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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages/Paths</th>
<th>Pali names</th>
<th>Fetters removed or reduced</th>
<th>Maximum number of lifetimes between this stage &amp; final liberation</th>
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| The path of stream-entry | *Sotapatti* | Removes:
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 | *Sakadagami* | 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 | *Anagami* | 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 | *Arahant* | Removes the remaining five fetters:  
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 |