

THE FIVE NIYĀMA OF BUDDHISM

(By Bhikkhu Dhammānanda)



| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| Introduction | 2 |
| Utu Niyāma | 5 |
| Bīja Niyāma | 8 |
| Citta Niyāma | 13 |
| Kamma Niyāma | 17 |
| Dhamma Niyāma | 22 |
| Summary of the 5 Niyāma | 28 |

INTRODUCTION

The idea of having a system that can help to comprehend the entirety of existence has intrigued mankind for millennia. This very idea was, in fact, what in ancient times constituted the loftier part of religion.

In modern times this urge to comprehend existence is represented by science, where however it has become almost entirely divorced from the agenda of religion — to overcome suffering.

In Buddhism this idea of course also exists. The Buddha himself is an icon of enlightenment and stands for millions of people for the person who has comprehended the whole of existence.

To his followers however, the Buddha rarely spoke about unchanging laws and the pursuit of realising more than one's own personal reality, and if he did, he would treat it usually only as a side matter. Various statements about things that in later times were grouped under the "heading" of the five Niyāma can be found both throughout the Suttas and the Vinaya, but they don't form a central aspect of his teachings.

After the Buddha's demise however, with the emergence and growth of Abhidhamma literature, the idea of five Niyāma, five universal laws of existence, began to take a more concrete shape. In the Visuddhimagga, the great treatise on meditation, which is fundamental in Theravada Buddhism, even though the term "Niyāma" itself never is used, many ideas about universal laws in regard to the physical universe, and in regard to nature, mind, kamma and Dhamma can be found. These were later further

systemised and developed to form what we now call the five Niyāma (Pañca Niyāma).

In my previous work, “Paramattha”, I built up, in a step-by-step manner, a scheme which gradually led to my treatment of the Five Niyāma. In this little booklet I do not have much more to add to what I have written there. However, as I know that many people have a primary interest in the Five Niyāma without necessarily having much interest in what I have written in the chapters that preceded that part of the book, I thought it might not be a bad idea to create a small booklet devoted entirely to the Five Niyāma.

Nevertheless the reader should keep in mind that what follows here about the Five Niyāma, does not entirely stand alone, but has evolved out of my contemplations of the fundamental aspects of the Abhidhamma, and of the 24 Paṭṭhāna conditions, as I describe them in the aforementioned work.

Before elaborating on the Five Niyāma, I must add that what I have written here only constitutes my current understanding, which I present not as a view I hope others will adopt, but to show the possibility of ordering the whole of one’s knowledge and understanding into a complete system wherein everything is interrelated. This can help us not just to better understand the Dhamma contained in the scriptures, but also to understand ourselves in relation to the Dhamma. Hence it can be a great tool for our personal path.

Furthermore, it can help with something that has for centuries been a great concern for thinkers in the west, and which is doubtlessly becoming an emerging topic in the East too - the bringing together of religion and science once more.

I hope the reader will keep that in mind throughout reading this little booklet, as doing so will aid in understanding the work.

UTU NIYĀMA



The Buddha declared, that an absolute beginning of things can not be found. Yet, in regard to the phenomenal world, whether on a grand scale or in the very tiny things, all things are understood to possess these two sides of a spectrum, one being the beginning and the other being the end. Between these two points (or poles) there will be a space, large or small, and whatever thing (or phenomena) it is, whose beginning is considered, it will undergo change until it reaches its end(ing).

The immaterial, dynamic aspect that causes change to occur in regard to a universe and in regard to the coarsest inanimate forms of matter, in Buddhism is called Utu Niyāma, the law of generation or the law of physical nature. It is the law, which governs the arising, evolution and dissolution of the physical universe.

Energy, mass, movement and cohesion,...these are the first primary qualities of matter.

As these primary qualities become balanced and begin to work in the direction of synthesis (sampayutta) rather than being repelled by each other (vippayutta), they allow for the crystallisation of concrete matter. Thus tiny particles of matter evolve. These,

occasionally gather together. At first, more or less only accidentally, once in a while, and only for a short time, whereafter they disperse again, often to recombine again with other particles of matter. Thus nebulas, that is, clouds of material particles begin to appear.

But slowly, as this process of combining, dispersing and recombining of particles happens more often, more numerous, and faster; particles remain more frequently in particle-compounds (Anantara - Condition of Combination), which consequently also become more and more dense. These more dense particle-compounds then slowly will form a more liquid kind of matter, wherein the process of dispersion of these particles happens at a much slower rate, while dispersing particles will quickly find sympathetic particles to recombine with. And this process continues until denser and denser forms of matter are achieved.

Gradually, there evolves a central focus of conglomerated matter. And thus a sun gets born. This, apart from steadily growing in mass, also grows more and more in attractive force; and whatever is gained in mass through that conglomeration, is also gained in matters of force of attraction.

This central sun then delimits by virtue of its own force, a sphere of influence apart from the vast infinity of space. And, as out of the nebulous background matter, still other mass centres develop, some of these also begin to gather around the body of that central sun.

Benefitting from existing in that sphere of influence, they begin to orbit, at an orderly distance, around this focal point of their new habitat.

Living in the secure space of the sun's sphere of influence; being radiated at the beneficent energy-giving rays of that central orb of light, these smaller planetary bodies begin to undergo their own processes of transformation. Thus, they gradually develop into conditions of increasing inner refinement. And accordingly, these

planets then begin to develop their own sphere of influence, while slowly surrounding themselves with the shield of an atmosphere.

Gradually, the myriad varieties of matter that will form the surface and structure of the planets, establish themselves.

Gems and crystals, mountains and valleys, surrounded by oceans and filled with rivers, are blown at by winds, weak or strong, and on occasions get disrupted by fires from below.

Slowly matter becomes more and more refined. And more specialised forms of matter begin to evolve.

And when under the rule of this Law of Utu, material evolves, that is more light, malleable and better structured, then it starts giving way to the next Law which is higher in order.

BĪJA NIYĀMA



Bīja literally means 'seed', in the sense of 'germ of life'. Thus this law called Bīja Niyāma, is essentially the law that governs the growth of organic life, from the smallest germ to the birth and growth of higher beings.

When some small particle of matter, surrounded by a medium of water which is neither too hot, nor too cold, and neither too stagnant, nor too fast moving, is itself coming to a condition wherein earth, water, movement and temperature are so highly balanced, that they form a unified whole, capable to resist the surrounding elements¹, a new variety of matter arises.

This new matter, although being able to resist the surrounding matter, exists yet entirely in dependence of it. Hence, it is continuously moved by the forces that surround it.

Yet, slowly, as this matter adopts or imitates those movements, those movements begin to function for an increasing momentum of time more and more independently. And with that certain internal mechanisms evolve, which with time begin to function longer and

¹ This stability being an instance of avigata paccaya, non-disappearance or retention condition

longer by themselves. This becomes the first living matter², that is matter, which possess a certain self-initiation.

Now, initially these internal movements will be only short lasting and then some further external impulse will be needed again; the impulse bringing with it also new material needed to maintain its stability. Yet, slowly even that becomes an acquisition of the new matter, that it acquires a capacity to use its own movement to draw in new material as its source of energy, and that also only when needed.

In a stable environment, myriad of such particles may form. And as the forces of the environment are more hostile than those particles of a like kind, being in contact with those other particles works itself out as a more preferable condition. Thus being not anymore surrounded on all sides by forces that quickly can turn into a threat, allows for further improvement of stability of all the particles connected. Slowly there arise particle groups that more and more function as a singular entity. Now, energy is not just drawn in and kept in each particle, but is exchanged and moved around within the group. Thus cell colonies form, and with time become the first tissue like matters.

Gradually, not only do particles attract each other, but equally so develop these tissues mutual interactions and thus relations with each other. By that slowly, ever more complex entities develop. Cells develop into cell-colonies, cell colonies into tissues, tissues into plants and plants are becoming ever more elaborate and lasting, till they reach such a stage of aliveness and complexity that entirely new faculties develop in them. Thus, certain such entities develop more complex forms of sensing material, which they with equally growing skill learn to draw in, transform into energy, and assimilate into their bodily structure.

² The reason why I am here using the term particle or later living particle, rather than cell, is because, this is closer to the traditional Abhidhamma designation 'kalapa'.

Then also, with the increase in energy in each particle, the internal life (and movement) increases too. And as that life starts overflowing, when its own limit of growth is for the most part reached, it brings forth another life akin to itself. This then becomes the way, not only of individual particles, but equally so of the steadily complex growing structures.

The growth of energy and stability slowly also allows for making faster and further movements in order to seek beyond the mere immediate surrounding matter for sources of nutriment. Thus develop worms, sea-stars, the first simple insects and various other simple build animals, whose internals are often made up of hardly more than a simple digestive tract and some muscle- like structures to move.

With time, new organs form. A heart allows energy to be moved around the whole body, although some species living in water may be able to entirely rely on the tides of sea water to both move themselves as well as to move food and energy around in their body. An evolving nervous system allows for more complex movements and sense-reactions. And an evolving brain allows for better control and coordination of the senses, more complex behaviour patterns towards what is perceived by the senses, and the management of the organism as a whole. Then also other organs evolve, such as liver and lungs, which allow for a much greater refinement of the bodily energy and the transformation of more varying material into such refined energy. This more refined energy then in turn allows for even greater refinement of the bodily organs especially the brain, as well as for greater skills and capacities of the organism or entity as a whole. Thus a mechanism of mutuality assures a generally continuous forward movement in the direction of improvement. Wherein greater skill of the entity to acquire food and security assures a better working of the internal organs, which in turn allows for further improvements of its skills.

Then, as the brain becomes more elaborate, the evolving entity not only becomes better in assuring its own immediate survival, but learns to coordinate its actions with beings of the same species, both to assure greater levels of security, as well as to easier follow its instinct of reproduction. Thus evolves another type of entity, that is, a herd, or family, or tribe.

Similar to the cells of a cell-colony or tissue, or the organs making up a body, the members of a herd, family or tribe are sharing material, exchange energy, as well as develop more specialised tasks which get divided amongst the members.

With time, most of the members of the group are becoming specialised in some particular field. So will, similar to the brain in the body or even the nucleus in a cell, some entity become established as the ruling or governing entity. Other parts will have to fulfill tasks related to supplying the whole group with nutriment. Again others will be charged with seeing to it, that the group or body is kept clean from things that endanger its continuation or well-fare.

Yet, usually in a well governed body or group, there then evolves another type of entity, which is fulfilling a task, that in itself is quite unrelated to the physical functions of the body or group. It is an entity which has become specially charged (that is, temporarily synchronized) by something altogether outside of the group (and the groups interests). And indeed outside the whole law of organic life.³ Their activity and function will only become clear when treating a further law later on.

Families grow into tribes, tribes grow into states, states grow into countries, and so there arise more and more complex entities out of simpler entities.

³ Of course the entity referred to, is the religious person. How the charging happens I hope will become clear in the treatment of the next Niyāma.

Therein too, some family or tribe is developing some specialized support, that is, some skill or technology which also is of use to the members of other groups. Thus may some village or tribe, develop some way to form out of lumps of clay, a vessel which allows for a much longer storage of food, or out of some long poles of wood, some structure, which can protect the whole family or tribe from rain or wind. While some other village or tribe develops some tool for digging up eatable plant roots or some skill to knit dried grass into a mat or basket. And the two tribes seeing the benefit for each other, develop close relations, which with time, too make two or more entities slowly function as one.

Yet, while beings, or groups of beings, similar to more simple entities, may easily become attracted towards whatever supports or affirms their life and identity, they may equally easily become repelled or repelling towards what does not. Thus develop bonds and friendships, as well as enemies and animosities. And thus it also comes about, that complex or simple entities not only develop skills and technologies that support their own life, but also such as can repel what is a threat to it.

But however well even a civilization can both support itself, as well as repel what is a threat to it, although it will survive an almost infinite amount of cells, a great many generations of people, and may see the rise and fall of many cities, its vitality will in the end equally fade and dissipate, becoming the nourishing ground for whatever comes after.

However, while civilization advances, there comes into play more and more a yet other law.

CITTA NIYĀMA



Citta Niyāma is the law of mind. It is the law that governs the appearance and sequence in regard to mental phenomena.

Even as the coarsest and deadest of matter, contains in it the potential for life, in that, by chance it might combine with a material sympathetic with its own combination of elements, to form a combination that is capable of bringing forth life,⁴ so too, wherever there is life, there is at least a latent mind (the potency of mind). That is, there will be some information on how to grow and how to reproduce.⁵ This may be thought of as constituting the first root or establishment of mind in matter.⁶

And as life grows in complexity, so will the mind involved with it grow in complexity.

⁴ Just as a seed, which might be as hard as a rock, showing no sign of life, starts to become animated and sprouts when contacting the element of water, so do the elements making up a universe contain already the potential of life (in a pre-nascent condition).

⁵ There are certain well established facts regarding dead matter, which allow for a thought-consideration regarding a mind in dead matter...in that, it is possible to charge various materials (usually either water or stones) with thought forms which they seemingly retain. This is the basis of talisman-magic, as well as 'holy' (blessed) water. The same phenomenon is also employed in the case of hypnotism, wherein thought forms are impressed on living matter. But a consistent mind as in the case of individuation is of course only possible in higher forms of life. This I will treat under the the next Law (Kamma Niyāma).

⁶ in Pali - hetu

More and more often will this mind move out of the condition of latency in order to manifest its content. And the 'lack' of life gradually becomes the 'desire' of the mind, and the 'repelling' of life gradually becomes the 'aversion' of the mind.

Furthermore, as the lives capacity to receive impressions grows, so does the mind's capacity to receive information grow. Hence, the mind's content grows too.

As a consequence, as impressions and informations grow more and more numerous, the mind is forced to grow for itself a yet new faculty. That is, it learns to investigate and classify those impressions or informations coming from without in order to choose amongst them, and in order to work out appropriate means for responding towards them. Which becomes the third root or establishment in matter.

Thus, the mind faculty evolves and develops. Taking its reign over matter and life. And the law of mind begins competing to attain rulership over the evolving being.

Then, as the mind's content increases, also the first primary conception of good and bad develops. Wherein 'good' will initially mean a conception of what brings pleasure, while 'bad' will be whatever brings displeasure.

And based on these concepts and this primary division of things, the mind learns to make decisions as to what actions should be initiated and which inner impulses should be initiated and which inner impulses should be restrained in order to attain the "pleasant" and avoid the "unpleasant".⁷

With time, the mind starts to extend further into the past and into the future, remembering previous experiences and based on that anticipating future ones. And with that, refining its own conception

⁷ Generating active kamma in 4 modes as described in the beginning chapter on mind

of experience, slowly 'good' no longer just means 'pleasant now' but, may also mean 'unpleasant now but pleasant in the future'.

Furthermore, as the mind learns to become thus skilled in decision making, it becomes by that also skilled in organising the immediacy of the life's life. With that, more and more often it comes to be, that it receives sense-impressions (or informations) for which there will be no need to relate them to the needs of the physical life. Consequently, new ideas form for which there is no exact correspondence in the physical world.

Thus, investigating a thunderstorm⁸ under conditions where it does not appear as an immediate threat (to the life), or a large mountain unproductive of full-filling any physical needs, may evoke 'strange' feelings unfelt before...and the mind investigating it in its condition of upliftment, gives a designation to it that is much grander than the mere physical appearance.

Accordingly, the mind starts to possess mind-objects which require a special kind of feeling (or more beautiful mental factors)⁹ in order to be processed. Processing no longer is meant to subserve the body or physical matter, nor does it just follow the classification of sense-impressions, but rather it arises in conjunction with or in dependence on a certain feeling of upliftment.

As a consequence, the primary division of good and bad equally takes on a different, new meaning. In that, 'Good' is no longer what serves the body or physical existence, but what brings forth (and sustains) these 'special' new feelings. While 'Bad' becomes whatever disturbs these feelings of upliftment. And the mind succeeding in reproducing (repeating) those experiences of

⁸ As this is meant to be a writing explaining "All"...I am following here the naturalistic scheme of things, building up on the previous Niyāmas. Of course further along the line it will more often mean statues of some saint or god (for example Buddha-statues), religious symbols, inspiring personages, buildings of grand architecture, inspiring writings or meditation subjects like the breath.

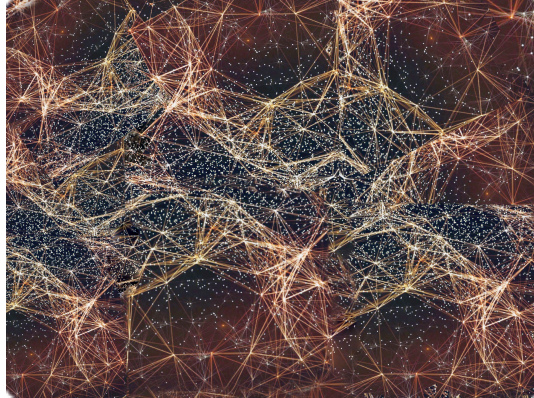
⁹ primarily Pīti and Sukha

upliftment, develops ideas of evolving complexity and makes decisions more often based on these.

Then, in consequence of learning to reside in feelings of upliftment for more prolonged periods of time, eventually the mind starts to contact and perceive its own contents. And as it thus perceives things in the world of ideas, it orders them along definite lines, the most obvious of which will be again 'right' and 'wrong', or 'good' and 'bad'.

And as the mind, based on this distinguishing of things into good or bad, is making decisions for the one or the other, it starts to come under a law yet higher in order...

KAMMA NIYĀMA



Kamma Niyāma is the law of will or intention.

Whenever the mind based on previous investigation and designation (initially of some sense-sphere phenomenon), is thinking a thought, that thought will incline in one direction or another (usually depending on how something was designated).

When that direction of thought, becomes more and more a consistent choice, a yet other faculty will evolve,..the faculty of will.

As the mind makes more consistent choices, the mind and life (viz. the life of the body), will less and less just follow only their own nature of going after pleasure and seeking for comprehension. Because, as consciousness begins to follow a definite trend of choice as to what to pay attention to and what to expel, the organism will learn to respond only to some kinds of stimulation, while the mind will start to seek to understand only that which is important for the will.

The most primitive forms of choices, will be choices directed towards certain objects (supports of mind), (which may include particular environments, or people or experiences). Thus, the mind having willed, will be inclined to drive the organism into habitual contact with a certain object or environment, establishing a definite

relation with that object¹⁰. This will almost inevitably form the main form of will for a human being in the initial phases of life.

Even in cases wherein the emotions are repelled by a particular object or person, this relation will become established, in that, the mind being inclined on something, will drive the organism into habitual contact with that object...even for the purpose of further despising it.

Then, with the progression of the life of the body, there will be actions of body and mind that are repeatedly executed, ...habitual actions, practices, occupations, or the various forms of learning. And their repeated performance will create further opportunities for their execution in the future.

So will a habit of smoking, make consciousness see opportunities both for smoking and for the gaining of cigarettes.

Training in a sport like boxing, will make consciousness see opportunities for fighting with somebody.

Having a hobby like drawing, will make consciousness see various things that could aid the imagination.

Seeking to become a religious person or training to be a preacher, will make consciousness see opportunities for preaching the religion.

Or having a habit of meditating, will make consciousness see opportunities for sitting down to calm the mind and reflect on a certain thing of interest.

Then, as the mind gains experiences, grouping them into 'good' and 'bad', and starts to make more consistent choices in the direction of 'good', or based on an conception of 'good'; the good roots, or certain virtues will become established. That is, a 'good will'

¹⁰ This relates to the condition of attraction (sampayutta)

becomes established. With that, the organism will be less bound to be driven to some particular objects or environment, but rather it will be in easy sympathy with anything and anyone who is/ that is symbolising the mind's considerations of good. While when the mind, distinguishing things into 'good' and 'bad', makes choices repeatedly based on the conception of 'bad', the bad roots are getting established. That is, the will becomes sinful or promiscuous, and the organism will be in easy sympathy with any environment, object or person, that are of likewise establishment.

Besides, whether the mind is developing a relation with a certain object (/environment, etc.), or is developing a habit, or reflects on the good and bad of things, ...that thought or mental condition or intendedness on things, will usually possess a certain time component to it. That is, the object, idea or habit will not just be considered in the present or in relation to the present, but will also be considered about as something of the past and something in the future.

And it is thus, that the intendedness on outer objects will highly condition the life-circumstances of the unfolding future. The habits and practices of body and mind, will have a strong influence on the opportunities that life offers. While the mind's considerations of right and wrong will establish the character of body and mind.

Then, as the body grows old, the will (mind) in many cases will more frequently seek to revoke consolidating thoughts and images from the past. Often while perceiving them, developing new intentions based on them. Thus, one such old kamma may gain new strength, becoming a desire in the mind's attempt to cling to the

life, even when life is just ceasing.¹¹ And as the life of the body is gone,...that desire will fasten itself onto some other material akin to its own nature. A desire, being immaterial in nature, but possessing a certain amount of force, if it's nature is of a human-world kind, as matured human bodies are usually occupied by some conscious or unconscious processes, may find as a suitable receiver only a fertilised ovum, getting drawn to such, even if the latter is at a far distance from the body that has just been left behind.¹²

In the sense sphere world kamma making will be usually directed to sense-sphere objects. Consequently, a human being acquiring an understanding of the law of cause and effect, will start to make calculations as to his future good in the sense-sphere world. And an alike kamma is likely to come up at the time of approaching death.

When the mind acquires knowledge of things higher than the things of the 5 senses, with time, it starts becoming intent on them. Then, the mind more and more starts driving the inner parts of the organism into the proximity of those higher things, in that, the organism is sought to become modified to get a feeling of precisely those higher things.

If the will succeeded in this modification of body and mind, and is able to maintain that condition even until the body's death, with the falling away of the body, the mind will seek its counterpart in loftier spheres with bodies whose native condition is subtle from the very beginning.

¹¹ There are four possibilities as to the kamma which will be decisive for the birth to the next life. Strong kamma, habitual kamma, kamma near the moment of death and random kamma. Strong kamma is any strong intention made during the life, or a strong will at the near death moment that deliberately decides where and/or under what circumstances the next birth shall be. Habitual kamma is the habitual inclination of the mind/will which was there for a longer period of time before the approaching death of the body. Kamma near the moment of death, is an aspiration made recently before the approaching death. And for a mind which lacks both wholesome supportive kamma and decisive will, rebirth will usually happen entirely according to random kamma (The kammical seed falling into any form of existence).

¹² similar to other immaterial forces as radio waves etc.

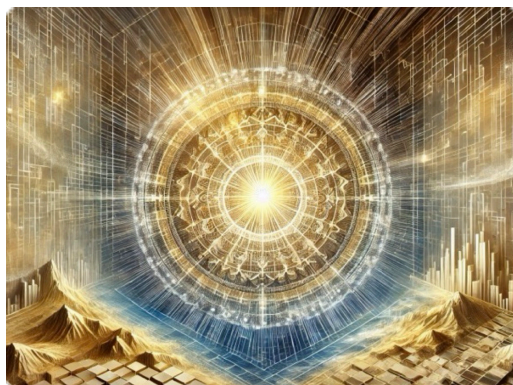
Further still, there may be even cases, wherein the mind is able to live and move purely in ideas. In such case, at the break up of the bodily form, the mind, if powerful enough, will be drawn to spheres wherein there is no matter and only mind and ideas prevail.

In both of the above cases, will due to the much lesser resistance of the matter to the direction(s) of the mind, the working of time also be quite different from that of the sense sphere world. In that, conceptions or perceptions of time will be of a much grander nature, usually encompassing much more of past, present and future.

On the reverse side, there are also spheres of existence, which are exceedingly hostile to life. So that a kammical seed landing there, finds any life-seeking impulses sprouting from within immediately killed off. As there is only suffering prevailing in such sphere, there will be no opportunity for forming concepts, including forming a conception of time.

Usually only such kammical seeds end up here, whose inner nature itself is one of utter hostility to life.

DHAMMA NIYĀMA



As choices become more consistent and as the mind grows in its capacities of making intelligent kammical calculations that are in alignment with those choices, individuality reaches its peak. Ultimately the mind will then seek to know, what the worthiest of goals to aspire to is.

Hence it sets out to study life with an aim to acquire knowledge of things unchanging with the hope of by that perhaps come to realise life's goal and meaning.

Consequently, again the mind formulates concepts regarding the good and the bad and the right and the wrong way of proceeding. So becomes good or right, whatever seems to lead to the realisation of higher truths, while bad or wrong becomes whatever appears to lead away from such realisation. And as it starts thus, whatever appears to be an obstruction, the mind studies for the purpose of overcoming it, while whatever appears to be an aid or support on the way to the aimed-at realisation, it studies for the purpose of reproducing it or in order to be able to make use of it more efficiently.

Studying thus, the mind begins to recognise, that there is some correspondence between the inner subjective world and the outer

world of objects. And following that track, it begins to distinguish certain universal elements of experience.

First, its focus lands on matter. And there, for the first time, it begins to clearly recognise, that all matter can be reduced to four primary material qualities.

Earth being the most obvious to be recognised as matter, but water is quickly understood to be a form of matter too. Yet, upon deeper thought, the wind that blows through the world and the fire that, at times may be daily lit, becomes understood to too belong to the sphere of matter.

And, as this first truth of nature has been discovered, the mind begins to see, that this truth is not just a truth of the nature without, but equally can be experienced within. Hence it tries to classify new experiences, both in the world without and within, more often in accordance with these newly discovered truths.

Furthermore, as the mind studies those elements in nature, it notices, that these elements can exist in a condition of balance and harmony with each other, but occasionally become imbalanced and then begin to work one against the other. And perceiving the former condition in most cases as the preferable one, the mind makes experiments as to how to balance those elements more efficiently, as well as to how to counteract the many times threatfull condition of the disruption of the balance.

Accordingly, as the mind succeeds with its endeavour to balance those elements and due to that finds itself more often surrounded by conditions of balance, it becomes aware of a yet more subtle universal element, which, too seems to exist both within and without. Thus it starts recognising that there is an element of life. This is what animates matter. This is what makes the human and the squirrel as one, nay, even the human and the shrub and the stem of corn.

Conceiving thus, the mind dives deeper still to investigate what this life actually is that all living creatures seem to share. And thus it learns to observe life as living processes. It learns that all life feeds on something. First of all, all life gets born. But then, all life eats, assimilates what it ate in order to move and to grow, and, once grown, it usually seeks to reproduce itself, to yet in the end slowly diminish in strength and gradually fall dead to the ground. These are the natural processes of life.

Yet, the mind too discerns, that there are more ideal lives, and less ideal ones, more ideal working out of those processes and less ideal ones. And comprehending that such is the case, the mind makes still further experiments as to how to improve the natural working out of life both without and within.

As it does so, the mind begins to detect, that there is a mind involved with life. In fact, upon closer observation, it finds that there is not just one mind, but many minds.

Thus it perceives, that based upon the nature of the life- process, there exists a mind particular to that process. Within, involved with the digestive process or the organs of digestion, there exists some particular mind that concerns itself with food and nourishment only. Involved with the organs of reproduction exists another mind which is interested in all things of a sexual nature; involved with each organ of sense, there exist yet different minds, each with its particular likes and dislikes in regards to its respective sphere; while involved with the organ and the processes of the brain there exists still another mind. This one seeks to govern, or put into order all the rest.

And as the mind already realised that the world without and the world within are somewhat equal in their ways, the mind henceforth will look for, or at least believe in minds that may exist also in the processes of nature without.

These are, of course, the thunder-, the ocean-, and the rain- gods, as well as the gods of love, the gods of war, and so on, which, until the advent of the newer religions, have existed in all cultures of the past. These are usually presided over by one who is their leader, just as the minds involved with internal processes of the body are somewhat presided over by the mind of the brain. And as our truth seeking mind awakens to these facts of nature, it realises, that although each of those minds within, or gods without, has its definite purpose, the last, that is, the ordering and governing one, is the most sublime and important one of all. Naturally that realisation then leads to giving that mind or god more attention, which will equally give it greater power also.

Now, when a ruling mind or entity gains more power to order its subjects, it will seek to not only acquire dominion over them in the small sphere of the present, but equally, tries to guide their condition towards an ordered future. Thus, gradually, that mind, taking note of the present, remembering the past, and thinking of the future, begins to realise certain facts about life. It starts witnessing instances of the great spiritual messengers of life; that is, birth, sickness, old age and death.¹³ And it too learns about the duality of good and evil. That latter realisation in turn, of perceiving a good that is distinct from a bad, ultimately, sometimes sooner, sometimes later then will also lead the mind to pursue the good, at least in preference of the bad. And when the mind finally does pursue the good, it finds an inner joy occasionally arising, which leads the way towards loftier feelings still. These experiences of joy and of lofty feelings, progressively expand the mind's horizon. The mind begins to be less concerned with the body, and indeed its whole identification with the body starts to gradually diminish. Which will lead it to quite new concerns. That is, as the mind's identification with the body diminishes, at times it begins to wonder

¹³ That is, with the growth of the mind, sooner or later, the spiritual powers (Indriya), of mindfulness, energy, wisdom and so on begin to develop.

about the possibility of the mind existing independent from the body. A consideration which in turn leads it to occasionally undertake to make certain calculations regarding possible conditions of the mind after death.

One of its earliest investigations leads it to a consideration regarding the difference between a possible after-death-life of an evil mind against one that is good. But later it too realises other patterns, such as what the difference between a mind inclining towards material things, as opposed to a mind directed at nobler things would mean in relation to an after- death-life world.

Slowly, based on its discernment of different conditions of consciousness, the mind gains glimpses of a hell that is equivalent to a mental condition of utter inner cleavage and suffering, as opposed to a heaven of perfect inner peace and at-oneness. Realising thus, naturally the mind will determine to avoid anything which might lead to the former condition, while the latter becomes the more appealing the more it is understood.

All this our discerning mind perceives as a natural progression of the path towards perfection.

Yet, with the progression of insight, comprehending more and more how present mind-states and intentions relate to future experiences, the mind begins to become more focused on realising the workings of the will.

Little by little it realises the intricacies between willing and experiences and experiences and willing. That is, how the will (directed towards phenomena; that is, mental and material things) creates experiences (that is, phenomena existing as objects for consciousness) and how experiences in turn condition the arising of a will, or more often even, of many wills.

And seeing the endlessness and uncertainty of that cycle, the mind sees more and more the suffering nature therein. As a consequence, it begins to more deliberately remove both all wills

and all experiences which may lead to undesirable wills and experiences in the future. In that process, it realises that all wills arise from a store of latent dispositions and that by considering experiences in a universal light or in matters of ultimate truth and natural law, seeing the suffering in all things transient, latent wills become purified from the stain of revolving around transient phenomena and a singular illusory self. Thus all suffering and all that is less than perfect becomes gradually transcended.

Still, this process of purification usually does not happen at once, but often is accomplished in stages. Therein the first stage is accomplished when, having glimpsed 'a life' beyond the personal, the belief in the 'ultimateness' of the self is destroyed, doubt about the essence of the spiritual life is destroyed, as well as superstition and all forms of belief in wrong practices for a proposed spiritual development. This accomplishment is called 'entering into the stream' (Sotāpatti magga).

Emphasising thus ultimate truth and ever seeking to go beyond the veil of the phenomenal world, gradually the passions, especially of greed and hatred start to diminish. A stage which is called Sakadāgāmī ('One who returns only once').

When all the passions related to sense-sphere existence are entirely destroyed, the third stage of enlightenment is reached. And a person who has attained this stage is called an Anāgāmī ('Non-returner'). After the attainment of this stage, only fetters of attachment to the higher stages of meditation, as well as minor imperfections of character, as restlessness and pride, along with the last bit of ignorance regarding spiritual perfection is left. And when these are eliminated, a person is called an Arahāt, a 'Holy One'.

....

Having outlined the Five Niyāma, let us briefly summarize to ensure that the key points are not easily forgotten:

SUMMARY OF THE 5 NIYĀMA

The first universal law of Buddhism is called **Utu Niyāma**. It is the law of physical nature or physical existence. This law is what governs the coming into being, evolution, and final destruction of the physical universe.

The second law, **Bīja Niyāma** — the law of heredity and growth, is a law that comes into play after the physical universe has reached a certain stage of evolution and balance. It is the natural law that governs the growth and reproduction of the various species, from plant life to higher beings.

When life has evolved to such a degree that it is capable of sustained growth and the building upon an inheritance of reasonably well-functioning faculties, the third law, **Citta Niyāma**, begins to take the lead. This is the law that governs the appearance and sequence of all mental phenomena.

The fourth Niyāma, **Kamma Niyāma**, is the law of cause and effect, specifically in regards to mind and intention. This, too, builds upon all the laws prior to it. In that, through thinking and the creation of ideas, an intention develops, especially in relation to the three periods of time — past, present, and future. And by virtue of this law, this intention becomes effective.

Finally, when a person becomes skillful in using the law of Kamma, the last law, **Dhamma Niyāma**, may aid a person in attaining holiness. That is, if a person, based on an acquired understanding of

the imperfect nature of material or worldly life and the possibility of perfecting his being, sets before himself to transcend this material or worldly life and works to become such perfected being, he begins to make use of the principles of the Law of Dhamma.

Together, these five laws present a holistic view of reality, encouraging us to live harmoniously with the natural world. By understanding and aligning with them we can gain a deeper comprehension of existence and progress on the path to enlightenment.