time, truly, I have been deceived by this fellow, defrauded and cheated with this knacker's shirt, blackened with oil and soot.' In exactly the same way, Māgandiya, I should like to expound to you the doctrine, as to what is health, what is Nibbāna. And you might behold health, and see Nibbāna, and as you were beginning to see, joy and pleasure in the five groups of grasping would vanish from you, and you would think: 'For a long time I have really been deceived, defrauded and cheated by this mind.* And thus I was in attachment grasping the body, I was in attachment grasping sensation, I was in attachment grasping perception, I was in attachment grasping mentations, I was in attachment grasping cognition.'"²⁷⁰

But not only our personality, as existing on this earth, looks to the delivered one like a knacker's shirt, blackened with oil and soot. *Every* personality, even such as exists in the highest heavens of the gods, is for him who has withdrawn to the purity of his innermost self, nothing but—filth! For, according to the *Anguttara Nikāya*, even a form of existence reduced to the very smallest residue is still as such, evil, just as even the smallest residue of filth or pus still smells badly. Though this remainder of existence has, in the pure gods, become as small as possible, nevertheless they appear to the ascetic only as the immeasurable vault of heaven with its golden fires appeared to the Prince of Denmark, that is, as "no other thing than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours," not as a thing one wants to return to. For this very cause, the delivered one on no account turns back to the world. "And even, Sāriputta, if I should only be reborn among the Pure Gods, I do not wish to return to this world."²⁷¹ Herein precisely, the bliss of the peace he has won becomes especially clear. The saint who has completely mastered his willing, has it in his power to bring about through all the eternities, only re-embodiment in the highest worlds of light, by generating within himself only so much and such a kind of thirst, that at the moment of death it always brings about a grasping in those worlds

* Because it did not allow me to recognize the true state of affairs.

of light. But even this he despises. How could he who has experienced in himself the "stainless"²⁷² bliss of eternal peace, once more choose filth, when in death he lays aside the stain of his present personality? Thus then for him the stain of the world vanishes forever, and he vanishes forever for the world.* There is no longer any bridge between the two. He is *extinguished*, but, to repeat it once more, only for the world, as we expounded in detail, in speaking of the state of the perfected one after death,** with which the present chapter is thus immediately connected. Only, to what has been said before concerning the expression "extinction," which only now has become completely comprehensible to us, we may in conclusion add a few words.

The term "extinction" was chosen by the Buddha in relation to fire which also may be extinguished. But fire, as we know, *is* in some way or other, even when it is extinguished; it is nowhere and everywhere. For nowhere can it be found, and yet everywhere it is lying in wait for the conditions of its entry into this world, and, consequently, can flame up every moment and in every place, where these conditions are provided, greedily seizing the food offered it, be it here with us, or on far-off Sirius. In exactly the same way the totally extinguished delivered one is nowhere and everywhere. For nowhere can he any longer be found, but everywhere, here upon our earth, even in our very midst, or again, in any other place in the infinity of space, he might now, just as well as at any time in the infinitude of the ages, re-enter the world, if only he *wished*, if only the slightest desire for such a thing should arise within him, and thereby a grasping take place. But contrary to the greed with which fire ever and always presses into the world, he has lost all desire of this kind for all eternity. Safe and secure he reposes in the boundlessness and infinitude of his own highest essence. This the Buddha sets forth at length in the 72nd Discourse of the Majjhima Nikāya, when the wandering ascetic Vacchagotta asks him what becomes of the delivered one after death.

"Vaccha, this subject is difficult to fathom, to perceive, and to think out; it is peaceful and exalted, not to be reached by mere abstract thinking, sublime and only to be understood by the wise . . . What do you think, Vaccha? If a fire were burning before your eyes, would you then know: 'There, before me, a fire is burning?'"—"Yes, reverend Gotama."—"But, Vaccha, if someone should ask you: 'Through what is the fire before your eyes burning,' what would you answer him?"—"Reverend Gotama, I should answer: 'The fire before my eyes is burning, because it keeps grasping wood and hay.'"—"If now the fire before your eyes should extinguish, would you then know that the fire is extinguished?"—"Certainly, reverend Gotama."—"But, Vaccha, if you were asked: 'Towards which region of the world has the fire departed, that is extinguished before your eyes, towards the east, the west, the north or the south?' what would you

* From the standpoint of the saint, it is not he who disappears, but the world. To us the process presents itself as just the reverse.

** See the chapter on the subject of suffering!

then answer?"*—"Reverend Gotama, this question is wrongly put. The fire that before was burning because it kept grasping wood and hay, having consumed it and so being without any further fuel is now—owing to its lack of food—to be called an extinguished one."—"Exactly the same is it with the Perfected One, Vaccha. His body, his sensation, his perception, his mentations, his cognition, that might be thought of when speaking of him, are done with, are entirely annihilated, beyond all possibility of their ever again arising in the future, and the Perfected One is *exalted above all comprehensibility* by means of the form of apprehension we call body, sensation, perception, mentations, cognition. *He is indefinable, inscrutable, immeasurable, like the great ocean.* It were false to say: 'He is;' it were just as false to say: '*He is not.*'** And now, all is said that can be said as to the nature of our eternal destiny. He whose mind thereby feels "aroused, rejoiced, pacified, relieved,"²⁷³ or, "who longs after the *unnameable*, laid hold of in his innermost,"²⁷⁴ such an one with good prospect of success may tread the way to realizing Nibbāna for himself, and thus with his own eyes behold the truth of that which hitherto he has only known as the experience of others.

* The principle of the fire to remain intact by the extinction of its *manifestation* was to an Indian a matter of course in such a degree that he was bound—so to speak—to have the question referred to on the tip of his tongue.

** Compare Udāna VIII,10. "Just as of the fire that flames up under the strokes of the smith's hammer it cannot be said where it has gone, after it is extinguished, so just as little can be discovered the abode of the truly delivered ones who have crossed over the stream of the bonds of the senses, have reached the unshakeable bliss."

In the passage of the Majj. Nik. cited above in the text, a perfected one, that is, one who has entirely freed himself from his personality, in his inscrutability is compared to the great ocean, whereby it is expressed as clearly as possible, that he is something immeasurable, inapprehensible for knowledge, of which one cannot even say: 'It is.' (Compare the words of the nun Khemā, quoted above.) But the question may be raised as to how the saint attains a knowledge of this immeasurableness of his essence, since beyond his personality all knowledge too comes to an end. But it is precisely this latter circumstance which points the direction in which we must look for the answer. The saint gains a knowledge of the immeasurableness of his essence, as also of his essence in general in an *indirect* manner, by penetrating the realm of *not-the-I*. In the first great knowledge that arises in him—see above—the whole beginningless chain of rebirths, revolving through countless millions of Kalpas, unveils itself before him, the endlessness of time thereby becoming the mirror of his own essence. Later, like every dying person, if he wished it, he would have the opportunity of grasping in death at any germ in infinite space, were it distant trillions of light-years,—each of them measuring thirty-one billions of miles—so that hence he is also unaffected by the boundlessness of space. According to this, however, the world in all its temporal and spatial infinity is "only the measure of his own grandeur, always surpassing it" (Schopenhauer). But by this, be it well noted, again, at bottom, nothing positive is affirmed, but only his unlimitedness, thus, something purely negative.

