

MN 149: Mahāsaḷāyatanika Sutta

The Great Discourse on the Six Sense Bases

Translated by Suddhāso Bhikkhu

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Sāvatti, in Jeta's Grove, at Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. There the Blessed One addressed the monks: "Monks!" "Auspicious sir," those monks replied to the Blessed One. "Monks, I will teach you a great discourse on the six sense bases. Listen to this and carefully pay attention; I will speak." "Yes, Bhante," those monks replied to the Blessed One. The Blessed One said this:

"Monks, when one does not accurately know and see the eye, visible objects, eye-consciousness, eye-contact, and whatever feeling arises from eye-contact - whether pleasant, painful, or neutral - then one becomes infatuated with the eye, with visible objects, with eye-consciousness, with eye-contact, and with whatever feeling arises from eye-contact - whether pleasant, painful, or neutral.

"When one remains infatuated, bound, confused, and focused on gratification, then in the future there will be further accumulation of the five aggregates affected by clinging¹. One's craving - which leads to further existence, is accompanied by delight and passion, and seeks delight here and there - also increases. One's physical distress increases. One's mental distress increases. One's physical torment increases. One's mental torment increases. One's physical fever increases. One's mental fever increases. One experiences physical suffering and mental suffering.

"Monks, when one does not accurately know and see the ear... the nose... the tongue... the body... the mind, mental objects, mind-consciousness, mind-contact, and whatever feeling arises from mind-contact - whether pleasant, painful, or neutral - then one becomes infatuated with the mind, with mental objects, with mind-consciousness, with mind-contact, and with whatever feeling arises from mind-contact - whether pleasant, painful, or neutral. When one remains infatuated, bound, confused, and focused on gratification, then in the future there will be further accumulation of the five aggregates of clinging... one experiences physical suffering and mental suffering.

"Monks, when one accurately knows and sees the eye... the ear... the nose... the tongue... the body... the mind, mental objects, mind-consciousness, mind-contact, and whatever feeling arises from mind-contact - whether pleasant, painful, or neutral - then one does not become infatuated with the mind, with mental objects, with mind-consciousness, with mind-contact, and with whatever feeling arises from mind-contact - whether pleasant, painful, or neutral.

"When one remains uninfatuated, unbound, unconfused, and focused on drawbacks², then in the future there will be diminution of the five aggregates affected by clinging. One's craving - which leads to further existence, is accompanied by delight and passion, and seeks delight here and there - is left behind. One's physical distress is left behind. One's

1 *Pañc'upādāna-k-khandhā*. Lit. "five-clinging-aggregates." This refers to the five aggregates of being (body, feeling, recognition, thought, and consciousness) when affected by clinging.

2 *Ādīnava*. That is, the drawbacks of infatuation with sensory experiences.

mental distress is left behind. One's physical torment is left behind. One's mental torment is left behind. One's physical fever is left behind. One's mental fever is left behind. One experiences physical pleasure and mental pleasure.

“The perspective of such a person is right perspective. The thought of such a person is right thought. The effort of such a person is right effort. The mindfulness of such a person is right mindfulness. The concentration of such a person is right concentration. Furthermore, that person's speech, actions, and livelihood were already well-purified. Thus this leads to that person's fulfillment of the Noble Eightfold Path by development.

“For one who develops the Noble Eightfold Path in this way, the Four Establishments of Mindfulness, the Four Right Strivings, the Four Paths to Success, the Five Faculties, the Five Powers, and the Seven Enlightenment Factors also reach fulfillment by development.

“For that person, these two phenomena progress together: tranquility and insight³. That person understands with higher knowledge those phenomena which are to be understood by higher knowledge. That person abandons those phenomena which are to be abandoned. That person develops those phenomena which are developed. That person realizes with higher knowledge those phenomena which are to be realized by higher knowledge.

“And, monks, what phenomena are to be understood by higher knowledge? 'The five aggregates affected by clinging' is to be said – that is, the body-aggregate affected by clinging, the feeling-aggregate affected by clinging, the recognition-aggregate affected by clinging, the thought-aggregate affected by clinging, and the consciousness-aggregate affected by clinging. These phenomena are to be understood by higher knowledge.

“And, monks, what phenomena are to be abandoned? Ignorance and the desire for existence – these phenomena are to be abandoned.

“And, monks, what phenomena are to be developed? Tranquility and insight – these phenomena are to be developed.

“And, monks, what phenomena are to be realized? Knowledge and liberation – these phenomena are to be realized.”

This is what the Blessed One said. Satisfied, those monks delighted in the Blessed One's speech.