

Four Stages of Enlightenment

Key points

- Four Stages of Enlightenment are also referred to as the Supramundane *Jhānas* or Four Paths.
- The four stages/paths of enlightenment represent a gradual purification in which the ten fetters are reduced and eradicated.
- Entry into the stream of the *Dhamma* happens when consciousness takes *Nibbāna* as object.
- All four paths/stages take *Nibbāna* as the object of consciousness

Stages/Paths	Pali names	Fetters removed or reduced	Maximum number of lifetimes between this stage & final liberation
The path of stream-entry	<i>Sotapatti</i>	Removes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the erroneous view of self 2. doubt regarding the efficacy of Buddha's teaching 3. belief that purification comes through performing rites and rituals 	Has maximum of seven rebirths into happy realms of human or heavenly worlds before final deliverance
The path of the once-returner	<i>Sakadagami</i>	Does not cut off any fetters completely, but greatly reduces sensual desires and ill will	May return to this world only one more time before reaching final liberation
The path of the non-returner	<i>Anagami</i>	Completely cuts off sense desire and ill will	Will never again take rebirth in the sense-sphere before attaining final liberation
The path of arahantship	<i>Arahant</i>	Removes the remaining five fetters: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. desire for existence in the fine-material sphere 2. desire for existence in the immaterial spheres 3. conceit 4. restlessness 5. ignorance 	This final stage concludes the round of rebirths and puts an end to the cycle of suffering