

## 43 *Mahāvédalla Sutta*

### The Greater Series of Questions and Answers

[292] 1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvattṭhi in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park.

Then, when it was evening, the venerable Mahā Koṭṭhita rose from meditation, went to the venerable Sāriputta, and exchanged greetings with him.<sup>428</sup> When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side and said to the venerable Sāriputta:

(WISDOM)

2. "One who is unwise, one who is unwise' is said, friend. With reference to what is this said, 'one who is unwise'?"

"One does not wisely understand, one does not wisely understand,' friend; that is why it is said, 'one who is unwise.' And what doesn't one wisely understand? One does not wisely understand: 'This is suffering'; one does not wisely understand: 'This is the origin of suffering'; one does not wisely understand: 'This is the cessation of suffering'; one does not wisely understand: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.' 'One does not wisely understand, one does not wisely understand,' friend; that is why it is said, 'one who is unwise.'"

Saying, "Good, friend," the venerable Mahā Koṭṭhita delighted and rejoiced in the venerable Sāriputta's words. Then he asked him a further question:

3. "One who is wise, one who is wise,' is said, friend. With reference to what is this said, 'one who is wise'?"

"One wisely understands, one wisely understands,' friend; that is why it is said, 'one who is wise.' What does one wisely understand? One wisely understands: 'This is suffering'; one

wisely understands: 'This is the origin of suffering'; one wisely understands: 'This is the cessation of suffering'; one wisely understands: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.' 'One wisely understands, one wisely understands, friend; that is why it is said, 'one who is wise.'"<sup>429</sup>

## (CONSCIOUSNESS)

4. "Consciousness, consciousness' is said, friend. With reference to what is 'consciousness' said?"

"It cognizes, it cognizes, friend; that is why 'consciousness' is said.<sup>430</sup> What does it cognize? It cognizes: '[This is] pleasant'; it cognizes: '[This is] painful'; it cognizes: '[This is] neither-painful-nor-pleasant.' 'It cognizes, it cognizes, friend; that is why 'consciousness' is said."<sup>431</sup>

5. "Wisdom and consciousness, friend – are these states conjoined or disjoined? And is it possible to separate each of these states from the other in order to describe the difference between them?"

"Wisdom and consciousness, friend – these states are conjoined, not disjoined, and it is impossible to separate each of these states from the other in order to describe the difference between them. For what one wisely understands, that one cognizes, and what one cognizes, that one wisely understands. [293] That is why these states are conjoined, not disjoined, and it is impossible to separate each of these states from the other in order to describe the difference between them."<sup>432</sup>

6. "What is the difference, friend, between wisdom and consciousness, these states that are conjoined, not disjoined?"

"The difference, friend, between wisdom and consciousness, these states that are conjoined, not disjoined, is this: wisdom is to be developed, consciousness is to be fully understood."<sup>433</sup>

## (FEELING)

7. "Feeling, feeling' is said, friend. With reference to what is 'feeling' said?"

"It feels, it feels, friend; that is why 'feeling' is said. What does it feel? It feels pleasure, it feels pain, it feels neither-pain-nor-pleasure. 'It feels, it feels, friend, that is why 'feeling' is said."<sup>434</sup>

## (PERCEPTION)

8. "Perception, perception' is said, friend. With reference to what is 'perception' said?"

"It perceives, it perceives, friend; that is why 'perception' is said. What does it perceive? It perceives blue, it perceives yellow, it perceives red, and it perceives white. 'It perceives, it perceives, friend; that is why 'perception' is said."<sup>435</sup>

9. "Feeling, perception, and consciousness, friend – are these states conjoined or disjoined? And is it possible to separate each of these states from the others in order to describe the difference between them?"

"Feeling, perception, and consciousness, friend – these states are conjoined, not disjoined, and it is impossible to separate each of these states from the others in order to describe the difference between them. For what one feels, that one perceives; and what one perceives, that one cognizes. That is why these states are conjoined, not disjoined, and it is impossible to separate each of these states from the others in order to describe the difference between them."<sup>436</sup>

## (KNOWABLE BY MIND ALONE)

10. "Friend, what can be known by purified mind-consciousness released from the five faculties?"

"Friend, by purified mind-consciousness released from the five faculties the base of infinite space can be known thus: 'Space is infinite'; the base of infinite consciousness can be known thus: 'Consciousness is infinite'; and the base of nothingness can be known thus: 'There is nothing.'"<sup>437</sup>

11. "Friend, with what does one understand a state that can be known?"

"Friend, one understands a state that can be known with the eye of wisdom."<sup>438</sup>

12. "Friend, what is the purpose of wisdom?"

"The purpose of wisdom, friend, is direct knowledge, its purpose is full understanding, its purpose is abandoning."<sup>439</sup>

## (RIGHT VIEW)

[294] 13. "Friend, how many conditions are there for the arising of right view?"

"Friend, there are two conditions for the arising of right view: the voice of another and wise attention. These are the two conditions for the arising of right view."<sup>440</sup>

14. "Friend, by how many factors is right view assisted when it has deliverance of mind for its fruit, deliverance of mind for its fruit and benefit, when it has deliverance by wisdom for its fruit, deliverance by wisdom for its fruit and benefit?"

"Friend, right view is assisted by five factors when it has deliverance of mind for its fruit, deliverance of mind for its fruit and benefit, when it has deliverance by wisdom for its fruit, deliverance by wisdom for its fruit and benefit. Here, friend, right view is assisted by virtue, learning, discussion, serenity, and insight. Right view assisted by these five factors has deliverance of mind for its fruit, deliverance of mind for its fruit and benefit; it has deliverance by wisdom for its fruit, deliverance by wisdom for its fruit and benefit."<sup>441</sup>

## (BEING)

15. "Friend, how many kinds of being are there?"

"There are these three kinds of being, friend: sense-sphere being, fine-material being, and immaterial being."

16. "Friend, how is renewal of being in the future generated?"

"Friend, renewal of being in the future is generated through the delighting in this and that on the part of beings who are hindered by ignorance and fettered by craving."<sup>442</sup>

17. "Friend, how is renewal of being in the future not generated?"

"Friend, with the fading away of ignorance, with the arising of true knowledge, and with the cessation of craving, renewal of being in the future is not generated."

## (THE FIRST JHĀNA)

18. "Friend, what is the first jhāna?"

"Here, friend, quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome states, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by applied and sustained

thought, with rapture and pleasure born of seclusion. This is called the first jhāna."

19. "Friend, how many factors does the first jhāna have?"

"Friend, the first jhāna has five factors. Here, when a bhikkhu has entered upon the first jhāna, there occur applied thought, sustained thought, rapture, pleasure, and unification of mind. That is how the first jhāna has five factors."

20. "Friend, how many factors are abandoned in the first jhāna and how many factors are possessed?"

"Friend, in the first jhāna five factors are abandoned and five factors are possessed. Here, when a bhikkhu has entered upon the first jhāna, sensual desire is abandoned, ill will is abandoned, sloth and torpor are abandoned, restlessness and remorse [295] are abandoned, and doubt is abandoned; and there occur applied thought, sustained thought, rapture, pleasure, and unification of mind. That is how in the first jhāna five factors are abandoned and five factors are possessed."

## (THE FIVE FACULTIES)

21. "Friend, these five faculties each have a separate field, a separate domain, and do not experience each other's field and domain, that is, the eye faculty, the ear faculty, the nose faculty, the tongue faculty, and the body faculty. Now of these five faculties, each having a separate field, a separate domain, not experiencing each other's field and domain, what is their resort, what experiences their fields and domains?"<sup>443</sup>

"Friend, these five faculties each have a separate field, a separate domain, and do not experience each other's field and domain, that is, the eye faculty, the ear faculty, the nose faculty, the tongue faculty, and the body faculty. Now these five faculties, each having a separate field, a separate domain, not experiencing each other's field and domain, have mind as their resort, and mind experiences their fields and domains."

22. "Friend, as to these five faculties – that is, the eye faculty, the ear faculty, the nose faculty, the tongue faculty, and the body faculty – what do these five faculties stand in dependence on?"

"Friend, as to these five faculties – that is, the eye faculty, the ear faculty, the nose faculty, the tongue faculty, and the body faculty – these five faculties stand in dependence on vitality."<sup>444</sup>

"Friend, what does vitality stand in dependence on?"

"Vitality stands in dependence on heat."<sup>445</sup>  
 "Friend, what does heat stand in dependence on?"  
 "Heat stands in dependence on vitality."

"Just now, friend, we understood the venerable Sāriputta to have said: 'Vitality stands in dependence on heat'; and now we understand him to say: 'Heat stands in dependence on vitality.' How should the meaning of these statements be regarded?"

"In that case, friend, I shall give you a simile, for some wise men here understand the meaning of a statement by means of a simile. Just as when an oil-lamp is burning, its radiance is seen in dependence on its flame and its flame is seen in dependence on its radiance; so too, vitality stands in dependence on heat and heat stands in dependence on vitality."

(VITAL FORMATIONS)

23. "Friend, are vital formations states of feeling or are vital formations one thing and states of feeling another?" [296]

"Vital formations, friend, are not states of feeling.<sup>446</sup> If vital formations were states of feeling, then when a bhikkhu has entered upon the cessation of perception and feeling, he would not be seen to emerge from it. Because vital formations are one thing and states of feeling another, when a bhikkhu has entered upon the cessation of perception and feeling, he can be seen to emerge from it."

24. "Friend, when this body is bereft of how many states is it then discarded and forsaken, left lying senseless like a log?"<sup>447</sup>

"Friend, when this body is bereft of three states – vitality, heat, and consciousness – it is then discarded and forsaken, left lying senseless like a log."

25. "Friend, what is the difference between one who is dead, who has completed his time, and a bhikkhu who has entered upon the cessation of perception and feeling?"

"Friend, in the case of one who is dead, who has completed his time, his bodily formations have ceased and subsided, his verbal formations have ceased and subsided, his mental formations have ceased and subsided, his vitality is exhausted, his heat has been dissipated, and his faculties are fully broken up. In the case of a bhikkhu who has entered upon the cessation of perception and feeling, his bodily formations have ceased and subsided, his

verbal formations have ceased and subsided, his mental formations have ceased and subsided, but his vitality is not exhausted, his heat has not been dissipated, and his faculties become exceptionally clear.<sup>448</sup> This is the difference between one who is dead, who has completed his time, and a bhikkhu who has entered upon the cessation of perception and feeling."

(DELIVERANCE OF MIND)

26. "Friend, how many conditions are there for the attainment of the neither-painful-nor-pleasant deliverance of mind?"

"Friend, there are four conditions for the attainment of the neither-painful-nor-pleasant deliverance of mind: here, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the fourth jhāna, which has neither-pain-nor-pleasure and purity of mindfulness due to equanimity. These are the four conditions for the attainment of the neither-painful-nor-pleasant deliverance of mind."

27. "Friend, how many conditions are there for the attainment of the signless deliverance of mind?"

"Friend, there are two conditions for the attainment of the signless deliverance of mind: non-attention to all signs and attention to the signless element. These are the two conditions for the attainment of the signless deliverance of mind."<sup>449</sup>

28. "Friend, how many conditions are there for the persistence of the signless deliverance of mind?"

"Friend, there are three conditions for the persistence of the signless deliverance of mind: [297] non-attention to all signs, attention to the signless element, and the prior determination [of its duration]. These are the three conditions for the persistence of the signless deliverance of mind."

29. "Friend, how many conditions are there for emergence from the signless deliverance of mind?"

"Friend, there are two conditions for emergence from the signless deliverance of mind: attention to all signs and non-attention to the signless element. These are the two conditions for emergence from the signless deliverance of mind."

30. "Friend, the immeasurable deliverance of mind, the deliverance of mind through nothingness, the deliverance of mind

through voidness, and the signless deliverance of mind: are these states different in meaning and different in name, or are they one in meaning and different only in name?"

"Friend, the immeasurable deliverance of mind, the deliverance of mind through nothingness, the deliverance of mind through voidness, and the signless deliverance of mind: there is a way in which these states are different in meaning and different in name, and there is a way in which they are one in meaning and different only in name.

31. "What, friend, is the way in which these states are different in meaning and different in name? Here a bhikkhu abides pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth, so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he abides pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will. He abides pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with compassion...He abides pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with appreciative joy...He abides pervading one quarter with a mind imbued with equanimity, likewise the second, likewise the third, likewise the fourth; so above, below, around, and everywhere, and to all as to himself, he abides pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with equanimity, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will. This is called the immeasurable deliverance of mind.

32. "And what, friend, is the deliverance of mind through nothingness? Here, with the complete surmounting of the base of infinite consciousness, aware that 'there is nothing,' a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the base of nothingness. This is called the deliverance of mind through nothingness.

33. "And what, friend, is the deliverance of mind through voidness? Here a bhikkhu, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty hut, reflects thus: 'This is void of a self or of what belongs to a self.' [298] This is called the deliverance of mind through voidness.<sup>450</sup>

34. "And what, friend, is the signless deliverance of mind? Here, with non-attention to all signs, a bhikkhu enters upon and abides in the signless concentration of mind. This is called the signless deliverance of mind.<sup>451</sup> This is the way in which these

states are different in meaning and different in name.

35. "And what, friend, is the way in which these states are one in meaning and different only in name? Lust is a maker of measurement, hate is a maker of measurement, delusion is a maker of measurement.<sup>452</sup> In a bhikkhu whose taints are destroyed, these are abandoned, cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, done away with so that they are no longer subject to future arising. Of all the kinds of immeasurable deliverance of mind, the unshakeable deliverance of mind is pronounced the best. Now that unshakeable deliverance of mind is void of lust, void of hate, void of delusion.<sup>453</sup>

36. "Lust is a something, hate is a something, delusion is a something.<sup>454</sup> In a bhikkhu whose taints are destroyed, these are abandoned, cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, done away with so that they are no longer subject to future arising. Of all the kinds of deliverance of mind through nothingness, the unshakeable deliverance of mind is pronounced the best.<sup>455</sup> Now that unshakeable deliverance of mind is void of lust, void of hate, void of delusion.

37. "Lust is a maker of signs, hate is a maker of signs, delusion is a maker of signs.<sup>456</sup> In a bhikkhu whose taints are destroyed, these are abandoned, cut off at the root, made like a palm stump, done away with so that they are no longer subject to future arising. Of all the kinds of signless deliverance of mind, the unshakeable deliverance of mind is pronounced the best.<sup>457</sup> Now that unshakeable deliverance of mind is void of lust, void of hate, void of delusion. This is the way in which these states are one in meaning and different only in name."<sup>458</sup>

That is what the venerable Sāriputta said. The venerable Mahā Kottḥita was satisfied and delighted in the venerable Sāriputta's words.