

Majjhima Nikāya - The Middle Length Discourses

The Longer Discourse-Questions and Answers (Mahaavedallasutta)

I heard thus.

At one time the Blessed One was living in the monastery offered by Anaathapindika in Jeta's grove in Saavatthi. Then venerable Mahaako.t.thita getting up from his seclusions in the evening, approached venerable Saariputta, exchanging friendly greetings, sat on a side and said:

Friend, it is said, lacking in wisdom. What is lacking in wisdom? Friend, does not know, therefore it is said lacking in wisdom. Does not know what?: Does not know, this is unpleasant, this is the arising of unpleasantness, this is the cessation of unpleasantness and this is the path to the cessation of unpleasantness. Does not know these, therefore it is said lacking in wisdom. Venerable Mahaako.t.thita agreeing and delighting, with the words of venerable Saariputta asked another question. It is said wise, for what is it said wise? Knows, therefore it is said wise. Knows what? Knows this is unpleasant, this is the arising of unpleasantness, this is the cessation of unpleasantness and this is the path to the cessation of unpleasantness. Knows these, therefore it is said wise. It is said consciousness. Friend, what is consciousness?: Knows, therefore conscious. Knows what? Knows this is pleasant, this is unpleasant and knows this is neither unpleasant nor pleasant. Knows therefore it is said conscious. Friend, this knowledge and this consciousness, are they associated or dissociated? Is there a method to differentiate them and show them apart? What is known is consciousness and consciousness is knowledge. Therefore these things are associated and not dissociated and it is not possible to differentiate them and show them apart. Friend, of these things that are associated and not dissociated, what is their difference? Friend, of these things associated and not dissociated knowledge should be developed and consciousness should be accurately known. That is their difference.

Friend, it is said feeling? What is feeling? When felt it is said feeling. What is felt?: Pleasant feeling, unpleasantness feeling and neither unpleasantness nor pleasant feeling. These feelings are felt. Friend, it is said perception, what is perception? Perceives therefore it is said perception. What is perceived? Blue is perceived, yellow is perceived, red is perceived and white is perceived. Therefore it is said perception..Friend, this feeling, perception, and this consciousness, are these associated or dissociated? Is it possible to differentiate them and show them apart?: Friend, feelings, perceptions and consciousness are associated and not dissociated and it is not possible to differentiate them and show them apart: Friend, the felt is perceived, and the perceived is consciously known Therefore these things are associated and not dissociated and it is not possible to differentiate them and show them apart.

Friend, when the five sense faculties do not lead, to what is the purified faculty of the mind led? Friend, when the five sense faculties do not lead, the purified faculty of the mind leads to space with space is boundless, leads to consciousness with consciousness is boundless, leads to the sphere of no-thing with there is nothing. Friend, how is this leading to be known? Friend, this leading should be known with the eye of wisdom. Friend, for what purpose is wisdom? Wisdom is for depth realisation, thorough knowing and for giving up.

Friend, how many ways are there for the arising of right view? Friend, there are two ways for the arising of right view. Either hearing it from an outside source or internally reflecting the root causes. In these two ways right view arises. Friend, in how many ways does there come about, the release of mind with right view and the results of the release of mind, the release through wisdom with right view and the results of the release through wisdom: Friend, the release of mind with right view and its results and the release through wisdom with right view and its results, come about in five ways. Friend, that right view comes with virtues, learning, discussion, appeasement and wisdom. In these five ways there comes about, the release of mind through right view and its results, and the release of mind.:through wisdom and its results. Friend, how many kinds of 'being' are there? Friend, its threefold: Being with sensuality, with matter and with non-matter. (*!)Friend, how does future rebirth come about?. Friend, beings shrouded in ignorance and bound to craving delight here and

there, thus comes about rebirth in the future (*2). Friend, how does future rebirth not come about? When ignorance is dispelled science arises and craving ceases, thus future rebirth does not come about (*3)

Friend, what is the first jhaana? Here, friend, the bhikkhu secluded from sensual desires and thoughts of demerit, with thoughts and thought processes and with joy and pleasantness born of seclusion attained to abides in the first jhaana. Friend, how many factors has the first jhaana? The first jhaana has five factors.: Here friend, the bhikkhu attained to the first jhaana maintains thoughts, thought processes, joy, pleasantness and one pointedness of mind. The first jhaana has these five factors.. Friend, in the first jhaana how many factors are dispelled, and how many factors are maintained? One attained to the first jhaana dispels five factors and maintains five factors. Here, friend, the bhikkhu attained to the first jhaana has dispelled the interest for sensuality, anger, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry and doubts. He maintains, thoughts, thought processes, joy, pleasantness, and one pointedness of mind. Friend, the first jhana is devoid of these five and endowed with these five.

Friend, these five mental faculties with varying provinces and pastures not partaking each others province and pasture such as the faculties of the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body, where are they restored and who partakes the pasture commonly?.

Friend, these five mental faculties with varying provinces and pastures not partaking each others province and pasture such as the faculties of the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body. They are restored in the mind and it partakes the pasture commonly.

Friend, these five mental faculties of the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body, on what do they rely? Friend, these five mental faculties of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body rely on life span. Friend, this life span, on what does it rely? Friend, life span relies on breath. Friend, on what does breath rely? Breath relies on life span. Now we understand the words of venerable Saariputta thus. Life span relies on breath and breath relies on life span. How could we understand these words of venerable

Saariputta?. Then I will give you an example, for some wise understand when an example is given. Just as the burning wick of an oil lamp shows a light on account of the flame and a flame on account of the light. In the same manner life span relies on breath and breath on life span.

Friend, is life span the same as the field of feelings or else is life span different from the field of feelings? (*4) Friend, life span is not the field of feelings. If it happened that life span was the field of feelings a bhikkhu's rising from the attainment, the cessation of perceptions and feelings could not be explained. Since the life span is different from the field of feelings the rising from the attainment, cessation of perceptions and feelings could be explained. Friend, when this body is forsaken, useless and lies lifeless like a log, how many things are thrown out of it? Friend, when three things, life, heat and consciousness, are thrown out, this body becomes useless and lifeless like a log of wood. Friend, what is the difference between a dead body and a bhikkhu attained to the cessation of perceptions and feelings? Friend, in a dead body the bodily determination has ceased and is appeased The verbal determination has ceased and is appeased The mental determination has ceased and is appeased (*5). Life span has exhausted. The heat has extinguished, and the mental faculties have broken up. Of the bhikkhu attained to the cessation of perceptions and feelings, the bodily determination has ceased and is appeased The verbal determination has ceased and is appeased The mental determination has ceased is appeased. The life span is not exhausted. The heat is not extinguished. The mental faculties are very clear. Friend, this is the difference between a dead body and of one attained to the cessation of perceptions and feelings. Friend, how many factors are there in the release in neither unpleasant nor pleasant feelings? The release in neither unpleasant nor pleasant feelings is based on four factors. Here, the bhikkhu dispelling pleasantness and unpleasantness and earlier having overcome pleasure and displeasure, and mindfulness purified with equanimity attained to abides in the fourth jhana. Based on these four is the release from neither unpleasant nor pleasant feelings. Friend, based on how many factors is the release of mind in signlessness?. The release of mind in signlessness is based on two factors. Not attending to any signs and attending to the no-sign element. Based on these two factors the release of mind in signlessness is attained. On account of what is the duration of the release of mind in signlessness? The duration of the release of mind in signlessness is based on three factors. Not attending to any signs, attending to the no-sign element, and making a determination earlier. Friend, based on these three is the

duration of the release of mind in the no-sign element.. Friend, how is the rising from the release of mind in the no-sign element? Based on two factors is the rising from the release of mind in the no-sign element: Attending to all signs and not attending to the no-sign element. Based on these two is the rising from the attainment, release of mind in the no-sign element.

Friend, the limitless release of mind, the release of mind in no-thingness, the release of mind in voidity, and the release of mind in the no-sign element, are they different in meaning and different in words or are they the same in meaning and different in words? There is a method in which they are different in meaning and different in words and there is a method in which they are the same in meaning and different in words. Friend, how are they different in meaning and different in words. Here the bhikkhu abides with the thought of loving kindness pervading one direction, so too the second, third, and fourth directions, above, below and across, in all circumstances, for all purposes, towards all, this thought grown great and extensive without anger. The thought of compassion— The thought of intrinsic joy,---The thought of equanimity pervading one direction, so too the second, the third, the fourth, above, below, and across, in all circumstances, for all purposes, towards all, this thought grown great and extensive without anger he abides. This is the limitless release of mind. Friend, what is the release of mind in no-thingness: Here the bhikkhu overcoming all the sphere of consciousness attained to abides in the sphere of no-thingness. To this is said, the release of mind in the sphere of no-thingness. Friend what is release of mind in voidity? Here the bhikkhu gone to the forest, to the root of a tree or to an empty house reflects This is void of a self or the belongings of a self. Friend to this is said the release of mind in voidity. Friend, what is the release of mind in the no-sign element: Here the bhikkhu not attending to any sign, attends to the no-sign element and abides in it. To this is said the release of mind in the no-sign element. According to this method, these things are different in meaning and different in words.

Friend, how are these things the same in meaning and different in words. Here, friend, greed is a limiting factor, hate is a limiting factor, delusion is a limiting factor,

To the bhikkhu with desires destroyed these things are dispelled, pulled out with the roots, have the tops cut off, made things that would not grow again. Of the boundless releases of the mind the immovable release of mind is the highest, it is said (*6). Friend that immovable release of mind is void of greed, void of hate and void of delusion. Friend, greed is something, hate is something, delusion is something. To the bhikkhu with desires destroyed these things are dispelled, pulled out with the roots, have the tops cut off, made things that would not grow again. Of the release of mind in no-thingness, the immovable release of mind is the highest it is said. Friend, the immovable release of mind is void of greed, void of hate and void of delusion. Friend, greed is a sign, hate is a sign, and delusion is a sign. To the bhikkhu with desires destroyed, these things are dispelled, pulled out with the roots, have the tops cut off, made things that would not grow again. Of the release in signlessness, the immovable release is the highest it is said. Friend, the immovable release of mind is void of greed, void of anger, void of delusion. According to this method, these things are the same in meaning and different in words.

Venerable Saariputta said thus and venerable Mahaako.t.thita delighted in the words of venerable Saariputta. . .

Notes.

1. Being with sensuality, with matter and with non-matter.'kaamabhava ruupabhava aruupabhava'
Being 'bhava' Bava the Pali word translated as being is the ramblings of the mind in sensual desires, in material things and in immaterial states such as the jhaanas, and attainments described in this Sutta.

2. Beings (sattaa) shrouded in ignorance and bound to craving delight here and there, thus comes about rebirth in the future.'avijjaaniivaranaana.m kho aavuso sattaana.m tanhasanyojanaana.m eva.m aayati.m punabbhavaanibbanti honti'
Rebirth in the future is a result of the mind's ramblings in sensuality, matter and non-matter covered by ignorance and bound to craving.

3. When ignorance is dispelled, science arises and craving ceases, thus future rebirth does not come about. 'avijjaaviraagaa kho aavuso vijaappaadaa ta.nhaanirodhaa eva.m aayati.m punabbhavaanibbanti na honti.' The dispelling of the rambling mind's interest in sensuality, matter and non-matter is the dispelling of ignorance and the arising of science and that is the cessation of craving..

4. Is life span the same as the field of feelings? 'teva nukho aavuso aayusankhaaraa teva vedaniiyaa dhammaa udaahu a~n~ne aayusankhaaraa a~n~ne vedaniiyaa dhammaa?.' The field of feelings is the sixfold sphere of mental contact, based on which feelings constantly arise with every contact at one or the other of the doors of mental contact.

5. In a dead body the bodily determination has ceased and is appeased. The verbal determination has ceased and is appeased. The mental determination has ceased and is appeased. 'yavaaya.m aavuso mato kaalakato tassa kaayasankhaaraa niruddhaa pa.tipassaddhaa vaciisankhaaraa niruddhaa pa.tipassaddhaa cittasankhaaraa niruddhaa pa.tipassaddhaa.' The bodily, verbal and mental determinations are in and out breaths, thinking and pondering, and feeling and perceiving. When one is dead, these things have ceased and are appeased, that is they do not worry him any more.

6. Of the boundless releases of the mind the immovable release of mind is the highest, it is said. 'yaavataa kho aavuso appamaana ceto vimuttiyo akuppa taasa.m ceto vimutti aggamakkhaayaati' The releases of mind experienced by those free of greed, hate and delusion is the highest. This in other words is the experience of arahanta, extinction.