

DN 1
Dīgha Nikāya
The Long Discourses

Sīlakkhandha Vagga
The Section on The Training in Virtue

Brahmajāla Sutta
“All-Encompassing Net of Wrong Views”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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1. PARIBBĀJAKAKATHĀ – DISCUSSION ABOUT WANDERING RECLUSES

This is what I personally heard.

On one occasion, The Blessed One was travelling on the main road stretching between Rājagaha and Nālandā, accompanied by a large group of His Bhikkhu Sangha, numbering nearly five hundred Bhikkhus.

Meanwhile, the wandering ascetic Suppiya was also travelling on the main road stretching between Rājagaha and Nālandā, accompanied by his own pupil, the young Brahmadatta.

Now, while walking, the wandering ascetic Suppiya kept on speaking in a derogatory and demeaning manner against The Buddha, The Dhamma, and The Sangha, as he criticized all Three. However, his pupil, the young Brahmadatta, kept on speaking in a respectful manner about The Buddha, The Dhamma, and The Sangha, as he spoke in praise of all Three.

So, these two, both teacher and pupil, walked closely behind The Blessed One and the Sangha of Bhikkhus, making statements based on what they thought, while directly contradicting one another.

Then, The Blessed One, along with the accompanying Sangha of Bhikkhus, entered the royal resthouse in the Ambalaṭṭhikā garden, with the intention of spending the night there.

Soon after, Suppiya along with his pupil, Brahmadatta, also went into the royal resthouse in the Ambalaṭṭhikā garden to spend the rest of the day.

But even after having entered the resthouse, the two continued contradicting each another, where Suppiya, the wandering ascetic, kept criticizing and finding blame with The Buddha, The Dhamma, and The Sangha of Bhikkhus accompanying The Blessed One, whereas his own student, Brahmadata, continued highlighting the amazing qualities of The Buddha, The Dhamma, and The Sangha of Bhikkhus, while praising them in different ways.

Then, at sunrise, a group of several Bhikkhus gathered in the meeting area and brought up a theme that was most noticeably taking place around them and thus began discussing what they had witnessed. In this manner, they spoke:

“It is quite remarkable and utterly marvelous, friends! Indeed, it is truly amazing, friends, how The Blessed One, The Perfectly Self-Awakened Buddha, directly knows and comprehends with His unhindered vision, as He can clearly and so penetratingly see through the various dispositions and proclivities of sentient beings, no matter how diverse they might be!

“After all, this wandering ascetic Suppiya has been making disparaging statements about The Buddha; disparaging statements about The Dhamma; and disparaging statements about The Sangha, while criticizing them, nonstop.

“Meanwhile, Suppiya’s own student, Brahmadata, keeps contradicting his own teacher, as he points out the marvelous and beautiful qualities of The Buddha; the marvelous and beautiful qualities of The Dhamma; and the marvelous and beautiful qualities of The Sangha!

“In this manner, both teacher and pupil have been engaged in a constant back-and-forth, making contradictory statements to each other, as they closely kept following and walking behind The Blessed One and The Sangha of Bhikkhus!”

Later, on realizing the nature of the conversation taking place amongst those Bhikkhus, The Blessed One went and approached the place where they had gathered and sat on the seat that was made ready for Him. He then addressed those Bhikkhus by asking:

“Bhikkhus, what were you all engaged in discussing earlier, having gathered here? What might have been the topic of your conversation before my arrival, which was interrupted as a result?”

And those Bhikkhus replied respectfully, by saying:

“Bhante, having gathered here at sunrise, prior to The Blessed One’s arrival, we have all been engaged in a discussion, by speaking the following statements to each other:

‘It is quite remarkable and utterly marvelous, friends! Indeed, it is truly amazing, friends, how The Blessed One, The Perfectly Self-Awakened Buddha, directly knows and comprehends with His unhindered vision, as He can clearly and so penetratingly see through the various dispositions and proclivities of sentient beings, no matter how diverse they might be!

‘After all, this wandering ascetic Suppiya has been making disparaging statements about The Buddha; disparaging statements about The Dhamma; and disparaging statements about The Sangha, while criticizing them, nonstop.

‘Meanwhile, Suppiya’s own student, Brahmadata, keeps contradicting his own teacher, as he points out the marvelous and beautiful qualities of The Buddha; the marvelous and beautiful qualities of The Dhamma; and the marvelous and beautiful qualities of The Sangha!’

‘In this manner, both teacher and pupil have engaged in a constant back-and-forth, making contradictory statements to each other, as they closely kept following and walking behind The Blessed One and The Sangha of Bhikkhus!’

“This, therefore, Bhante, was the topic of our conversation prior to The Blessed One’s arrival.”

And The Blessed One replied by instructing those Bhikkhus the following:

“Bhikkhus, if and when others speak ill of me, saying harsh, disparaging, or bitter words by being critical and mean towards me; or whether they speak ill of The Dhamma, saying harsh, disparaging, or bitter words by being critical and mean towards The Dhamma; or whether they speak ill of The Sangha, saying harsh, disparaging, or bitter words by being critical and mean towards The Sangha, you must not allow yourselves to become triggered in any way, nor let your hearts become agitated, by getting angry, indignant, or resentful and bitter.

“For, if you do allow such things to affect you thus, Bhikkhus, then you certainly will experience much difficulty in your practice, as a result of having become irritated and overwhelmed by anger, which ultimately will hurt you and you alone.

“After all, Bhikkhus, if and when others speak ill of me; saying harsh, disparaging, or bitter words while being critical and mean towards me, The Dhamma, or The Sangha and, as a result of such statements, you let yourselves be overtaken by bitterness, losing your cool and become angry or resentful, then, would it even be possible for you to recognize or appreciate what is truly lovely and constructive, from all that is ugly and disheartening?”

“No, Bhante, it would surely not be possible for us to do so.”

“For this reason, Bhikkhus, if and when others speak ill of me, saying harsh, disparaging, and bitter words by being critical and mean towards me; or whether they speak ill of The Dhamma, saying harsh, disparaging, and bitter words by being critical and mean towards The Dhamma; or whether they speak ill of The Sangha, saying harsh, disparaging, and bitter words by being critical and mean towards The Sangha, you must remain level-headed while rationally looking at what is being expressed, and therefore, distinguish what is factually true from that which is false; hence recognizing what is untrue as exactly that, not true, by reflecting thus:

‘This is why such statements made are, in fact, false and not true at all!’

‘What is being expressed here against us neither represents us nor has anything to do with us, at all, and therefore, it does not pertain to us in any way.’

“And conversely too, Bhikkhus, if and when others speak in praise of me, saying kind words in admiration or address me with lofty accolades; or whether they speak in praise of The Dhamma, saying kind words in admiration or address The Dhamma with many lofty accolades; or whether they speak in praise of The Sangha, saying kind words in admiration or address The Sangha with lofty accolades, you must not allow yourselves to become excited or thrilled with elation, nor let your hearts become stirred with exhilarated delight in hearing such things.

“For, if you do allow such things to affect you thus, Bhikkhus, then you certainly will experience much difficulty in your practice, as a result of having become excited and thrilled by delight, which ultimately will hurt you and you alone.

“For this reason, Bhikkhus, if and when others speak in praise of me, saying kind words in admiration or address me with lofty accolades; or whether they speak in praise of The Dhamma, saying kind words in admiration or address The Dhamma with many lofty accolades; or whether they speak in praise of The Sangha, saying kind words in admiration or address The Sangha with lofty accolades, you must remain level-headed while rationally looking at what is being expressed, and therefore distinguish what is factually false from that which is true; hence recognizing what is true as exactly that, true, by reflecting thus:

‘This is why such statements made are, in fact, true and not false at all!’

‘What is being expressed here in support of us, does in fact represent us correctly, and therefore, it does pertain to us, indeed.’

2. SĪLA – CULTIVATION OF VIRTUOUS BEHAVIOR

CŪḲA SĪLA: SHORTER SECTION ON VIRTUOUS BEHAVIOR

“Bhikkhus, there are instances when an average person who is untrained and unlearned in The Dhamma, speaks in praise of The Tathāgata. But in doing so, such an individual who is uninterested in living and practicing according to The Noble Dhamma, would be speaking words and making claims that are shallow and superficial at best; statements that rest at the level of the mundane and the trivial; not going beyond the range of what is customarily accepted by the masses; reflecting merely what are observed by that individual on the level of rules.

“And what exactly is meant here by shallow and superficial praises and accolades addressed to The Tathāgata, when spoken by a puthujjana? Statements that rest at the level of the mundane and the trivial; staying at a low range, and as such, ones that do not go beyond what is generally accepted; merely reflecting what can be observed by the unlearned and undisciplined *puthujjana*, who only sees such rules as his proper gauge of showing respect, even though they are only of the mundane level?

“Here, Bhikkhus, the *puthujjana* goes on reflecting -

C.S.1 'Having given up all forms of violence, The Recluse Gautama abstains from killing and the destruction of living beings, as He has relinquished the tendency to harm and has thrown away His weapons; and now He dwells while being caring and considerate, with aroused compassion, abiding with compassion for all living beings.'

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

C.S.2 'By giving up taking what is not freely given, the Recluse Gautama only accepts what is offered or given to Him. Thus, He is stainless as He protects Himself by abstaining from stealing that which belongs to others.'

“This also, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

C.S.3 'Having given up all forms of sexuality, which belongs to the common and unholy life, The Recluse Gautama thus lives a celibate holy life while completely abstaining from the low and vulgar act of sexual behavior.'

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

C.S.4 'By having given up telling lies, The Recluse Gautama speaks only what is truth and is therefore someone who is most certainly trustworthy, in the world. He is indeed honest and truthful and never the trickster; thus, He remains utterly reliable and true to His word.'

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

C.S.5 'By giving up slandering, The Recluse Gautama does not go and tell over there what He heard over here, to create a schism between people. Similarly, He does not tell here what He had heard over there, to create schism between people. Thus, He speaks in order to join the disjointed and the separated, while strengthening the wholesome bonds between people. Fond of unity, The Recluse Gautama talks words that lead to unity.'

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

C.S.6 'By giving up rough words, The Recluse Gautama speaks politely and with a pleasant, sweet voice, with words that go straight to the heart. Thus, His words are accepted by all the masses.'

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

C.S.7 *‘By giving up frivolous speech and idle chatter, The Recluse Gautama speaks at the right time. Speaking only what is truth and meaningful, He speaks only The Dhamma and The Discipline, and at the right time, using appropriate words, and succinctly; with such words that are worth being recorded and repeated, due to their beneficial nature.’*

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

C.S.8 *“Furthermore, The Recluse Gautama refrains from destroying seeds, fruit trees, and vegetable plants. While refraining from taking food at night-time and at the wrong hour, he only takes one meal a day. He refrains from dancing, music, and musical entertainments. He refrains from decorating himself with flowers, scents, or fragrant ointments. He gives up high and stately beds. He refrains from accepting gold, silver and money. He does not accept raw grains, raw meat, women, girls, slaves, whether men or women, goats and sheep, roosters and pigs, elephants, cattle, horses and mares. He does not accept fields or lands. He abstains from carrying messages between people, from buying and selling, or dealing in matters unfairly, such as in measures and weights. The Recluse Gautama does not take bribes, nor cheats or engages in any insincere act. He does not cut, kill or bind, and he does not collect even a single morsel of food violently, and in voracious, barbaric ways.’*

“In this way also, Bhikkhus, the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

MAJJHIMA SĪLA: MIDDLE SECTION ON VIRTUOUS BEHAVIOR

“Furthermore, Bhikkhus, the *puthujjana* continues reflecting the virtues of The Tathāgata thus –

M.S.1 *‘While there are many recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, by taking it for granted, however, they remain inconsiderate and careless, as they engage in mistreating and being disrespectful and abusive towards seeds of all kinds and plant life too. Thus, they make no distinction in their maltreatment of plant-life, whether those that have been started from roots, from cutting, grafting, budding, from stems, and seeds, acting in such a destructive, blind and self-serving manner. All those behaviors, however, The Recluse Gautama completely abstains from, while abhorring living and practicing such a damaging and ungrateful lifestyle.’*

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

M.S.2 *‘While there are other recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them and see to their needs and their requisites of food, being inconsiderate and careless of all that support, however, they go on greedily hoarding and storing food, when others struggle to survive, yet they keep hoarding and storing up edible food;*

various types of drinks, robes, vehicles for transport, bedding, oils and fragrant incense, drying and storing up meat, all so that they could enjoy consuming them later, in the future; and so while these individuals choose to live in such a greedy, blind and self-serving manner, The Recluse Gautama, however, completely abstains from such behavior, while abhorring hoarding and storing food and resources for his own personal use.'

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

M.S.3 *'While there are recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them and see to their needs and their requisites of food, yet they remain inconsiderate and careless in their disposition; forgetting their role as religious practitioners who are supposed to be living the Holy Life, and instead they spend their time entertaining themselves by watching various kinds of shows, such as dancing, singing, concerts and musical events, choruses and other oral recitations, drumming and playing on cymbals, hand-clapping, moving picture shows, circus performances, elephants performing or fighting, horses performing or fighting, buffaloes, roosters, goats, rams, quails, and also human beings performing or fighting with each other; as well as attending carnivals; wrestling and boxing matches, battle re-enactments, military demonstrations and shows, troops being in action, or doing their drills; and so, while others engage in such activities that are wasteful of precious time, The Recluse Gautama utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such behaviors entirely.'*

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

M.S.4 *'There happen to be recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them and see to their needs and their requisites of food, but they are in fact inconsiderate and careless, forgetting their role as religious practitioners who are supposed to be living the Holy Life. Thus, they live heedlessly while spending their time playing various kinds of games, such as 8- and 10-row chess, checkers, hopscotch, dice games, stick throwing games, drawing pictures through tracing of the palms; doing summersaults, gymnastics, acrobatics, playing with toy pipes, cars, and other vehicles, running and chasing one another, playing with toy ploughs, toy windmills, toy measures, toy chariots, building and playing with toy weapons like bows and arrows, as well as guessing games such as charades, guessing letters written in the air, riddles for amusements, guessing each other's thoughts; mimicking and pretending to be deformed or handicapped to amuse themselves or others; and so while others engage in such activities that are wasteful of precious time, The Recluse Gautama utterly and completely refuses to entertain Himself or others, as He abstains from engaging in such behaviors entirely.'*

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

M.S.5 *'There happen to be recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them and see to their needs and their requisites of food, but*

they are in fact inconsiderate and careless; abusing that trust as they go and seek a lavish and luxurious lifestyle, such as fancy and opulent furnishings and accommodations for themselves, ornate and expensive chairs, thrones, extravagant seats; over-sized couches, using animal hides as their rugs and throws; carpets, covers and drapes with long tassels and laces, multi-colored pillows, pillows made of cotton, of fine embroidery, pillows and covers made of wool, coverlets and pillowcases embroidered with precious gems, gold, fine materials, or animal figures; hides from all sorts of animals, such as elephants, lions, tigers, antelope, deer; beds, couches and seats with awnings, or having stuffed quilts, or red fluffy cushions for the head and feet; and so while others engage in such a lavish lifestyle that is so wasteful, The Recluse Gautama utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from engaging in such behaviors and from seeking a lavish and opulent lifestyle, entirely.'

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

M.S.6 *'While there are recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them and see to their needs and their requisites of food, they are in fact inconsiderate and careless, forgetting their role as religious practitioners who are supposed to be living the Holy Life; abusing that trust by enjoying, seeking out or demanding that they use fine unguents, fragrances, precious oils and ghee, along with various fine rubbing powders for their body and massaging oils to treat themselves to, as well as perfumed water to bathe in, and different types of cosmetic products to beautify themselves with or to look younger, such as by using mirrors, garlands, unguents, creams, mascara, bracelets, head-bands, along with head and foot gear, turbans, ornamented water containers, swords, fancy sun shades and fans, lavish sandals, walking sticks, yak-tail whisks, robes with long fringes and tassels; and so, while others seek to live in such absurd ways, having a lavish lifestyle that is so wasteful, The Recluse Gautama, however, utterly and completely abstains from pampering or beautifying Himself, for He refuses to engage in such behaviors entirely.'*

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

M.S.7 *'There are recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them and see to their needs and their requisites of food, but they are in fact inconsiderate and careless, forgetting their role as religious practitioners; abusing that trust by engaging in frivolous talk and idle chatter, which is unbecoming to those who say they are living The Holy Life. Thus, they engage in useless talk and gossip about kings and rulers, ministers of state, their armies and military prowess, the dangers or threats they present, battles and wars, as well as talking about food and drink, clothing, types of furniture, engaging in all types of street talk, or chatting about robbers and thieves; discussing such trivial topics as chariots, vehicles, villages or towns, major cities and their populations, differences among them; talking around the watering hole, about heroes and women, or those who have died, discussing philosophical points about the past or the future, that lead nowhere; talking about the 'creation' of the world and the oceans, or whether they are truly existing or not, in addition to talking about winning and losing. And so, while others seek to live in such absurd ways, engaging in*

useless and frivolous discussions that are so wasteful, The Recluse Gautama, however, utterly and completely refuses to do so, while abstaining from such wasteful talk entirely.'

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

M.S.8 *'There are other recluses and brahmins, who live but while being inconsiderate and careless of their role and significance, given the support of food and requisites, which they receive through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them. Yet, they are adamantly passionate about debating and winning in arguments, more than striving to live and practice The Holy Life, as they go on claiming:*

'You definitely do not understand this doctrine and discipline! I, on the other hand, thoroughly understand this doctrine and discipline!' At best, your understanding of it is quite pathetic, whereas my understanding of it goes deep! Plus, you are practicing it all wrong, unlike me, who knows how to practice! You are not consistent either, whereas I am very consistent! Also, what should have been said, you spoke at the very last, meanwhile what should have been spoken last, you said first! Anyhow, whatever you thought you were defending or claiming, has been already defeated and debunked! So, might as well just admit you're done for and are now vanquished! Go and work on your theories, and perhaps you could salvage some of it! You are caught and have no way out of this argument with me!'

'So, while others waste the precious opportunity of living The Holy Life by such damaging, absurd, and useless activities, The Recluse Gautama, however, utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such contentious and infantile modes of behavior, entirely.'

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

M.S.9 *'While there are recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who live through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them and see to their needs and their requisites of food, yet they remain inconsiderate and careless in their disposition; forgetting their role as religious practitioners who are supposed to be living the Holy Life, and instead, they start engaging in taking messages back and forth; serving as go-betweens between kings and rulers, ministers and other heads of state, warrior princes and other nobles, brahmins, merchants, and other householders and their youths, meanwhile running errands for them and doing their bidding, while being directed thus: 'Come here! Go there! Take this there! Bring that over here!' etc.; and so, while others waste living the Holy Life in such foolish and damaging ways, The Recluse Gautama, however, utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such behaviors entirely.'*

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

M.S.10 *'There are other recluses and brahmins, who live but while being inconsiderate and careless of their role and significance, given the support of food and requisites, which they*

receive through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them. Instead, they keep up pretenses by being deceitful, as they live while taking advantage of their position, by flattering others, and those from whom they anticipate some benefit or gain; insinuating and hinting at things to gain some benefit while trying to hide their evil tracks; pressuring supporters against their will to do things for them, thereby abusing their role as well as the trust such supporters or students have towards them, pushing others, whether through force, intimidation and especially coercion, to make offerings, following the strategy of ‘you scratch my back, and I will scratch yours’, in addition to lying about their practice and spiritual attainments. And so, while others seek to live the Holy Life through deception and false pretenses in order to gain some benefit or influence over others, The Recluse Gautama, however, utterly abstains from such behaviors and completely refuses to support keeping up pretenses in any form, while living with honesty and practicing truthfully throughout.’

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

MAHĀ SĪLA: GREATER SECTION ON VIRTUOUS BEHAVIOR

Ma.S.1 *‘There are recluses and brahmins, who live but while being inconsiderate and careless of their role and significance, given the support of food and requisites, which they receive through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them. And thus, instead of striving to live and practice The Holy Life, they seek out ways to enhance their livelihood, by engaging in wrong means. This they do by making predictions, divinations and engaging in all forms of fortune telling, psychic readings, casting spells; by reciting, giving or providing of special protective charms, amulets, and the like; and thus they engage in reading signs and omens, reading tea leaves, marks or lines on limbs as in palmistry and other bodily features; interpreting cosmic events, constellations, movements of celestial objects; interpreting dreams; reading and interpreting various scratch marks on pieces of bones; offering fire or water blessings, oblations with a ladle, whisks, with ivory or horns, or oblations and blessings through rice grains, ghee, and various types of oils; furthermore, they engage in making sacrifices by chanting mantras, doing blood sacrifices, making predictions about the person by looking at the shape of their fingertips; causing scars, whether to oneself or onto others by means of breaking or burning the skin, as well as applying tattoos as some kind of protection against harm; engaging in geomancy, so as to determine the best location and position for a new structure, such as a garden or a building; foretelling as to who will be the next ruler or important political figure; comforting and pushing away demons, doing exorcism; snake charming, treating poisons from various animals, insects, and rodents; interpreting the footprints of scorpions, snakes, and other animals; making predictions by interpreting the calls of animals, bird sounds, and forecasting the date of a person’s death; making charms or reciting them to ward off and protect against arrows and other projectiles. And so, while others seek to live the Holy Life by wasting it as they engage in wrong livelihood and such useless ways, The Recluse Gautama, however, utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such inferior and debased practices entirely.’*

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

Ma.S.2 *‘There are recluses and brahmins, who live but while being inconsiderate and careless of their role and significance, given the support of food and requisites, which they receive through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, but instead, they seek out more ways to obtain their livelihood and through wrong means, such as by making predictions and forecasting various things, as in identifying the power of gems and crystals, in terms of which among them brings more good luck or fortune; similarly, helping in the selection of garments, staffs, swords and other weapons; helping in the selection of the best among the women one is to marry, as well as getting involved with the selection of boys and girls, male and female slaves for one’s retinue or household; helping choose the best animals for someone, as in selecting the best elephants, horses, buffaloes, cows, oxen, goats, rams, deer, chickens, quail, rabbits, tortoises, and other animals. And so, while others seek to live the Holy Life by wasting it as they engage in wrong livelihood and such useless ways, The Recluse Gautama, however, utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such inferior and debased practices entirely.’*

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

Ma.S.3 *‘There are recluses and brahmins, who live but while being inconsiderate and careless of their role and significance, given the support of food and requisites, which they receive through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, but instead, they greedily seek out ways to obtain their livelihood and through wrong means, such as by making predictions and foretelling future events, as in who the next ruler of the domain would be to lead the people, while predicting their future actions and strategies; predicting how those in power will behave or which direction they would take in the event of wars, or how they would be attacking, advancing or retreating, and in which direction; how the attacking rulers would triumph or how they would be defeated, etc. And so, while others seek to live the Holy Life by wasting it as they engage in wrong livelihood and such useless ways, The Recluse Gautama, however, utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such inferior and debased practices entirely.’*

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

Ma.S.4 *‘There are recluses and brahmins, who live but while being inconsiderate and careless of their role and significance, given the support of food and requisites, which they receive through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, but instead of striving to live and practice The Holy Life, they still go and seek out ways to obtain their livelihood through the wrong means, such as by predicting or forecasting various natural or weather events, as in when the next solar or lunar eclipse is going to take place, or other transitions having to do with the sun or the moon, or both combined; making predictions about celestial phenomena and what those things mean; also, explaining when the next meteor showers will take place; the darkening of the sky; when or why some clouds or thunderstorms would be happening or not; when or why earthquakes would be taking place; forecasting the position of the sun or the moon; their shape, color or impact on other phenomena, etc. And so, while others seek to live the Holy Life by*

wasting it as they engage in wrong livelihood and such useless ways, The Recluse Gautama, however, utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such inferior and debased practices entirely.'

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

Ma.S.5 *'There are recluses and brahmins, who live but while being inconsiderate and careless of their role and significance, given the support of food and requisites, which they receive through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, and yet, instead of striving to live and practice The Holy Life, they seek out ways to increase the support they already receive, by engaging in wrong livelihood, such as by foretelling and making predictions, as in forecasting when the next abundant rainfall would take place, or whether there will be a drought; predicting whether there will be famine or drought; whether wars or dangers are on their way to be faced by the public; whether there will be disease and hardship; also, engaging in accounting work or measuring and calculating things; or composing chants or poetry, as a way of making a living or gaining profits. And so, while others seek to live the Holy Life by wasting it as they engage in wrong livelihood and such useless ways, The Recluse Gautama, however, utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such inferior and debased practices entirely.'*

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

Ma.S.6 *'There are recluses and brahmins, who live but while being inconsiderate and careless of their role and significance, given the support of food and requisites, which they already receive through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, and yet, they still seek out ways to increase the provision they might further get, and thus go on engaging in wrong livelihood. This they do by forecasting the various major events in people's lives, as in calculating what date, time, or place would be most auspicious for significant activities for individuals and their families, such as designating the best time for wedding or marriage ceremonies, or divorces, or for purchasing property, or for borrowing money or investing in financial endeavors; similarly, making charms or protective amulets or writing, engraving, tattooing special spells to make one attractive or desirable, or immune to dangers, as well as prosperous and successful; or helping couples be parents by helping the woman get pregnant, or for protecting pregnant women from having miscarriages, or inducing abortion; chanting or reciting or writing spells on individuals' body parts to bring about a certain desirable effect, as in cases of paralysis, blindness, stuttering or inability to speak, or making the person lose control over their limbs, making them incapacitated, or go blind, mute, or deaf; also, playing the role of an oracle, providing answers to questions while looking into a body of water, a mirror, a young boy's or girl's finger nails or inducing the children to become mediums to give him the answers he seeks; becoming a medium himself by going into a trance, invoking spirits; or worshipping some Devas or Mahā Brahmā to get good fortune for himself or others. And so, while others seek to live the Holy Life by wasting it as they engage in wrong livelihood and such useless ways, The Recluse Gautama, however, utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such inferior and debased practices entirely.'*

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

Ma.S.7 *‘There are recluses and brahmins, being inconsiderate and careless of their role and significance, given the support of food and requisites they already receive through the generosity of the faithful who trust in them, but instead, they still seek out ways to increase their resources by engaging in wrong livelihood. Thus, they dabble in low and vile practices such as concocting various protective chants or substances, writings, potions, etc., to induce certain desired outcomes, whether to promote healing for someone or to harm them, or even to kill them; and thus they engage in showing people how to bless or protect a house from unwanted energies; how to overcome impotence or enhance virility; engaging in the consecration of sites prior to construction, showing people how to conduct ceremonial bathing, or how to ritualistically wash the mouth; conducting fire rituals; engaging in the preparation of medicinal potions, as in diuretics, laxatives, purgatives, etc., or preparing eye or ear drops, or various treatments with oils to be taken internally through the mouth, the eyes, ears, or nose, or applied topically, or the application of balms and other mixtures, topically or by rubbing them onto the joints, limbs, or the skin. And so, while others seek to live the Holy Life by wasting it as they engage in wrong livelihood and such useless ways, The Recluse Gautama, however, utterly and completely refuses to do so, abstaining from such inferior and debased practices entirely.’*

“This too, Bhikkhus, is why and how the ordinary and untrained person, the *puthujjana*, goes on praising The Tathāgata, while paying homage and showering Him with accolades.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, this is what is meant here by shallow and superficial praises and accolades addressed to The Tathāgata, when spoken by a *puthujjana*; statements that rest at the level of the mundane and the trivial; staying at that low range, they do not go beyond what is generally accepted; merely reflecting what can be observed by the *puthujjana*, who only sees such rules as his proper gauge of showing respect, even though they are only of the mundane level.

3. DIṬṬHI – WRONG VIEWS

PUBBANTAKAPPIKA: ASSUMPTIONS AND BELIEFS ABOUT “THE PAST”

“However, Bhikkhus, there are ways of understanding reality, which are extremely deep, truly difficult to comprehend, let alone to penetrate and come to see or appreciate their depth and scope, for they are indeed excellent; so sublimely peaceful, beyond anything the mind could conjure up, utterly transcending the confines of logic. In fact, they are so beautiful in their subtlety that they can only be realized by the wise that are few!

“Therefore, anyone who truly and sincerely wishes to pay homage by praising The Tathāgata, by venerating Him and offering Him accolades properly, would be doing so rightfully if the reverence he is offering considers and is based upon these irrefutable facts.

“Now, this itself is what The Tathāgata has revealed Himself, which having realized It through His own direct experiencing and penetrative insight, He now shares by introducing and making It known throughout.

“Therefore, when one personally becomes aware of these truths, stemming from their deep appreciation and bottomless respect of the extremely important and significant position of The Tathāgata, for sharing This Dhamma, and thus, offers respect and accolades, then, that indeed would be considered appropriate and not trivial at all. This, because they would be venerating and honoring the truth that The Tathāgata revealed to the world.

“And what are those ways of understanding reality, which are extremely deep, truly difficult to comprehend, let alone to penetrate and come to see or appreciate their depth and scope, for they are indeed excellent; so sublimely peaceful, beyond anything the mind could conjure up, utterly transcending the confines of logic; in fact, so beautiful in their subtlety that they can only be realized by the wise that are few?

“First, Bhikkhus, one must consider that there are many recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who engage in speculative thinking about ‘the very beginning of the past,’ as they theorize by making assumptions about the past. Soon enough, they turn those speculations into assertions and beliefs, which they then formulate into entire systems of thought, which they claim to be their assumptions about the past, based upon eighteen premises or frames of reference.

“And what, Bhikkhus, are these eighteen premises or frames of reference, which those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins engaging in speculative thinking apply, while relying upon them as evidence for the validity of their assumptions and beliefs about the past?

1. Sassatavāda: Eternalism

(WRONG VIEWS 1-4)

“Here, Bhikkhus, there are such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who assert and believe in the past, while using the premise that existence as such is eternal, including the entire cosmos, as well as the self, with which they identify.

“So, to point out the immutably eternal nature of both existence and the self, they use the following four premises as their sources or frames of reference.

“Now, what are these four frames of reference used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, as premises for their claim that the self and existence are eternal?

1.1 “Firstly, Bhikkhus, they use the method of recollecting details about one’s past lives.

“Thus, a certain recluse, religious practitioner, or brahmin, through diligent effort and with persistent resoluteness, focuses his attention by concentrating the mind. Becoming well concentrated in this way, with a mind bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, yet unshakably steady, he then directs it towards recollecting and knowing his past lives.

“Hence, he is able to remember his many past lives in all their details and features; that is, one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty, forty, fifty births, a hundred births, a thousand births, a hundred thousand births, recalling them all in this manner:

‘There I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance, such was my food and sustenance, such were my experiences of pleasure and pain, such was my life-span; and after passing away from there, I was reborn elsewhere; and there too I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance, such was my food and sustenance, such were my experiences of pleasure and pain, and such was my life-span; and passing away from there, I was reborn here.’

“In this manner, he is able to recollect details and features about his numerous previous lives and existences.

Then, on having obtained such information, he makes the following declaration:

‘Indeed, truly everlasting is the self, as is the entire cosmos called existence! For, they themselves are really colorless and barren, immovably there, just like a solid mountain peak, standing unshakably and unchanged as a firm pillar. Because these two remain eternally untouched and unchanged, while living beings come and go; arising and disappearing ceaselessly, on their samsāric journey.’

‘And what is my proof to be saying this?’

‘It is because, through diligent effort and with persistent resoluteness, when I focus my attention and thus become well concentrated; when the mind is bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, yet unshakably steady, and I then direct it towards recollecting and knowing my past lives, I am able to remember my many past lives in all their details and features.

‘That is, one birth, two births, three births, four births, five births, ten births, twenty births, thirty, forty, fifty births, a hundred births, a thousand births, a hundred thousand births, recalling them all in this manner:

‘There I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance; such was my food and sustenance, such were my experiences of pleasure and pain, such was my life-span; and after passing away from there, I was reborn elsewhere; and there too I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance, such was my food and sustenance, such were my experiences of pleasure and pain, and such was my life-span; and passing away from there, I was reborn here.’

‘In this manner, when I am able to recollect details and features about my numerous previous lives and existences, then, given this information, I come to declare:

‘Indeed, truly everlasting is the self, as is the entire cosmos called existence! For, they themselves are really colorless and barren, immovably there, just like a solid mountain peak, standing unshakably and unchanged as a firm pillar. Because these two remain eternally untouched and unchanged, while living beings come and go; arising and disappearing ceaselessly, on their saṃsāric journey.’

“This therefore, Bhikkhus, is the first of four frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim, that the self and existence are eternal.

“And what is the second frame of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim, that the self and existence are eternal?

1.2 “Here, Bhikkhus, a certain recluse, religious practitioner, or brahmin, through diligent effort and with persistent resoluteness, focuses his attention by concentrating the mind. Becoming well concentrated in this way, with a mind bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, yet unshakably steady, he then directs it towards recollecting and knowing his past lives.

“Thus, he is able to remember his many past lives in all their details and features; that is, one eon of a cosmic expansion and contraction; two, three, four, five, and even up to ten eons of cosmic expansions and contractions, recalling them all in this manner:

‘There I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance; such was my food and sustenance, such were my experiences of pleasure and pain, such was my life-span; and after passing away from there, I was reborn elsewhere; and there too I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance, such was my food and sustenance, such were my experiences of pleasure and pain, and such was my life-span; and passing away from there, I was reborn here.’

“In this manner, he is able to recollect details and features about his numerous previous lives and existences.

“Then, on having obtained such information, he makes the following declaration:

‘Indeed, truly everlasting is the self, as is the entire cosmos called existence! For, they themselves are really colorless and barren, immovably there, just like a solid mountain peak, standing unshakably and unchanged as a firm pillar. Because these two remain eternally untouched and unchanged, while living beings come and go; arising and disappearing ceaselessly, on their saṃsāric journey.’

‘And what is my proof to be saying this?’

‘It is because, through diligent effort and with persistent resoluteness, when I focus my attention and thus become well concentrated; when the mind is bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, yet unshakably steady, and I then direct it towards recollecting and knowing my past lives, I am able to remember my many past lives in all their details and features.’

‘That is, one eon of a cosmic expansion and contraction: two, three, four, five, and even up to ten eons of cosmic expansions and contractions, recalling them all in this manner:

‘There I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance; such was my food and sustenance, such were my experiences of pleasure and pain, such was my life-span; and after passing away from there, I was reborn elsewhere; and there too I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance, such was my food and sustenance, such were my experiences of pleasure and pain, and such was my life-span; and passing away from there, I was reborn here.’

‘In this manner, when I am able to recollect details and features about my numerous previous lives and existences, then, given this information, I come to declare:

‘Indeed, truly everlasting is the self, as is the entire cosmos called existence! For, they themselves are really colorless and barren, immovably there, just like a solid mountain peak, standing unshakably and unchanged as a firm pillar. Because these two remain eternally untouched and unchanged, while living beings come and go; arising and disappearing ceaselessly, on their saṃsāric journey.’

“This, therefore, Bhikkhus, is the second of the four frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim that the self and existence are eternal.

And what is the third frame of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim that the self and existence are eternal?

1.3 “Here, Bhikkhus, a certain recluse, religious practitioner, or brahmin, through diligent effort and with persistent resoluteness, focuses his attention by concentrating the mind. Becoming well concentrated in this way, with a mind bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, yet unshakably steady, he then directs it towards recollecting and knowing his past lives.

“Thus, he is able to remember his many past lives in all their details and features; that is, ten eons of cosmic expansions and contractions; twenty, thirty, and even up to forty eons of cosmic expansions and contractions, recalling them all in this manner:

‘There I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance; such was my food and sustenance, such were my experiences of pleasure and pain, such was my life-span; and after passing away from there, I was reborn elsewhere; and there too I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance, such was my food and sustenance, such were my experiences of pleasure and pain, and such was my life-span; and passing away from there, I was reborn here.’

“In this manner, he is able to recollect details and features about his numerous previous lives and existences.

“Then, on having obtained such information, he makes the following declaration:

‘Indeed, truly everlasting is the self, as is the entire cosmos called existence! For, they themselves are really colorless and barren, immovably there, just like a solid mountain peak, standing unshakably and unchanged as a firm pillar. Because these two remain eternally untouched and unchanged, while living beings come and go; arising and disappearing ceaselessly, on their saṃsāric journey.’

‘And what is my proof to be saying this?’

‘It is because, through diligent effort and with persistent resoluteness, when I focus my attention and thus become well concentrated; when the mind is bright in its purity, stainless, malleable and wieldy, yet unshakably steady, and I then direct it towards recollecting and knowing my past lives, I am able to remember my many past lives in all their details and features.

‘That is, ten eons of cosmic expansions and contractions: twenty, thirty, and even up to forty eons of cosmic expansions and contractions, recalling them all in this manner:

‘There I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance, such was my food and sustenance, such were my experiences of pleasure and pain, such was my life-span; and after passing away from there, I was reborn elsewhere; and there too I was so named, of such a family, with such an appearance, such was my food and sustenance, such were my experiences of pleasure and pain, and such was my life-span; and passing away from there, I was reborn here.’

‘In this manner, when I am able to recollect details and features about my numerous previous lives and existences, then, given this information, I come to declare:

‘Indeed, truly everlasting is the self, as is the entire cosmos called existence! For, they themselves are really colorless and barren, immovably there, just like a solid mountain peak, standing unshakably and unchanged as a firm pillar. Because these two remain eternally untouched and unchanged, while living beings come and go; arising and disappearing ceaselessly, on their saṃsāric journey.’

“This, therefore, Bhikkhus, is the third of the four frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim, that the self and existence are eternal.

“And what is the fourth frame of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim, that the self and existence are eternal?

1.4 “Here, Bhikkhus, a certain recluse, religious practitioner, or brahmin, through the application of his rational thinking, reasons out by logical means and reaches a conclusion, as a result of a series of exhaustive investigations of himself and the world. Given his deductions from the logical examinations gathered, he then comes out with the declaration:

‘Indeed, truly everlasting is the self, as is the entire cosmos called existence! For, they themselves are really colorless and barren, immovably there, just like a solid mountain peak, standing unshakably and unchanged as a firm pillar. Because these two remain eternally

untouched and unchanged, while living beings come and go; arising and disappearing ceaselessly, on their saṃsāric journey.'

“This, therefore, Bhikkhus, is the fourth of the four frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim, that the self and existence are eternal.

“Hence, these are the four frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim, that the self and existence are eternal.

“Therefore, whatever recluses, religious practitioners, or brahmins who assert and believe in the premise that existence as such is eternal, along with the self with which they identify, as they point out the immutably eternal nature of existence, they all would be using or relying on one or another of these four premises, as their sources or frames of reference.

That is so, because outside these four frames of reference there can be none.

“After all, this itself is the understanding of The Tathāgata, who clearly knows and sees, that –

'If anyone attaches oneself to, and identifies with any one of these premises, it leads one back into yet another birth, for it surely keeps one trapped within the cyclical becomings of saṃsara, without any hope at all, for an escape beyond it.'

“Now, The Tathāgata is truly the one who finally came to clearly understand this for what it really is, as well as directly know and see the very escape from this. As such, there can be no confusion or uncertainty whatsoever in The Tathāgata, as it relates to His understanding of this truth, which is why He has indeed quenched His thirst and attained to extinction.

“Thus, by fully comprehending the whole process of arising, of falling away, and of disappearing, of the constant pursuit of gratification, the dangers that it brings, and especially the very escape from all kinds of feelings, The Tathāgata has truly attained to Ultimate Freedom, by entirely giving up all grabbing, with its tenacious tendency to hold on.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these are the Teachings, the ways of understanding reality, which are extremely deep, truly difficult to comprehend, let alone to penetrate and come to see or appreciate their depth and scope, for they are indeed excellent, so sublimely peaceful, beyond anything the mind could conjure up, utterly transcending the confines of logic. In fact, they are so beautiful in their subtlety that they can only be realized by the wise, that are few!

“Now, this itself is what The Tathāgata has Himself revealed, having realized It through His own direct experiencing and penetrative insight, and He now shares It by introducing and making It known, throughout.

“To this end, anyone who truly and sincerely wishes to pay homage by praising The Tathāgata, venerating and offering Him accolades properly, would be doing so rightfully, while considering and basing his reverence upon these irrefutable facts.

2. *Ekaccasassatavāda: “Almost or Quasi-Eternal”*

(WRONG VIEWS 5-8)

“Bhikkhus, there are recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who assert and believe in the premise that existence as such is almost or quasi eternal, as is the case with the self, with which they identify and claim to be partly eternal, as well.

“So, to point out the partly eternal and partly non-eternal nature of existence, they use the following four premises, as their sources or frames of reference.

“Now, what are these four frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim, that the self and existence are somewhat or almost eternal?

2.1 “Firstly, Bhikkhus, after a very long time has passed, there begins the period where the cosmos or existence itself begins to shrink and contract onto itself.

“Now, during that cosmic contraction, living beings find themselves taking rebirth and reappearing into the Brahma Ābhassara world called The Streaming Radiance Divine realm; a dimension of existence where the bodies of beings residing in it are all mind-made, that is, generated and fashioned by the mind.

“The nourishment these beings take in as their sustenance is spiritual joy itself (*pīti*), and as such, their bodies are self-luminous, levitating and floating about through space. They live thus radiantly beautiful for a very long time, in their untouched and unthreatened glory.

“Eventually, however, Bhikkhus, there does come a period, after an incalculably long time has passed, where the cosmos starts growing and expanding again. When this inflationary stage is unfolding, then, a vastly empty Divine mansion, a majestic Brahma palace, suddenly manifests.

“It is at this time, that a certain Brahma Deva, dwelling within The Streaming Radiance Ābhassara world, upon the exhaustion of his merits that led him to be reborn there in the first place, reaches the end of his life-span within that Divine Brahma World, and thus, he dies and falls away from among the rest of the Devas of Streaming Radiance.

“Then, this being immediately reappears into that vastly empty Brahma palace, where again he finds himself inhabiting a self-luminous, subtle mind-made body, one that is fashioned and generated by the mind.

“There too, this Brahma God sustains himself by nourishing on spiritual joy (pīti), dwelling in the sky, moving about and wandering unhindered through space, for a very, very long time, indeed.

“Eventually, however, there comes a time when this being feels uneasy, becomes anxious and restless, given the boredom that living in such a realm, all alone, may arouse in such a being.

“So, he begins reflecting –

‘Oh, it would be so wonderful and truly amazing, if other beings would also come and join me here, where we could live and enjoy this beautiful realm, all of us together!’

“Then, it so happens that many other Brahma Devas, also having lived out their lifespan in The Streaming Radiance Ābhassara world, at the exhaustion of *their own* merits, one after another, they die, likewise falling away from their companionship of the other Devas of Streaming Radiance.

“These beings then immediately reappear in that vastly empty Brahma palace, into the company of that once solitary Brahma Deva. Now, the newcomer Devas also find themselves inhabiting self-luminous, subtle mind-made bodies, that were again fashioned and generated by the mind; sustaining themselves on spiritual joy as nourishment, living in the sky, as they too, moved about, travelling unhindered through space, for a very, very long time.

“Then, the being who had first appeared into that vastly empty Brahma realm, begins to reflect, again –

‘Apparently, I am the one-and-only Brahmā! The Mahā Brahmā Himself! The Highest of all Gods; The Conqueror and Unvanquished; The One with the Universal Eye, that sees everything, everywhere! The Mighty and Powerful Creator of All; The Supreme Being, The Progenitor and Originator of All Things! The Alpha Supreme, Himself! The Almighty God, who deems and ordains all things to happen; The All-Powerful Creator and Father Supreme to all beings born, and all those who are yet to be born!’

‘For truly, all these beings who keep arriving into this realm must be my children! My own creations, every one of them!’

‘And why do I say this?’

‘It is because I was the one who first had the thought and the wish:

“Oh, it would be so wonderful and truly amazing, if other beings would also come and join me here, where we could live and enjoy this beautiful realm, all of us together!”

‘Therefore, with this being my heart’s desire, it soon came to pass, as they all showed up, one after another, and joined my company in this place, exactly as I had wished them to!’

“Meanwhile, all those other beings who had followed him into that Brahma realm, also began reflecting –

‘Truly, This is The one-and-only Brahmā! The Mahā Brahmā Himself! The Highest of all Gods; The Conqueror and Unvanquished; The One with the Universal Eye, that sees everything, everywhere! The Mighty and Powerful Creator of All; The Supreme Being, The Progenitor and Originator of All Things! The Alpha Supreme, Himself! The Almighty God, who deems and ordains all things to happen; The All-Powerful Creator and Father Supreme to all beings born, and all those who are yet to be born!’

‘For truly, all of us beings who keep arriving into this realm are His children! His own creations, each and every one of us!’

‘And why do we say this?’

‘It is because He was the One who appeared into this realm first. It was only much later that we arrived here and joined His company!’

‘Also, there is a clear distinction in the illustrious glow, radiance, and beauty of our Lord, who is far older and ancient than all of us who arrived here after Him.’

“Now, Bhikkhus, it is only a matter of time that, eventually, having spent and thus exhausted the merits of his rebirth in that Brahma realm, one of those beings dies and falls away from the company of those Brahma Gods, and instead, finds himself reborn into the human realm.

“Then, it so happens that this human being, at one point or another, decides to go forth, as he walks off from home life into homelessness. Later, through his diligent effort and with persistent resoluteness, he engages in the practice of meditation by focusing his attention and becoming well-concentrated. Thus, he attains to a level of concentration that settles his heart into a state of collectedness, whereby he is then able to remember and recollect the details of his last birth, spent within that Brahma realm, but nothing of his previous births preceding it.

“Later, as a result of his discovery through recollection of his previous life within that Brahma realm, he makes the following assertion –

‘Truly, He is The one-and-only Brahmā! The Mahā Brahmā Himself! The Highest of all Gods; The Conqueror and Unvanquished; The One with the Universal Eye, that sees everything, everywhere! The Mighty and Powerful Creator of All; The Supreme Being, The Progenitor and Originator of All Things! The Alpha Supreme, Himself! The Almighty God, who deems and ordains all things to happen; The All-Powerful Creator and Father Supreme to all beings born, and all those who are yet to be born!’

‘After all, it was through Him and because of Him, the Lord, that we were all created. This, because, surely, He remains untouched and eternal; non-perishing and never declining, utterly unchanged, eternally, when all that is around him changes!’

‘We, on the other hand, having been fashioned and created by Him, are certainly not like Him, for we are not eternal, but are short-lived and weak; always declining and changing; subject to die and perish, which is the reason why we were now reborn here, this time as human beings!’

“This, Bhikkhus, is the first of four premises or frames of reference, that some recluses, religious practitioners and brahmins use, to point out the partly eternal and partly non-eternal nature of existence, upon which they rely as their source or frame of reference.

“And what, Bhikkhus, is the second frame of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as a premise for their claim, that the self and existence are quasi or almost eternal?

2.2 “There is, Bhikkhus, a category of Devas who spend their very long lifespans enjoying all that sense pleasures could provide. Thus, they live without any sense of moderation, and spend their time in depravity; indulging and intoxicating themselves in all manner of merriment, laughter, and pleasure-seeking. As a result, they lose all semblance of alertness and mindfulness, and eventually die and fall away from those heavenly realms, finding themselves reborn into the human realm.

“Then, it so happens that in time, one such human being decides to go forth, as he walks off from home life into homelessness. Later, through his diligent effort and with persistent resoluteness, he engages in meditation practice by focusing his attention and becoming well-concentrated. Thus, he attains to a level of concentration that settles his heart into a state of collectedness, whereby he is then able to remember and recollect the details of his last birth, spent enjoying and indulging himself within that divine realm, but none of his previous births preceding that are remembered.

“Later, as a result of his discovery through recollection of his previous life within that heavenly realm, he makes the following assertion –

‘Truly, there are Gods who are not depraved, who live eternally and are completely unshakable and ever-lasting! They surely do not perish nor wither, at all, and thus remain throughout eternity, glorious in their divine grace, surrounded by their hosts of gods. For, they do not lose their alertness, nor forget their role and importance, hence they are the ones living with awareness.’

‘We, on the other hand, were short-lived, although Devas nonetheless, we lived not knowing, nor understanding the meaning of moderation, as we indulged in all kinds of sense pleasures; intoxicated by our depravity, always seeking some kind of merriment and laughter. And, as a

result, we forgot our role, we lost our awareness completely and thus died and fell away from those heavenly realms, finding ourselves reborn into this human realm!’

“This then, Bhikkhus, is the second of four premises or frames of reference, that some recluses, religious practitioners and brahmins use, to point out the partly eternal and partly non-eternal nature of existence, upon which they rely as their source or frame of reference.

“And what, Bhikkhus, is the third frame of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners and brahmins as a premise for their claim, that the self and existence are quasi or almost eternal?

2.3 “There is, Bhikkhus, another category of Devas with corrupted hearts, who are jealous and envious of others, seeking what others possess and enjoy. Thus, they live with their focus being on others, dominated by their excessive discontent with their state, which leads them to experience anger and resentment. As a result, their subtle Deva bodies become tired under the heavy weight of anger and envy overwhelming their tainted Deva hearts, which is why soon enough, exhaustion takes over and they die. Falling away from that state, they find themselves reborn into the human realm.

“Then, it so happens that in time, one such human being decides to go forth, as he walks off from home life into homelessness. Later, through his diligent effort and with persistent resoluteness, he engages in meditation practice by focusing his attention and becoming well-concentrated. Thus, he attains to a level of concentration that settles his heart into a state of collectedness, whereby he is then able to remember and recollect the details of his last birth as a Deva, but none of his previous births preceding that one are remembered.

“Later, as a result of his discovery through recollection of his previous life within that heavenly realm, he makes the following assertion –

‘Truly, there are Gods with uncorrupted hearts, who look upon other gods with kindly eyes, and not with envy. They surely are the ones who live eternally and are completely unshakable and ever-lasting! They surely do not perish nor wither, at all, because they do not let their hearts and bodies become dominated either by jealousy or envy, hence they do not get exhausted by the heaviness of anger or resentment, at all, which is why they remain throughout eternity, glorious in their divine grace, surrounded by their hosts of gods.

‘We, on the other hand, although Devas, nevertheless, were short-lived, because we lived with discontent; allowing ourselves to become jealous and envious of others; always resentful and angry at others, which is why our hearts and bodies became overburdened and heavy, and because of that, we were soon exhausted and died. Therefore, we were not eternal at all, but subject to change and death, which is why we died and fell away from those heavenly realms, finding ourselves reborn into this human realm!’

“This then, Bhikkhus, is the third of four premises or frames of reference, that some recluses, religious practitioners and brahmins use to point out the partly eternal and partly non-eternal nature of existence, upon which they rely as their source or frame of reference.

“And what, Bhikkhus, is the fourth frame of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners and brahmins as a premise for their claim, that the self and existence are quasi or almost eternal?

2.4 “Here, Bhikkhus, a certain recluse, religious practitioner, or brahmin, through the application of his rational thinking, reasons out by logical means as he reaches a conclusion, as a result of a series of exhaustive investigations of himself and the world. Given his deductions from the logical examinations gathered, he then comes out with the declaration:

‘This thing called ‘an eye,’ ‘an ear,’ ‘a nose,’ ‘a tongue,’ and ‘a body,’ including the self within it, are all impermanent; changing constantly, never the same, unstable and unreliably fickle, for they are all constantly in a state of decline.

‘However, that which is called ‘mind’ or ‘consciousness’ is truly unchanging, for it is truly permanent, stable and everlasting; non-decaying and thereby it remains forever and throughout all time, into eternity!’

“This then, Bhikkhus, is the fourth of four premises or frames of reference, that some recluses, religious practitioners and brahmins use, to point out the partly eternal and partly non-eternal nature of existence, upon which they rely as their source or frame of reference.

“Hence, these four are the four frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim, that the self and existence are somewhat or quasi eternal.

“Therefore, whatever recluses, religious practitioners, or brahmins who assert and believe in the premise that existence as such is eternal, along with the self with which they identify, as they point out the quasi or partially eternal nature of existence, they all would be using or relying on one or another of these four premises, as their sources or frames of reference. That is so, because outside of these four frames of reference there can be none.

“After all, this itself is the understanding of The Tathāgata, who clearly knows and sees, that –

‘If anyone attaches oneself to, and identifies with any one of these premises, it still leads one back into yet another birth, for it surely keeps one trapped within the cyclical becomings of samsara, and without any hopes for an escape beyond it, at all.’

“Now, The Tathāgata is truly the one who finally came to clearly understand this for what it really is, as well as directly know and see the very escape from this. As such, there can be no

confusion or uncertainty whatsoever in The Tathāgata, as it relates to His understanding of this truth, which is why He has indeed quenched His thirst and attained to extinction.

“Thus, by fully comprehending the whole process of arising, of falling away, and of disappearing, of the constant pursuit of gratification, the dangers that it brings, and especially the very escape from all kinds of feelings, The Tathāgata has truly attained to Ultimate Freedom, by entirely giving up all grabbing, with its tenacious tendency to hold on.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these are the Teachings, the ways of understanding reality, which are extremely deep, truly difficult to comprehend, let alone to penetrate and come to see or appreciate their depth and scope, for they are indeed excellent, so sublimely peaceful, beyond anything the mind could conjure up, utterly transcending the confines of logic. In fact, they are so beautiful in their subtlety that they can only be realized by the wise that are few!

“Now, this itself is what The Tathāgata has Himself revealed, having realized It through His own direct experiencing and penetrative insight, and He now shares It by introducing and making It known, throughout.

“To this end, anyone who truly and sincerely wishes to pay homage by praising The Tathāgata, venerating and offering Him accolades properly, would be doing so rightfully, while considering and basing his reverence upon these irrefutable facts.

3. Antānantavāda: Existence or The Cosmos is Finite (or Infinite)

(WRONG VIEWS 9-12)

“Bhikkhus, there are recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who assert and believe in the premise that existence or the cosmos as such is finite or infinite.

“So, to point out their conclusion that existence of the cosmos is finite or infinite, they use the following four premises, as their sources or frames of reference.

“Now, what are these four frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim, that existence or the cosmos is finite or infinite?

3.1 “Here, Bhikkhus, a certain recluse, religious practitioner, or brahmin, through diligent effort and with persistent resoluteness, focuses his attention by concentrating his mind. Thus, he attains to a level of concentration that settles his heart into a state of collectedness, whereby he is then able to experience existence or the cosmos as being finite and limited in its dimensions.

“Later, as a result of his discovery through his meditation, he makes the following assertion –

‘Truly, existence and this entire cosmos is finite and limited in its dimensions!’

‘And what is my proof to be saying this?’

‘It is because through diligent effort and with persistent resoluteness, when I focus my attention and become well-concentrated, as my heart settles into a level of collectedness, I am then able to experience existence and the cosmos as finite and limited in its dimensions. Therefore, it is because of knowing this for a fact, that I declare:

“Truly, existence and this entire cosmos is finite and limited in its dimensions!”

“This, Bhikkhus, is therefore the first of four premises or frames of reference, that some recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins use, to point out that existence or the cosmos as such is finite or infinite, upon which they rely as their source or frame of reference.

“And what, Bhikkhus, is the second frame of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as a premise for their claim, that existence or the cosmos as such is finite or infinite?

3.2 “Here, Bhikkhus, a certain recluse, religious practitioner, or brahmin, through diligent effort and with persistent resoluteness, focuses his attention by concentrating his mind. Thus, he attains to a level of concentration that settles his heart into a state of collectedness, whereby he is then able to experience existence or the cosmos as being infinite and boundless in its dimensions.

“Later, as a result of his discovery through his meditation, he makes the following assertion –

‘Truly, existence and this entire cosmos is infinite and boundless in its dimensions!’

‘And what is my proof to be saying this?’

‘It is because through diligent effort and with persistent resoluteness, when I focus my attention and become well-concentrated, as my heart settles into a state of collectedness, I am then able to experience existence and the cosmos as infinite and boundless in its dimensions. Therefore, it is because of knowing this for a fact, that I declare:

“Truly, existence and this entire cosmos is infinite and boundless in its dimensions!”

“This, Bhikkhus, is therefore the second of four premises or frames of reference, that some recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins use, to point out that existence or the cosmos as such is finite or infinite, upon which they rely as their source or frame of reference.

“And what, Bhikkhus, is the third frame of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as a premise for their claim, that existence or the cosmos as such is finite or infinite?”

3.3 “Here, Bhikkhus, a certain recluse, religious practitioner, or brahmin, through diligent effort and with persistent resoluteness, focuses his attention by concentrating his mind. Thus, he attains to a level of concentration that settles his heart into a state of collectedness, whereby he is then able to experience existence or the cosmos as finite and limited in its vertical axis, while infinite and boundless in its horizontal axis.

“Later, as a result of his discovery through his meditation, he makes the following assertion –

‘Truly, existence and this entire cosmos is both finite and infinite in its dimensions!’

‘Which is why all those recluses, religious practitioners and brahmins who claim that existence or the cosmos is finite and limited in its dimensions are terribly wrong!’

‘The same goes for all those others, who claim the opposite, by stating that existence or the cosmos is infinite and boundless in its dimensions, for, they too are mistaken!’

‘Because, truly, existence and this entire cosmos is both finite and infinite in its dimensions!’

‘And what is my proof to be saying this?’

‘It is because through diligent effort and with persistent resoluteness, when I focus my attention and become well-concentrated, as my heart settles into a state of collectedness, I am then able to experience existence and the cosmos as finite and limited in its vertical axis, while infinite and boundless in its horizontal axis. Therefore, it is because of knowing this for a fact, that I declare:

“Truly, existence and this entire cosmos is both finite and infinite in its dimensions!”

“This, therefore, Bhikkhus, is the third of four premises or frames of reference, that some recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins use to point out, that existence or the cosmos as such is finite or infinite, upon which they rely as their source or frame of reference.

“And what, Bhikkhus, is the fourth frame of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as a premise for their claim, that existence or the cosmos as such is finite or infinite?”

3.4 “Here, Bhikkhus, a certain recluse, religious practitioner, or brahmin, through the application of his rational thinking, reasons out by logical means as he reaches a conclusion, as a result of a series of exhaustive investigations of himself and the world. Given his deductions from the logical examinations gathered, he then comes out with the declaration:

‘Existence or the cosmos is, in fact, neither finite nor infinite!’

‘Which is why all those recluses, religious practitioners and brahmins who claim that existence or the cosmos is finite and limited in its dimensions are terribly wrong!’

‘The same goes for all those others who claim the opposite, by stating that existence or the cosmos is infinite and boundless in its dimensions, as they too are mistaken!’

‘So are those who claim that existence or the cosmos is both finite and infinite, because they too are mistaken!’

‘Because, truly, existence and this entire cosmos is neither finite nor infinite in its dimensions!’

“This then, Bhikkhus, is the fourth of four premises or frames of reference, that some recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins use, to point out that existence or the cosmos as such is finite or infinite, upon which they rely as their source or frame of reference.

“Hence, these four listed are the four frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim, that existence or the cosmos is finite or infinite.

“Therefore, whatever recluses, religious practitioners, or brahmins who assert and believe in the premise that existence as such is eternal, along with the self with which they identify, as they point out the finite or infinite nature of existence or the cosmos, they all would be using or relying on one or another of these four premises, as their sources or frames of reference. That is so, because outside of these four frames of reference there can be none.

“After all, this itself is the understanding of The Tathāgata, who clearly knows and sees, that –

‘If anyone attaches oneself to, and identifies with any one of these premises, it still leads one back into yet another birth, for it surely keeps one trapped within the cyclical becomings of samsara, and without any hopes for an escape beyond it, at all.’

“Now, The Tathāgata is truly the one who finally came to clearly understand this for what it really is, as well as directly know and see the very escape from this. As such, there can be no confusion or uncertainty whatsoever in The Tathāgata, as it relates to His understanding of this truth, which is why He has indeed quenched His thirst and attained to extinction.

“Thus, by fully comprehending the whole process of arising, of falling away, and of disappearing, of the constant pursuit of gratification, the dangers that it brings, and especially the very escape from all kinds of feelings, The Tathāgata has truly attained to Ultimate Freedom, by entirely giving up all grabbing, with its tenacious tendency to hold on.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these are the Teachings, the ways of understanding reality, which are extremely deep, truly difficult to comprehend, let alone to penetrate and come to see or

appreciate their depth and scope, for they are indeed excellent, so sublimely peaceful, beyond anything the mind could conjure up, utterly transcending the confines of logic. In fact, they are so beautiful in their subtlety that they can only be realized by the wise that are few!

“Now, this itself is what The Tathāgata has Himself revealed, having realized It through His own direct experiencing and penetrative insight, and He now shares It by introducing and making It known, throughout.

“To this end, anyone who truly and sincerely wishes to pay homage by praising The Tathāgata, venerating and offering Him accolades properly, would be doing so rightfully, while considering and basing his reverence upon these irrefutable facts.

4. Amarāvikkhepavāda: Endless Ambiguities of “Eel Wridders”

(WRONG VIEWS 13-16)

“Bhikkhus, there are recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who come up with endless ambiguities, as they are expert eel wridders. This because, when they are asked a question, they keep evading by ‘flip-flopping’ between their statements to fit the situation, but without making a definitive point about anything.

“So, to support this shiftiness in their eel wridding strategies, they use the following four premises, as their sources or frames of reference.

“Now, what are these four frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as a premise for maintaining their endless ambiguities?

4.1 “Here, Bhikkhus, a certain recluse, religious practitioner, or brahmin, unable to distinguish between what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, begins reflecting -

‘I do not know or understand as it truly is, nor am I able to distinguish between that which is wholesome and that which is, in fact, unwholesome.

‘So, if I go ahead and declare a position on this, then, given my lack of knowledge or proper understanding on the matter, I might be proven wrong and thus be discovered as being ignorant of the subject. Now, this exposure would be very embarrassing, if not damaging to my reputation, turning into a major obstacle, thereby bringing me much hardship and become a downfall, as well as cause a falling out of favor with so many who respect and trust me!’

“Therefore, as a result of his dislike and repugnance towards making a categorically false statement or lying, instead, he chooses to be vague and ambiguous in his responses. So, he

simply avoids saying or declaring anything conclusive or intelligible about the differences between that which is wholesome and that which is, in fact, unwholesome.

“As such, whenever he is asked a question, he simply resorts to evading tactics by ‘flip-flopping’ endlessly between his statements, to fit the situation, but without making a definitive point about anything.

“Instead, he goes on declaring –

‘Well, actually, I do not put it like this, nor do I claim it to be that way either, and I definitely do not say that it is a combination of both, or put it in a way, where it is none of those things, either. However, in putting it thus, it does not mean that I am claiming it to be some other way, or that it could somehow neither be this nor that!’

“This, therefore, Bhikkhus, is the first of four premises or frames of reference, used by some recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who come up with endless ambiguities, as they are expert eel wrigglers, who keep evading and ‘flip-flopping’ between their statements to fit the situation, but without making a definitive point about anything.

“And what, Bhikkhus, is the second frame of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as a premise for them, while they come up with endless ambiguities and ‘flip-flop’ between their statements?

4.2 “Here, Bhikkhus, a certain recluse, religious practitioner, or brahmin, unable to distinguish between what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, begins reflecting -

‘I do not know or understand as it truly is, nor am I really able to distinguish between that which is wholesome and that which is, in fact, unwholesome.

‘So, if I go ahead and declare a position on this, then, given my lack of knowledge or proper understanding on the matter, I might be proven wrong, which in turn might lead me to feel a strong desire to say or do something that I would not want to do. Then, as a result, I might become full of passionate rage, resentment, irritated and livid, finding myself thus trapped and unable to get out. Now, such a predicament would be terrible for me, not to mention very embarrassing, if not damaging to my reputation as well, turning into a major obstacle, thereby bringing me much hardship and a downfall, as well as a cause for falling out of favor with so many who respect and trust me!’

“Hence, as a result of his hesitation and fear of losing control and thus becoming irritated and filled with a passionate rage while trying to defend his position, if he is caught making a categorically false statement or even worse, lying, instead, he resorts to being vague and ambiguous in his responses. So, he simply avoids saying or declaring anything conclusive or intelligible about the differences between that which is wholesome and that which is, in fact, unwholesome.

“As such, whenever he is asked a question, he simply resorts to evading tactics by ‘flip-flopping’ endlessly between his statements to fit the situation, but without making a definitive point about anything.

“Instead, he goes on declaring –

‘Well, actually, I do not put it like this, nor do I claim it to be that way either, and I definitely do not say that it is a combination of both, or put it in a way, where it is none of those things, either. However, in putting it thus, it does not mean that I am claiming it to be some other way, or that it could somehow neither be this nor that!’

“This, therefore, Bhikkhus, is the second of four premises or frames of reference, used by some recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who come up with endless ambiguities, as they are expert eel wrigglers, who keep evading and ‘flip-flopping’ between their statements to fit the situation, but without making a definitive point about anything.

“And what, Bhikkhus, is the third frame of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as a premise for them, while they come up with endless ambiguities and ‘flip-flop’ between their statements?

4.3 “Here, Bhikkhus, a certain recluse, religious practitioner, or brahmin, unable to distinguish between what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, begins reflecting -

‘I do not know or understand as it truly is, nor am I really able to distinguish between that which is wholesome and that which is, in fact, unwholesome.

‘But, if I were to go ahead and declare a position on this, despite my obvious lack of knowledge and proper understanding on the matter, by stating: ‘this behavior or situation is wholesome, or that behavior or situation is unwholesome,’ then, there is always the possibility that I may be proven wrong by others.

‘After all, there might very well be other recluses, religious practitioners, or brahmins who are wiser or erudite and more knowledgeable than myself; who are experts on rhetorical devices and argumentation, and can easily tear up the doctrines and philosophies of others by picking them apart; who may decide to confront and challenge me on the statement I made. In such a situation, if they cross-question me, then they could easily grill me with their refutations, which would truly be a disaster, as it would completely ruin me! This because, other than being totally embarrassing, it would surely damage my reputation and therefore turn into a major obstacle; bringing me much hardship and a downfall, as well as a cause for falling out of favor with so many who respect and trust me!’

“Hence, as a result of his hesitation and fear of being cross-questioned and grilled by other experts, in being forced to defend his position if caught making a wrong declaration, he therefore resorts to being vague and ambiguous in his responses. So, he simply avoids saying or claiming

anything conclusive or intelligible about the differences between that which is wholesome and that which is, in fact, unwholesome.

“As such, whenever he is asked a question, he simply resorts to evading tactics by ‘flip-flopping’ endlessly between his statements to fit the situation, but without making a definitive point about anything.

“Instead, he goes on declaring –

‘Well, actually, I do not put it like this, nor do I claim it to be that way either, and I definitely do not say that it is a combination of both, or put it in a way, where it is none of those things either. However, in putting it thus, it does not mean that I am claiming it to be some other way, or that it could somehow neither be this nor that!’

“This, therefore, Bhikkhus, is the third of four premises or frames of reference, used by some recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who come up with endless ambiguities, as they are expert eel wrigglers, who keep evading and ‘flip-flopping’ between their statements to fit the situation, but without making a definitive point about anything.

“And what, Bhikkhus, is the fourth frame of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as a premise for them, while they come up with endless ambiguities and ‘flip-flop’ between their statements?

4.4 “Here, Bhikkhus, there is the case of a certain recluse, religious practitioner, or brahmin, who is dull-witted and below-average in his thinking and reasoning abilities.

“Then, due to his intellectual ineptitude, whenever someone asks him a clear-cut question so to know and identify his position on a matter, instead of giving them the expected clear-cut answer, he always ‘gives them the run-around’ by ‘flip-flopping’ endlessly and evading their questions, meanwhile providing not even a single rationally sound or coherent response.

“Therefore, when he is asked the following questions, he keeps shifting through his replies, one after another, thus –

1. *‘If you were to ask me whether there is another world somewhere, I would then say “yes”, and agree with you.*
2. *‘Or whether there isn’t another world somewhere, I would then say “yes”, and agree with you.*
3. *‘Or whether there is or there isn’t another world somewhere, I would then say “yes”, and agree with you.*
4. *‘Or whether there neither is nor there isn’t another world somewhere, I would then say “yes” and agree with you.*
5. *‘Or whether there are beings that are spontaneously born, I would then say “yes”, and agree with you.*
6. *‘Or whether there are no such beings that are spontaneously born, to which again I would say “yes” and agree with you.*

7. *'Or whether there both are and are not beings that are spontaneously born, to which I would again say "yes" and agree with you.*
8. *'Or whether there neither are nor there aren't beings that are spontaneously born, to which I would again say "yes" and agree with you.*
9. *'And if you ask me whether there are indeed fruits or results, as consequences of good and evil actions, I would agree with you and say "yes."*
10. *'Or whether there are no fruits or results, as consequences of good and evil actions, to which I would again say "yes" and agree with you.*
11. *'Or whether there both are and are not any fruits or results, as consequences of good and evil actions, and there too I would agree with you and say "yes."*
12. *'Or whether there neither are nor aren't any fruits or results, as consequences of good and evil actions, in which I would again agree with you and say "yes."*
13. *'And if you ask me as to whether The Tathāgata exists somewhere after His death, then I would agree with you and say "yes."*
14. *'Or when you ask whether The Tathāgata does not exist after His death, then I would agree with you and say "yes."*
15. *'Or whether The Tathāgata both exists and does not exist after His death, then I would agree with you.*
16. *'Or when you ask whether The Tathāgata neither exists nor does not exist after His death, then I would again agree with you and say "yes"*

'However, friends, in providing you my answers, you must know that I do not put it like this, nor do I claim it to be that way either, and I definitely do not say that it is a combination of both, or put it in a way, where it is none of those things either. However, in putting it thus, it does not mean that I am claiming it to be some other way, or that it could somehow neither be this nor that!'

“This, therefore, Bhikkhus, is the fourth of four premises or frames of reference, used by some recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who come up with endless ambiguities; being expert eel wrigglers, who keep evading and ‘flip-flopping’ between their statements to fit the situation, but without making a definitive point about anything.

“Hence, these four listed are the four frames of reference that are used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins to support such shiftiness in their eel wriggling strategies, while they evade and ‘flip-flop’ endlessly between their answers, without providing the questioner a single coherent or intelligible response.

“Therefore, whatever recluses, religious practitioners, or brahmins who are ambiguous in their replies, coming up with endless evasive maneuvers to maintain the shiftiness of their position, all such characters would be using or relying on one or another of these four premises, as their sources or frames of reference.

That is so, because outside of these four frames of reference there can be none.

“After all, this itself is the understanding of The Tathāgata, who clearly knows and sees, that –

‘If anyone attaches oneself to, and identifies with any one of these premises, it still leads one back into yet another birth, for it surely keeps one trapped within the cyclical becomings of samsara, and without any hopes for an escape beyond it, at all.’

“Now, The Tathāgata is truly the one who finally came to clearly understand this for what it really is, as well as directly know and see the very escape from this. As such, there can be no confusion or uncertainty whatsoever in The Tathāgata, as it relates to His understanding of this truth, which is why He has indeed quenched His thirst and attained to extinction.

“Thus, by fully comprehending the whole process of arising, of falling away, and of disappearing, of the constant pursuit of gratification, the dangers that it brings, and especially the very escape from all kinds of feelings, The Tathāgata has truly attained to Ultimate Freedom, by entirely giving up all grabbing, with its tenacious tendency to hold on.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these are the Teachings, the ways of understanding reality, which are extremely deep, truly difficult to comprehend, let alone to penetrate and come to see or appreciate their depth and scope, for they are indeed excellent, so sublimely peaceful, beyond anything the mind could conjure up, utterly transcending the confines of logic. In fact, they are so beautiful in their subtlety that they can only be realized by the wise that are few!

“Now, this itself is what The Tathāgata has Himself revealed, having realized It through His own direct experiencing and penetrative insight, and He now shares It by introducing and making It known, throughout.

“To this end, anyone who truly and sincerely wishes to pay homage by praising The Tathāgata, venerating and offering Him accolades properly, would be doing so rightfully, while considering and basing his reverence upon these irrefutable facts.

5. Adhiccasaṃuppannavāda: Origination by Chance

(WRONG VIEWS 17-18)

“Furthermore, Bhikkhus, there are recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who assert and believe in the premise that existence or the cosmos, as well as the self, arose or came about simply by chance, claiming them to have accidentally originated, and therefore a happenstance.

“So, to point out the serendipitous manifestation of existence and the self, they use the following two premises, as their sources or frames of reference.

“Now, what are these two frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim, that the self and existence are accidentally originated, being serendipitous phenomena?

5.1 “There is, Bhikkhus, a category of Devas with the inability to perceive, hence they are called ‘non-percipient’ Gods. But, after having spent their long lifespans in that non-percipient world, once a long period of time has passed, the moment comes when perception does arise in them, at which point they die and fall away from that plane of existence and the company of other Devas.

“Then, it so occurs that one or more of these beings, in falling away from their divine state, find themselves reborn into the human realm.

“Later, in time, one such human being decides to go forth, as he walks off from home life into homelessness. Then, through his diligent effort and with persistent resoluteness, he engages in meditation practice by focusing his attention and becoming well concentrated. Thus, he attains to a level of concentration that settles his heart into a state of collectedness, whereby he is then able to remember and recollect the very moment that perception arose in him, but while recalling none of the details about his existence prior to becoming percipient.

“Some time later, as a result of this discovery through his recollection of the moment he became percipient of himself and existence, he makes the following assertion –

‘Truly, the self and existence manifest serendipitously and thus originate accidentally!’

‘And why do I say this?’

‘It is because there was a time, when I did not exist, and then, I remember the moment when suddenly and just by chance, I sprang into being and began existing, just like that!’

“This then, Bhikkhus, is the first of two premises or frames of reference, that some recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins use, while asserting that existence or the cosmos, as well as the self, arose or came about simply by chance, claiming them to be accidentally originated.

“And what, Bhikkhus, is the second frame of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as a premise for their claim, that the self and existence are accidentally originated, being merely serendipitous phenomena?

5.2 “Here, Bhikkhus, a certain recluse, religious practitioner, or brahmin, through the application of his rational thinking, reasons out by logical means as he reaches a conclusion, as a result of a series of exhaustive investigations of himself and the world. Given his deductions from the logical examinations gathered, he then comes out with the declaration:

‘Truly, the self and existence manifest serendipitously and thus originate accidentally!’

“This, therefore, Bhikkhus, is the second of two premises or frames of reference, that some recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins use, while asserting that existence or the cosmos, as well as the self, arose or came about simply by chance, claiming them to be accidentally originated.

“Hence, these are the two frames of reference used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim, that the self and existence have an accidental origin, that they occurred and manifested merely by chance.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, whatever recluses, religious practitioners, or brahmins who assert and believe in the premise that existence or the cosmos, as well as the self, arose or came about simply by chance, claiming them to be accidentally originated, and therefore to be merely serendipitous phenomena, they all would be using or relying on one or the other of these two premises, as their sources or frames of reference. That is so, because outside of these two frames of reference, there can be none.

“After all, this itself is the understanding of The Tathāgata, who clearly knows and sees, that –

‘If anyone attaches oneself to, and identifies with any one of these premises, it still leads one back into yet another birth, for it surely keeps one trapped within the cyclical becomings of samsara, and without any hopes for an escape beyond it, at all.’

“Now, The Tathāgata is truly the one who finally came to clearly understand this for what it really is, as well as directly know and see the very escape from this. As such, there can be no confusion or uncertainty whatsoever in The Tathāgata, as it relates to His understanding of this truth, which is why He has indeed quenched His thirst and attained to extinction.

“Thus, by fully comprehending the whole process of arising, of falling away, and of disappearing, of the constant pursuit of gratification, the dangers that it brings, and especially the very escape from all kinds of feelings, The Tathāgata has truly attained to Ultimate Freedom, by entirely giving up all grabbing, with its tenacious tendency to hold on.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these are the Teachings, the ways of understanding reality, which are extremely deep, truly difficult to comprehend, let alone to penetrate and come to see or appreciate their depth and scope, for they are indeed excellent, so sublimely peaceful, beyond anything the mind could conjure up, utterly transcending the confines of logic. In fact, they are so beautiful in their subtlety that they can only be realized by the wise that are few!

“Now, this itself is what The Tathāgata has Himself revealed, having realized It through His own direct experiencing and penetrative insight, and He now shares It by introducing and making It known, throughout.

“To this end, anyone who truly and sincerely wishes to pay homage by praising The Tathāgata, venerating and offering Him accolades properly, would be doing so rightfully, while considering and basing his reverence upon these irrefutable facts.

“These, therefore, Bhikkhus, are the eighteen premises or frames of reference which are used by recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who engage in speculative thinking, as they theorize and make their assumptions about the past. To this end, they support such claims by basing them upon these eighteen premises, which they use as their sources or frames of reference mentioned. That is so, because outside of these eighteen frames of reference, there can be none.

“After all, this itself is the understanding of The Tathāgata, who clearly knows and sees, that –

‘If anyone attaches oneself to, and identifies with any one of these premises, it still leads one back into yet another birth, for it surely keeps one trapped within the cyclical becomings of samsara, and without any hopes for an escape beyond it, at all.’

“Now, The Tathāgata is truly the one who finally came to clearly understand this for what it really is, as well as directly know and see the very escape from this. As such, there can be no confusion or uncertainty whatsoever in The Tathāgata, as it relates to His understanding of this truth, which is why He has indeed quenched His thirst and attained to extinction.

“Thus, by fully comprehending the whole process of arising, of falling away, and of disappearing, of the constant pursuit of gratification, the dangers that it brings, and especially the very escape from all kinds of feelings, The Tathāgata has truly attained to Ultimate Freedom, by entirely giving up all grabbing, with its tenacious tendency to hold on.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these are the Teachings, the ways of understanding reality, which are extremely deep, truly difficult to comprehend, let alone to penetrate and come to see or appreciate their depth and scope, for they are indeed excellent, so sublimely peaceful, beyond anything the mind could conjure up, utterly transcending the confines of logic. In fact, they are so beautiful in their subtlety that they can only be realized by the wise that are few!

“Now, this itself is what The Tathāgata has Himself revealed, having realized It through His own direct experiencing and penetrative insight, and He now shares It by introducing and making It known, throughout.

“To this end, anyone who truly and sincerely wishes to pay homage by praising The Tathāgata, venerating and offering Him accolades properly, would be doing so rightfully, while considering and basing his reverence upon these irrefutable facts.

“Furthermore, Bhikkhus, one has to consider that there are also many recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who engage in speculative thinking, as they theorize by making assumptions about the ultimate end, that is to come in the future. Soon enough, they turn those speculations into assertions and beliefs, which they then formulate into entire systems of thought, which they claim to be their assumptions about the ultimate end yet to come, based upon forty-four premises or frames of reference.

“And what, Bhikkhus are these forty-four premises or frames of reference, which those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins engaging in speculative thinking apply, while relying upon them as evidence for the validity of their assumptions and beliefs about the ultimate end, which they claim will occur sometime in the future?

6. Saññīvāda: Remaining Percipient Beyond Death

(WRONG VIEWS 19-34)

“Here, Bhikkhus, there are such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who assert and believe in the premise that life continues beyond death, whereby the self remains percipient and therefore does not die nor get extinguished.

“So, to point out that the self still remains percipient after death, they use the following sixteen premises, as their sources or frames of reference.

“Now, what are these sixteen frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim, that after death, the self lives on and continues to be percipient?

“Here, Bhikkhus, they make the following assertions—

6.1 *‘After death, the self retains its material form, while also remaining totally percipient, with all its faculties left functioning and intact.’*

6.2 *‘After death, the self obtains an immaterial form, while also remaining totally percipient, with all its faculties left intact and functioning.’*

6.3 *‘After death, the self retains its material form, as well as obtains an immaterial form, while also remaining totally percipient, with all its faculties left intact and functioning.’*

6.4 *'After death, the self neither retains its material form nor obtains an immaterial form, while also remaining totally percipient, with all its faculties left intact and functioning.'*

6.5 *'After death, the self stays finite, while also remaining totally percipient, with all its faculties left intact and functioning.'*

6.6 *'After death, the self becomes infinite, while also remaining totally percipient, with all its faculties left intact and functioning.'*

6.7 *'After death, the self is both finite and infinite, while also remaining totally percipient, with all its faculties left intact and functioning.'*

6.8 *'After death, the self is neither finite nor infinite, but while remaining totally percipient, with all its faculties left intact and functioning.'*

6.9 *'After death, the self remains percipient as it was during its life, without undergoing any changes, with all its faculties left intact and functioning.'*

6.10 *'After death, the self acquires a different and altered perception than the one it had while alive, while retaining its former faculties and functioning.'*

6.11 *'After death, the self acquires a limited range of perception, with some of its faculties left intact and still functioning.'*

6.12 *'After death, the self acquires a boundless range of perception, with faculties that are transformed, becoming limitless in their functioning.'*

6.13 *'After death, the self becomes ecstatic and exclusively happy, while also remaining totally percipient, with all its faculties left intact and functioning.'*

6.14 *'After death, the self becomes miserable and exclusively unhappy, while also remaining totally percipient, with all its faculties left intact and functioning.'*

6.15 *'After death, the self becomes both ecstatic and happy, as well as miserable and unhappy, while also remaining totally percipient, with all its faculties left intact and functioning.'*

6.16 *'After death, the self neither becomes ecstatic or exclusively happy, nor miserable or unhappy, yet it does remain totally percipient, with all its faculties left intact and functioning.'*

“Now, these are the sixteen frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their assertion and claim, that after death, the self lives on and continues to be percipient.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these happen to be the sixteen premises or frames of reference which are used by recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who engage in speculative thinking, as

they theorize and make their assumptions about life after death, whereby they assert that the self remains percipient and therefore does not die, nor get extinguished.

“To this end, they support such claims by basing them upon these sixteen premises, as their sources or frames of reference. That is so, because outside of these sixteen frames of reference, there can be none.

“After all, this itself is the understanding of The Tathāgata, who clearly knows and sees, that –

‘If anyone attaches oneself to, and identifies with any one of these premises, it still leads one back into yet another birth, for it surely keeps one trapped within the cyclical becomings of samsara, and without any hopes for an escape beyond it, at all.’

“Now, The Tathāgata is truly the one who finally came to clearly understand this for what it really is, as well as directly know and see the very escape from this. As such, there can be no confusion or uncertainty whatsoever in The Tathāgata, as it relates to His understanding of this truth, which is why He has indeed quenched His thirst and attained to extinction.

“Thus, by fully comprehending the whole process of arising, of falling away, and of disappearing, of the constant pursuit of gratification, the dangers that it brings, and especially the very escape from all kinds of feelings, The Tathāgata has truly attained to Ultimate Freedom, by entirely giving up all grabbing, with its tenacious tendency to hold on.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these are the Teachings, the ways of understanding reality, which are extremely deep, truly difficult to comprehend, let alone to penetrate and come to see or appreciate their depth and scope, for they are indeed excellent, so sublimely peaceful, beyond anything the mind could conjure up, utterly transcending the confines of logic. In fact, they are so beautiful in their subtlety that they can only be realized by the wise that are few!

“Now, this itself is what The Tathāgata has Himself revealed, having realized It through His own direct experiencing and penetrative insight, and He now shares It by introducing and making It known, throughout.

“To this end, anyone who truly and sincerely wishes to pay homage by praising The Tathāgata, venerating and offering Him accolades properly, would be doing so rightfully, while considering and basing his reverence upon these irrefutable facts.

7. *Asaññīvāda: No longer Percipient After Death*

(WRONG VIEWS 35-42)

“Here, Bhikkhus, there are such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who assert and believe in the premise that life continues beyond death, whereby the self, although not dying nor getting extinguished and thus remaining forever, nevertheless, no longer stays or becomes percipient again.

“So, to point out that the self no longer remains percipient after death, they use the following eight premises, as their sources or frames of reference.

“Now, what are these eight frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim, that after death, although the self lives on, it no longer continues to be percipient?

“Here, Bhikkhus, those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, make the following assertions –

7.1 *‘After death, the self exists and retains its material form but is no longer percipient.’*

7.2 *‘After death, the self exists by acquiring an immaterial form but is no longer percipient.’*

7.3 *‘After death, the self exists and retains both its material form and acquires an immaterial form but is no longer percipient.’*

7.4 *‘After death, the self which continues existing, neither retains its material form, nor obtains an immaterial form, but it is no longer percipient.’*

7.5 *‘After death, the self stays finite but is no longer percipient.’*

7.6 *‘After death, the self becomes infinite but is no longer percipient.’*

7.7 *‘After death, the self is both finite and infinite but is no longer percipient.’*

7.8 *‘After death, the self is neither finite nor infinite but is no longer percipient.’*

“Now, these are the eight frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their assertion and claim, that after death, the self lives on but is no longer percipient, anymore.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these happen to be the eight premises or frames of reference which are used by recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who engage in speculative thinking, as

they theorize and make such assumptions about life after death, whereby the self does not die nor gets extinguished, while they assert it becomes non-percipient.

“To this end, they support such claims by basing them upon these eight premises, as their sources or frames of reference. That is so, because outside of these eight frames of reference, there can be none.

“After all, this itself is the understanding of The Tathāgata, who clearly knows and sees, that –

‘If anyone attaches oneself to, and identifies with any one of these premises, it still leads one back into yet another birth, for it surely keeps one trapped within the cyclical becomings of samsara, and without any hopes for an escape beyond it, at all.’

“Now, The Tathāgata is truly the one who finally came to clearly understand this for what it really is, as well as directly know and see the very escape from this. As such, there can be no confusion or uncertainty whatsoever in The Tathāgata, as it relates to His understanding of this truth, which is why He has indeed quenched His thirst and attained to extinction.

“Thus, by fully comprehending the whole process of arising, of falling away, and of disappearing, of the constant pursuit of gratification, the dangers that it brings, and especially the very escape from all kinds of feelings, The Tathāgata has truly attained to Ultimate Freedom, by entirely giving up all grabbing, with its tenacious tendency to hold on.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these are the Teachings, the ways of understanding reality, which are extremely deep, truly difficult to comprehend, let alone to penetrate and come to see or appreciate their depth and scope, for they are indeed excellent, so sublimely peaceful, beyond anything the mind could conjure up, utterly transcending the confines of logic. In fact, they are so beautiful in their subtlety that they can only be realized by the wise that are few!

“Now, this itself is what The Tathāgata has Himself revealed, having realized It through His own direct experiencing and penetrative insight, and He now shares It by introducing and making It known, throughout.

“To this end, anyone who truly and sincerely wishes to pay homage by praising The Tathāgata, venerating and offering Him accolades properly, would be doing so rightfully, while considering and basing his reverence upon these irrefutable facts.

8. *Nevasaññīnāsaññīvāda: Neither Percipient nor Non-Percipient After Death*

(WRONG VIEWS 43-50)

“Here, Bhikkhus, there are such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who assert and believe in the premise, that life continues beyond death, whereby the self, although not dying nor getting extinguished and thus remaining forever, is neither percipient nor non-percipient.

“So, to point out that the self is neither percipient nor non-percipient after death, they use the following eight premises, as their sources or frames of reference.

“Now, what are these eight frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim, that after death, although the self goes on existing, however, it is neither percipient nor non-percipient anymore?

“Here, Bhikkhus, those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, make the following assertions –

8.1 *‘After death, the self exists and retains its material form, but is neither percipient nor non-percipient, anymore.’*

8.2 *‘After death, the self exists by acquiring an immaterial form, but is neither percipient nor non-percipient, anymore.’*

8.3 *‘After death, the self exists and retains both its material form and acquires an immaterial form also, but is neither percipient nor non-percipient, anymore.’*

8.4 *‘After death, the self which continues existing, neither retains its material form nor obtains an immaterial form, but is neither percipient nor non-percipient, anymore.’*

8.5 *‘After death, the self stays finite, but is neither percipient nor non-percipient, anymore.’*

8.6 *‘After death, the self becomes infinite, but is neither percipient nor non-percipient, anymore.’*

8.7 *‘After death, the self is both finite and infinite, but is neither percipient nor non-percipient, anymore.’*

8.8 *‘After death, the self is neither finite nor infinite, but is neither percipient nor non-percipient, anymore.’*

“Now, these are the eight frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their assertion and claim, that after death, although the self goes on existing, it is, nevertheless, neither percipient nor non-percipient, anymore.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these happen to be the eight premises or frames of reference which are used by recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who engage in speculative thinking, as they theorize and make their assumptions about life after death, whereby the self does not die nor gets extinguished, while also asserting that it neither becomes percipient nor non-percipient.

“To this end, they support such claims by basing them upon these eight premises, as their sources or frames of reference. That is so, because outside of these eight frames of reference there can be none.

“After all, this itself is the understanding of The Tathāgata, who clearly knows and sees, that –

‘If anyone attaches oneself to, and identifies with any one of these premises, it still leads one back into yet another birth, for it surely keeps one trapped within the cyclical becomings of samsara, and without any hopes for an escape beyond it, at all.’

“Now, The Tathāgata is truly the one who finally came to clearly understand this for what it really is, as well as directly know and see the very escape from this. As such, there can be no confusion or uncertainty whatsoever in The Tathāgata, as it relates to His understanding of this truth, which is why He has indeed quenched His thirst and attained to extinction.

“Thus, by fully comprehending the whole process of arising, of falling away, and of disappearing, of the constant pursuit of gratification, the dangers that it brings, and especially the very escape from all kinds of feelings, The Tathāgata has truly attained to Ultimate Freedom, by entirely giving up all grabbing, with its tenacious tendency to hold on.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these are the Teachings, the ways of understanding reality, which are extremely deep, truly difficult to comprehend, let alone to penetrate and come to see or appreciate their depth and scope, for they are indeed excellent, so sublimely peaceful, beyond anything the mind could conjure up, utterly transcending the confines of logic. In fact, they are so beautiful in their subtlety that they can only be realized by the wise that are few!

“Now, this itself is what The Tathāgata has Himself revealed, having realized It through His own direct experiencing and penetrative insight, and He now shares It by introducing and making It known, throughout.

“To this end, anyone who truly and sincerely wishes to pay homage by praising The Tathāgata, venerating and offering Him accolades properly, would be doing so rightfully, while considering and basing his reverence upon these irrefutable facts.

9. *Ucchedavāda: Annihilationism (Nihilism)*

(WRONG VIEWS 51-57)

“Here, Bhikkhus, there are such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who assert and believe in the premise that, after the breakup of the body, at death, the once existing being is extinguished, obliterated, becoming thus fully non-existent and no more.

“So, to point out that the self is fully eradicated and annihilated after death, they use the following seven premises, as their sources or frames of reference.

“Now, what are these seven frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim, that after death, the self no longer exists, and thus, becomes extinguished, obliterated, fully non-existent, and no more?

“Here, Bhikkhus, some of those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, make the following assertions –

9.1 *‘The self, sir, has a definite form and shape, and is composed of the four primary and fundamental constituents, and it is produced by the joining of father and mother. Now, once it is dead, however, this very self is destroyed, extinguished, and obliterated.*

‘This, therefore, is how after death, at the breakup of the body, the self becomes fully annihilated and non-existent, anymore.’

“Thus, this is how some of these people claim that the self becomes non-existent and fully annihilated right after death.

“Then, another person comes along and refutes that assertion by adding his own, while claiming –

9.2 *‘The self, sir, as you stated, does not exist after death. This much is true and I cannot deny it, because it is a fact. However, its extinction does not come about, and it does not get fully annihilated the way you explain.*

‘Instead, there is another self that manifests, which is divine in its form and attributes, with full access to the sensual realm, sustaining itself by consuming physical edible food. Now, this fact you obviously are neither able to know nor see. I, on the other hand, both know it and see it!’

‘So, this is how after death, at the breakup of the body, the self becomes fully annihilated and non-existent, anymore.’

“This is also, how some of these people claim that the self becomes non-existent and is fully annihilated right after death.

“Then, yet another person comes along and refutes that assertion by adding his own, while claiming –

9.3 *‘The self, sir, as you stated, really does not exist after death. This much is true, hence I cannot deny it, for it is a fact. But that is not how its extinction takes place and how it gets fully annihilated.*

‘Instead, there is another self that manifests in its place, once death has occurred, which is divine in its specific form and attributes, with all of its minor and major limbs and organs intact, and fully functioning faculties. This body, however, is mind-made, hence, it is created and fashioned by the mind. Now, this fact you obviously are neither able to know nor see. But I, both know it and see it!’

‘So, this is how after death, at the breakup of the body, the self becomes fully annihilated and non-existent, anymore.’

“This also, is how some of these people claim that the self becomes non-existent and is fully annihilated right after death.

“But then, someone else comes along and makes yet another assertion altogether, while stating –

9.4 *‘The self, sir, as you stated, really does not exist after death. This much is true, hence I cannot deny it, seeing that it is a fact. However, that is not how its extinction takes place and how it gets fully annihilated.*

‘Instead, there is another self that, while remaining fully aware of how ‘space is infinitely boundless,’ is reborn into the dimension of ‘Boundless Infinity of Space.’ This because, by no longer paying any attention to the multiplicity of unending perceptions, it has already completely transcended and gone beyond the confines of the physical world and of tangibility, along with the disappearance of perceptions dealing with sensory reflexive contact. Now, of course, this fact you are neither able to know nor see. But I, nevertheless, do know and see!’

‘So, this is how after death, at the breakup of the body, the self becomes fully annihilated and non-existent, anymore.’

“So, this also, is how some of these people claim that the self becomes non-existent and is fully annihilated right after death.

“And then, someone else comes around and makes yet another assertion, while stating –

9.5 *‘The self, sir, as you stated, really does not exist after death. This much is true, hence I cannot deny it, for it is indeed a fact. However, that is not how its extinction takes place and how it gets fully annihilated.*

'Instead, there is another self that, while remaining fully aware of how 'consciousness is infinitely boundless,' is reborn into the dimension of 'Boundless Infinity of Consciousness.' This because, it has already completely transcended and gone beyond the confines of the perception of space being boundlessly infinite. Now, of course, this fact you are neither able to know nor see, which I, on the other hand, both know and see!'

'So, this is how after death, at the breakup of the body, the self becomes fully annihilated and non-existent, anymore.'

"So, this also, is how some of these people claim that the self becomes non-existent and is fully annihilated right after death.

"And then, someone else comes around and makes yet another assertion, while stating –

9.6 *'The self, sir, as you stated, does not exist after death. This much is true, hence I cannot deny it, as it is a fact. However, that is not how its extinction takes place and how it gets fully annihilated.'*

'Instead, there is another self that belongs to the 'dimension of nothingness,' having attained to it by experiencing and being fully aware of how 'there is only nothingness and nothing else.' This because, it has already completely transcended and gone beyond the perception that takes consciousness as infinitely boundless. Now, of course, this fact you are neither able to know nor see, which I, on the other hand, both know and see!'

'So, this is how after death, at the breakup of the body, the self becomes fully annihilated and non-existent, anymore.'

"So, this also, is how some of these people claim that the self becomes non-existent and is fully annihilated right after death.

"Further, another person comes along as well and makes yet another assertion, while stating –

9.7 *'The self, sir, as you stated, does not exist after death. This much is true, hence I cannot deny it, as it is a fact. But that is not how its extinction takes place and how it gets fully annihilated.'*

'Instead, there is another self that has even gone beyond the 'dimension of nothingness,' and is reborn into the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, having previously experienced it as: 'This is peaceful, this is truly sublime!' Now, of course, this fact you are neither able to know nor see, which I, on the other hand, both know and see!'

'So, this is how after death, at the breakup of the body, the self becomes fully annihilated and non-existent, anymore.'

“So, this also, is how some of these people claim that the self becomes non-existent and is fully annihilated right after death.

“These, therefore, are the seven frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their assertion and claim, that the once existing being totally ends beyond death, whereby the self is extinguished, obliterated, becoming thus fully non-existent and no more.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these happen to be the seven premises or frames of reference which are used by recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who engage in speculative thinking, as they theorize and make their assumptions about life after death, claiming that the self no longer exists, and thus becomes extinguished, obliterated, fully non-existent and no more

“To this end, they support such claims by basing them upon these seven premises, as their sources or frames of reference. That is so, because outside of these seven frames of reference, there can be none.

“After all, this itself is the understanding of The Tathāgata, who clearly knows and sees, that –

‘If anyone attaches oneself to, and identifies with any one of these premises, it still leads one back into yet another birth, for it surely keeps one trapped within the cyclical becomings of samsara, and without any hopes for an escape beyond it, at all.’

“Now, The Tathāgata is truly the one who finally came to clearly understand this for what it really is, as well as directly know and see the very escape from this. As such, there can be no confusion or uncertainty whatsoever in The Tathāgata, as it relates to His understanding of this truth, which is why He has indeed quenched His thirst and attained to extinction.

“Thus, by fully comprehending the whole process of arising, of falling away, and of disappearing, of the constant pursuit of gratification, the dangers that it brings, and especially the very escape from all kinds of feelings, The Tathāgata has truly attained to Ultimate Freedom, by entirely giving up all grabbing, with its tenacious tendency to hold on.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these are the Teachings, the ways of understanding reality, which are extremely deep, truly difficult to comprehend, let alone to penetrate and come to see or appreciate their depth and scope, for they are indeed excellent, so sublimely peaceful, beyond anything the mind could conjure up, utterly transcending the confines of logic. In fact, they are so beautiful in their subtlety that they can only be realized by the wise that are few!

“Now, this itself is what The Tathāgata has Himself revealed, having realized It through His own direct experiencing and penetrative insight, and He now shares It by introducing and making It known, throughout.

“To this end, anyone who truly and sincerely wishes to pay homage by praising The Tathāgata, venerating and offering Him accolades properly, would be doing so rightfully, while considering and basing his reverence upon these irrefutable facts.

10. Diṭṭhadhammanibbānavāda: Extinguishment in This Very Life

(WRONG VIEWS 58-62)

“Here, Bhikkhus, there are such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who assert and believe in the premise that, while one is still alive, when *nibbāna* occurs in this very birth, the existing self of the person is right then and there extinguished and no more.

“So, to point out that the self is fully eradicated and annihilated, while there is still life in the being the moment supreme *nibbāna* takes place, they use the following five premises, as their sources or frames of reference.

“Now, what are these five frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their claim, that during the being’s lifetime, the self becomes extinct and thus extinguished and obliterated, the moment supreme *nibbāna* occurs?

“Here, Bhikkhus, some of these recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, make the following assertions –

10.1 *‘While the self is fully enjoying all that the five senses could provide through sensual stimulation, the self thus enjoying such ecstasy then attains to supreme nibbāna in this very life, by experiencing the gratification of sensual euphoria, at which point the self is fully extinguished, while still alive.*

“So, this is how some of these people claim that the existing self becomes fully annihilated in this very birth, while one is still alive, the moment supreme *nibbāna* occurs.

“Further, another person comes along and makes yet another assertion, while stating –

10.2 *‘The self, sir, as you stated, does exist. So, this much is true, hence I do not deny it, as it is a fact. But that is not exactly how its extinction takes place, in this very life.*

‘And why do I say this?

‘I say this, because all sensual pleasures are always changing, hence they are totally impermanent, suffering, and therefore, in a constant state of decay. Now, the fact that they are

always wasting away and perishing is what causes turmoil, tension, pain, depression, lamentation, and utter anguish.

‘However, it is by secluding his mind from running after things having to do with sensuality, and instead by pulling his attention inwards and thereby becoming quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome and bad merit-making states, that he enters upon and remains in the first jhāna, which is accompanied by thinking and pondering, while experiencing a strong flood of spiritual joy and ecstasy, all resulting from such seclusion.

‘This itself, is therefore, how the self becomes extinct in the living being, and thus gets extinguished and obliterated, the moment supreme nibbāna occurs, in this very life.’

“This also, is how some of these people claim that the existing self becomes fully annihilated the moment supreme *nibbāna* occurs, in this very birth, while one is still alive.

“Further, another person comes along as well and makes yet another assertion, while stating –

10.3 *‘The self, sir, as you stated, does exist. This much is true, so I will not deny it, as it is a fact. However, extinction as such does not take place in this very life, the way you described it.*

‘And why do I say this?’

‘I say this, because all engagement with thinking and pondering still keeps one stuck in the gross material dimension.

‘Which is why it is by stilling his thinking process, that he turns his attention away from his thoughts, thus no longer engaging or fighting with them, and comes to experience the disappearance of both thinking and pondering. In this way, the person enters upon and remains in the second jhāna, which continues to be accompanied by a strong flood of spiritual joy and ecstasy, that are now the result of his growing stable collectedness of heart, his samādhi.

‘Now, this itself, is how the self becomes extinct in the living being, and thus gets extinguished and obliterated, the moment supreme nibbāna occurs in this very life.’

“This also, Bhikkhus, is how some of these people claim that the existing self becomes fully annihilated, the moment supreme *nibbāna* occurs in this very birth, while one is still alive.

“But, then again, someone else comes along while declares the following –

10.4 *‘The self, sir, as you stated, does exist. This much is true, hence I am not going to deny it, as it is a fact. However, extinction as such does not take place, in this very life, the way you describe it.*

‘And why do I say this?’

‘I say this, because the presence of spiritual joy is itself very gross, as there still is mental exhilaration and elation, agitating the mind.

‘Which is why it is by going deeper in one’s meditation, by no longer holding on to anything, that he witnesses the fading away and ceasing of even the spiritual joy. Thus, the meditator comes to dwell in a state of equanimity, while still being mindful and fully aware, albeit feeling a sense of subtle ecstasy throughout, as he enters and abides in the third jhāna, for which reason the noble individuals declare:

*“It is such a one, indeed, who is serenely mindful;
Dwelling in happiness,
With an ever-present feeling of equanimity.”*

‘Now, this itself, is how the self becomes extinct in the living being, and thus gets extinguished and obliterated, the moment supreme nibbāna occurs, in this very life.’

“This also, Bhikkhus, is how some of these people claim that the existing self becomes fully annihilated the moment supreme nibbāna occurs, in this very birth, while one is still alive.

“Yet again, another person comes along while making the following assertion –

10.5 *‘The self, sir, as you stated, does exist. This much is true, hence I am not going to deny it, as it is a fact. However, extinction as such does not take place, in this very life, the way you describe it.*

‘And why do I say this?’

‘I say this, because there still is in him the presence of interest or concern for being happy, or to remain in a state of happiness, which in itself is still quite gross, thereby agitating the mind.

‘But it is only when one gives up both pleasure and pain, by having already gone beyond joy and anguish, that he remains in the continuous state of purifying mindfulness with an ever-present sense of equanimity, as he enters and abides in the fourth jhāna, while experiencing neither pleasure nor pain, having now gone beyond them both.

‘Now, this itself is how the self becomes extinct in the living being and thus gets extinguished and obliterated the moment supreme nibbāna occurs, in this very life.’

“This also, Bhikkhus, is how some of these people claim that the existing self becomes fully annihilated the moment supreme nibbāna occurs, in this very birth, while one is still alive.

“These, then, are the five frames of reference, used by such recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins as premises for their assertion and claim that, while one is still alive,

when *nibbāna* occurs in this very birth, the existing self of the person becomes extinguished right then and there, and is no more.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these happen to be the five premises or frames of reference which are used by recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who claim, that the self of the existing being is fully eradicated and annihilated, the moment supreme *nibbāna* takes place.

“To this end, they support such claims by basing them upon these five premises, as their sources or frames of reference. That is so, because outside of these five frames of reference, there can be none.

“After all, this itself is the understanding of The Tathāgata, who clearly knows and sees, that –

‘If anyone attaches oneself to, and identifies with any one of these premises, it still leads one back into yet another birth, for it surely keeps one trapped within the cyclical becomings of samsara, and without any hopes for an escape beyond it, at all.’

“Now, The Tathāgata is truly the one who finally came to clearly understand this for what it really is, as well as directly know and see the very escape from this. As such, there can be no confusion or uncertainty whatsoever in The Tathāgata, as it relates to His understanding of this truth, which is why He has indeed quenched His thirst and attained to extinction.

“Thus, by fully comprehending the whole process of arising, of falling away, and of disappearing, of the constant pursuit of gratification, the dangers that it brings, and especially the very escape from all kinds of feelings, The Tathāgata has truly attained to Ultimate Freedom, by entirely giving up all grabbing, with its tenacious tendency to hold on.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these are the Teachings, the ways of understanding reality, which are extremely deep, truly difficult to comprehend, let alone to penetrate and come to see or appreciate their depth and scope, for they are indeed excellent, so sublimely peaceful, beyond anything the mind could conjure up, utterly transcending the confines of logic. In fact, they are so beautiful in their subtlety that they can only be realized by the wise that are few!

“Now, this itself is what The Tathāgata has Himself revealed, having realized It through His own direct experiencing and penetrative insight, and He now shares It by introducing and making It known, throughout.

“To this end, anyone who truly and sincerely wishes to pay homage by praising The Tathāgata, venerating and offering Him accolades properly, would be doing so rightfully, while considering and basing his reverence upon these irrefutable facts.

“These, therefore, Bhikkhus, are the forty-four premises or frames of reference, which are used by recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who theorize by making assumptions about the

ultimate end, that is to come in the future. Soon enough, they turn those speculations into assertions and beliefs, which they then formulate into entire systems of thought, and claim to be their assumptions about the ultimate end yet to come, based upon forty-four premises, or frames of reference. That is so, because outside of these forty-four frames of reference, there can be none.

“After all, this itself is the understanding of The Tathāgata, who clearly knows and sees, that –

‘If anyone attaches oneself to, and identifies with any one of these premises, it still leads one back into yet another birth, for it surely keeps one trapped within the cyclical becomings of samsara, and without any hopes for an escape beyond it, at all.’

“Now, The Tathāgata is truly the one who finally came to clearly understand this for what it really is, as well as directly know and see the very escape from this. As such, there can be no confusion or uncertainty whatsoever in The Tathāgata, as it relates to His understanding of this truth, which is why He has indeed quenched His thirst and attained to extinction.

“Thus, by fully comprehending the whole process of arising, of falling away, and of disappearing, of the constant pursuit of gratification, the dangers that it brings, and especially the very escape from all kinds of feelings, The Tathāgata has truly attained to Ultimate Freedom, by entirely giving up all grabbing, with its tenacious tendency to hold on.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these are the Teachings, the ways of understanding reality, which are extremely deep, truly difficult to comprehend, let alone to penetrate and come to see or appreciate their depth and scope, for they are indeed excellent, so sublimely peaceful, beyond anything the mind could conjure up, utterly transcending the confines of logic. In fact, they are so beautiful in their subtlety that they can only be realized by the wise that are few!

“Now, this itself is what The Tathāgata has Himself revealed, having realized It through His own direct experiencing and penetrative insight, and He now shares It by introducing and making It known, throughout.

“To this end, anyone who truly and sincerely wishes to pay homage by praising The Tathāgata, venerating and offering Him accolades properly, would be doing so rightfully, while considering and basing his reverence upon these irrefutable facts.

“As such, Bhikkhus, I have explained to you here these sixty-two premises or frames of reference, which are used by recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who speculate and theorize by making assumptions about the very beginning of the past or the ultimate end, that is to come. Thus, they have turned those speculations into assertions and beliefs, while supporting such claims through these sixty-two premises or frames of reference. That is so, because outside of these sixty-two frames of reference, there can be none.

“After all, this itself is the understanding of The Tathāgata, who clearly knows and sees, that –

‘If anyone attaches oneself to, and identifies with any one of these premises, it still leads one back into yet another birth, for it surely keeps one trapped within the cyclical becomings of samsara, and without any hopes for an escape beyond it, at all.’

“Now, The Tathāgata is truly the one who finally came to clearly understand this for what it really is, as well as directly know and see the very escape from this. As such, there can be no confusion or uncertainty whatsoever in The Tathāgata, as it relates to His understanding of this truth, which is why He has indeed quenched His thirst and attained to extinction.

“Thus, by fully comprehending the whole process of arising, of falling away, and of disappearing, of the constant pursuit of gratification, the dangers that it brings, and especially the very escape from all kinds of feelings, The Tathāgata has truly attained to Ultimate Freedom, by entirely giving up all grabbing, with its tenacious tendency to hold on.

“Therefore, Bhikkhus, these are the Teachings, the ways of understanding reality, which are extremely deep, truly difficult to comprehend, let alone to penetrate and come to see or appreciate their depth and scope, for they are indeed excellent, so sublimely peaceful, beyond anything the mind could conjure up, utterly transcending the confines of logic. In fact, they are so beautiful in their subtlety that they can only be realized by the wise that are few!

“Now, this itself is what The Tathāgata has Himself revealed, having realized It through His own direct experiencing and penetrative insight, and He now shares It by introducing and making It known, throughout.

“To this end, anyone who truly and sincerely wishes to pay homage by praising The Tathāgata, venerating and offering Him accolades properly, would be doing so rightfully, while considering and basing his reverence upon these irrefutable facts.

4. ATTĀLOKAPAÑÑATTIVATTHU – PREMISES USED FOR THE ASSERTIONS ABOUT “A SELF” & EXISTENCE

PARITASSITAVIPPHANDITAVĀRA: AGITATION AND INDECISIVENESS

I. “Now, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who, despite having no evidence to support their assertions, claiming that the self and existence are both eternal and everlasting, do so by theorizing while using these four premises or frames of reference.

“Here, Bhikkhus, understand that, while they neither possess the direct knowledge or understanding, nor have seen this to be true themselves, they are, nevertheless, strongly

motivated by their discontent and dis-ease which they feel, being led by the constant agitation and uncertainty they experience internally, which stem from craving and its insatiable thirst for more.

2. “Also, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who, despite having no evidence to support their assertions, claiming that the self and existence are both partially or quasi eternal and everlasting, do so by theorizing while using these four premises or frames of reference.

“Here, Bhikkhus, understand that, while they neither possess the direct knowledge or understanding, nor have seen this to be true themselves, they are, nevertheless, strongly motivated by their discontent and dis-ease which they feel, being led by the constant agitation and uncertainty they experience internally, which stem from craving and its insatiable thirst for more.

3. “Further, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who, despite having no evidence to support their assertions, claiming that the self and existence are finite or infinite, do so by theorizing while using these four premises or frames of reference.

“Here, Bhikkhus, understand that, while they neither possess the direct knowledge or understanding, nor have seen this to be true themselves, they are, nevertheless, strongly motivated by their discontent and dis-ease which they feel, being led by the constant agitation and uncertainty they experience internally, which stem from craving and its insatiable thirst for more.

4. “Further, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who keep evading and ‘flip-flopping’ between their statements, do so by theorizing while using these four premises or frames of reference.

“Here, Bhikkhus, understand that, while they neither possess the direct knowledge or understanding, nor have seen this to be true themselves, they are, nevertheless, strongly motivated by their discontent and dis-ease which they feel, being led by the constant agitation and uncertainty they experience internally, which stem from craving and its insatiable thirst for more.

5. “Further, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who, despite having no evidence to support their assertions, declare that the self and existence arose or came about simply by chance or originated by accident, do so by theorizing while using these two premises or frames of reference.

“Here, Bhikkhus, understand that, while they neither possess the direct knowledge or understanding, nor have seen this to be true themselves, they are, nevertheless, strongly motivated by their discontent and dis-ease which they feel, being led by the constant agitation and uncertainty they experience internally, which stem from craving and its insatiable thirst for more.

6. “Further, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who, despite having no evidence to support their assertions about the very beginning of the past, do so by theorizing while using these eighteen premises or frames of reference.

“Here, Bhikkhus, understand that, while they neither possess the direct knowledge or understanding, nor have seen this to be true themselves, they are, nevertheless, strongly motivated by their discontent and dis-ease which they feel, being led by the constant agitation and uncertainty they experience internally, which stem from craving and its insatiable thirst for more.

7. “Also, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who, despite having no evidence to support their assertions about the self still existing *and* being percipient beyond death, do so by theorizing while using these sixteen premises or frames of reference.

“Here, Bhikkhus, understand that, while they neither possess the direct knowledge or understanding, nor have seen this to be true themselves, they are, nevertheless, strongly motivated by their discontent and dis-ease which they feel, being led by the constant agitation and uncertainty they experience internally, which stem from craving and its insatiable thirst for more.

8. “Also, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who, despite having no evidence to support their assertions about the existence of the self, and for it becoming non-percipient beyond death, do so by theorizing while using these eight premises or frames of reference.

“Here, Bhikkhus, understand that, while they neither possess the direct knowledge or understanding, nor have seen this to be true themselves, they are, nevertheless, strongly motivated by their discontent and dis-ease which they feel, being led by the constant agitation and uncertainty they experience internally, which stem from craving and its insatiable thirst for more.

9. “Further, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who, despite having no evidence to support their assertions about the existence of the self, and for it becoming neither percipient nor non-percipient beyond death, do so by theorizing while using these eight premises or frames of reference.

“Here, Bhikkhus, understand that, while they neither possess the direct knowledge or understanding, nor have seen this to be true themselves, they are, nevertheless, strongly motivated by their discontent and dis-ease which they feel, being led by the constant agitation and uncertainty they experience internally, which stem from craving and its insatiable thirst for more.

10. “Further, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who, despite having no evidence to support their assertions about the total annihilation of the self at the moment of death, do so by theorizing while using these seven premises or frames of reference.

“Here, Bhikkhus, understand that, while they neither possess the direct knowledge or understanding, nor have seen this to be true themselves, they are, nevertheless, strongly motivated by their discontent and dis-ease which they feel, being led by the constant agitation and uncertainty they experience internally, which stem from craving and its insatiable thirst for more.

11. “Further, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who, despite having no evidence to support their assertions about the total annihilation of the already existing self at the moment of attaining *nibbāna*, do so by theorizing while using these five premises or frames of reference.

“Here, Bhikkhus, understand that, while they neither possess the direct knowledge or understanding, nor have seen this to be true themselves, they are, nevertheless, strongly motivated by their discontent and dis-ease which they feel, being led by the constant agitation and uncertainty they experience internally, which stem from craving and its insatiable thirst for more.

12. “And Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who, despite having no evidence to support their assertions about ‘the ultimate end,’ do so by theorizing while using forty-four premises or frames of reference.

“Here, Bhikkhus, understand that, while they neither possess the direct knowledge or understanding, nor have seen this to be true themselves, they are, nevertheless, strongly motivated by their discontent and dis-ease which they feel, being led by the constant agitation and uncertainty they experience internally, which stem from craving and its insatiable thirst for more.

13. “Therefore, Bhikkhus, all these recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who, despite having no evidence to support their assertions about ‘the very beginning of the past’ or ‘the ultimate end,’ do so by theorizing while using these sixty-two premises or frames of reference.

“Hence, Bhikkhus, do know and understand that, while people neither possess the direct knowledge or understanding, nor have seen this to be true themselves, they are, nevertheless, strongly motivated by their discontent and dis-ease which they feel, being led by the constant agitation and uncertainty they experience internally, which stem from craving and its insatiable thirst for more.

PHASSAPACCAYAVĀRA: DEPENDING ON CONTACT

1. “Now, Bhikkhus, know and understand this: all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who claim that the self and existence are both eternal and everlasting, while speculating and using their four premises or frames of reference, they all do so *by* relying *and* depending on contact itself, and *not* without contact.

2. “Similarly, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who claim that the self and existence are both partially or quasi eternal and everlasting, as they use their four premises or frames of reference, they all do so *by* relying *and* depending on contact itself, and *not* without contact.

3. “Similarly, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who claim that the self and existence are finite or infinite, speculating throughout while using their four premises or frames of reference, they all do so *by* relying *and* depending on contact itself, and *not* without contact.

4. “Also, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who keep evading and ‘flip-flopping’ between their statements, while using their eel-wriggling strategies as they apply their four premises or frames of reference, they all do so *by* relying *and* depending on contact itself, and *not* without contact.

5. “Also, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who declare that the self and existence arose or came about simply by chance or originated accidentally, while using their two premises or frames of reference, they all do so *by* relying *and* depending on contact itself, and *not* without contact.

6. “Also, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who make their assertions about the very beginning of the past, while using their eighteen premises or frames of reference, they all do so *by* relying *and* depending on contact itself, and *not* without contact.

7. “Also, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who make their assertions about the self still existing *and* being percipient beyond death, while using their sixteen premises or frames of reference, they all do so *by* relying *and* depending on contact itself, and *not* without contact.

8. “Also, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who make their assertions about the existence of the self, which they claim becomes non-percipient beyond death, as they apply their eight premises or frames of reference, they all do so *by* relying *and* depending on contact itself, and *not* without contact.

9. “Furthermore, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who make their assertions about the existence the self, which they claim becomes neither percipient nor non-percipient beyond death, as they apply their eight premises or frames of reference, they all do so *by* relying *and* depending on contact itself, and *not* without contact.

10. “Furthermore, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who make their assertions about the total annihilation of the self at the moment of death, as they use their seven premises or frames of reference, they all do so *by* relying *and* depending on contact itself, and *not* without contact.

11. “Furthermore, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who make their assertions about the total annihilation of the already existing self at the moment of attaining *nibbāna*, in using their five premises or frames of reference, they all do so *by* relying *and* depending on contact itself, and *not* without contact.

12. “Furthermore, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who make their assertions about ‘the ultimate end,’ while using their forty-four premises or frames of reference, they all do so *by* relying *and* depending on contact itself, and *not* without contact.

13. “And Bhikkhus, when all these recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who keep making their assertions about ‘the very beginning of the past’ or ‘the ultimate end,’ while positing their sixty-two premises or frames of reference, they all do so *by* relying *and* depending on contact itself, and *not* without contact.

NETAṂTHĀNAMVIJJATIVĀRA: IT IS SIMPLY IMPOSSIBLE

1. “Now, Bhikkhus, know and understand this: it is simply impossible for all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins to draw up their four premises or frames of reference, in support of their claim that the self and existence are both eternal and everlasting, without first having made contact, which in this case means that the contact itself is *directly influenced* by *how* they feel and what they are sensitive to, given the view they are asserting.

2. “It is also impossible, Bhikkhus, for all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins to draw up their four premises or frames of reference, in support of their claim that the self and existence are both partially or quasi eternal and everlasting, without first having made contact, which in this case, means that the contact itself is *directly influenced* by *how* they feel and what they are sensitive to, given the view they are asserting.

3. “It is also impossible, Bhikkhus, for all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins to draw up their four premises or frames of reference, in support of their claim that the self and existence are finite or infinite, without first having made contact, which in this case means that the contact itself is *directly influenced* by *how* they feel and what they are sensitive to, given the view they are asserting.

4. “It is also impossible, Bhikkhus, for all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins to draw up their four premises or frames of reference as they keep evading and ‘flip-flopping’ between their statements, without first having made contact, which in this case means that the contact itself is *directly influenced* by *how* they feel and what they are sensitive to, in regards to the position they are protecting.

5. “It is also impossible, Bhikkhus, for all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins to draw up their two premises or frames of reference in support of the claim that the self and existence arose or came about simply by chance or originated accidentally, without first

having made contact, which in this case means that the contact itself is *directly influenced* by *how* they feel and what they are sensitive to, given the view they are asserting.

6. “It is also impossible, Bhikkhus, for all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins to draw up their eighteen premises or frames of reference in support of their claim about the very beginning of the past, without first having made contact, which in this case means that the contact itself is *directly influenced* by *how* they feel and what they are sensitive to, given the view they are asserting.

7. “It is also impossible, Bhikkhus, for all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins to draw up their sixteen premises or frames of reference in support of their claim about the self still existing *and* being percipient beyond death, without first having made contact, which in this case means that the contact itself is *directly influenced* by *how* they feel and what they are sensitive to, given the view they are asserting.

8. “It is also impossible, Bhikkhus, for all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins to draw up their eight premises or frames of reference in support of the claim about the existence of the self, and it becoming non-percipient beyond death, without first having made contact, which in this case means that the contact itself is *directly influenced* by *how* they feel and what they are sensitive to, given the view they are asserting.

9. “It is also impossible, Bhikkhus, for all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins to draw up their eight premises or frames of reference in support of their claim about the existence of the self, and how it becomes neither percipient nor non-percipient beyond death, without first having made contact, which in this case means that the contact itself is *directly influenced* by *how* they feel and what they are sensitive to, given the view they are asserting.

10. “It is also impossible, Bhikkhus, for all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins to draw up their seven premises or frames of reference in support of the claim about the total annihilation of the self at the moment of death, without first having made contact, which in this case means that the contact itself is *directly influenced* by *how* they feel and what they are sensitive to, given the view they are asserting.

11. “It is also impossible, Bhikkhus, for all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins to draw up their five premises or frames of reference in support of their claim about the total annihilation of the already existing self at the moment of attaining *nibbāna*, without first having made contact, which in this case means that the contact itself is *directly influenced* by *how* they feel and what they are sensitive to, given the view they are asserting.

12. “It is also impossible, Bhikkhus, for all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins to draw up their forty-four premises or frames of reference in support of the claim about ‘the ultimate end,’ without first having made contact, which in this case means that the contact itself is *directly influenced* by *how* they feel and what they are sensitive to, given the view they are asserting.

13. “It is also impossible, Bhikkhus, for all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins to draw up their sixty-two premises or frames of reference in support of their claim about ‘the very beginning of the past’ or ‘the ultimate end,’ without first having made contact, which in this case means that the contact itself is *directly influenced* by *how* they feel and what they are sensitive to given the view they are asserting.

DITṬHIGATIKĀDHITṬHĀNAVATṬAKATHĀ: VIEWS KEEPING ONE IN THE CYCLES OF REBIRTH

1. “Therefore, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who draw up their four premises or frames of reference in support of their claim that the self and existence are both eternal and everlasting, each and every one of them, is making contact again and again, through the six sense doors.

“Thus, once contact has taken place, there arises a certain feeling, and it is due to being conditioned by that feeling that there develops craving, with its thirst for more. Now, due to being conditioned by that craving, the tendency to grab tenaciously manifests, which then leads to the arising of the desire for rebecoming. And, it is due to that desire to rebecome that birth takes place, which is itself the very condition for ageing, decay, sickness, and death, all of which are the very conditions for the surfacing of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, anguish, and despair.

2. “Similarly, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who draw up their four premises or frames of reference in support of their claim that the self and existence are both partially or quasi eternal and everlasting, each and every one of them, is making contact again and again, through the six sense doors.

“Thus, once contact has taken place, there arises a certain feeling, and it is due to being conditioned by that feeling that there develops craving, with its thirst for more. Now, due to being conditioned by that craving, the tendency to grab tenaciously manifests, which then leads to the arising of the desire for rebecoming. And, it is due to that desire to rebecome that birth takes place, which is itself the very condition for ageing, decay, sickness, and death, all of which are the very conditions for the surfacing of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, anguish, and despair.

3. “Similarly, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who draw up their four premises or frames of reference in support of their claim that the self and existence are finite or infinite, each and every one of them, is making contact again and again, through the six sense doors.

“Thus, once contact has taken place, there arises a certain feeling, and it is due to being conditioned by that feeling that there develops craving, with its thirst for more. Now, due to being conditioned by that craving, the tendency to grab tenaciously manifests, which then leads to the arising of the desire for rebecoming. And it is due to that desire to rebecome that birth takes place, which is itself the very condition for ageing, decay, sickness, and death, all of which are the very conditions for the surfacing of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, anguish, and despair.

4. “Similarly, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who draw up their four premises or frames of reference as they keep evading and ‘flip-flopping’ between their statements, each and every one of them, is making contact again and again, through the six sense doors.

“Thus, once contact has taken place, there arises a certain feeling, and it is due to being conditioned by that feeling that there develops craving, with its thirst for more. Now, due to being conditioned by that craving, the tendency to grab tenaciously manifests, which then leads to the arising of the desire for rebecoming. And, it is due to that desire to rebecome that birth takes place, which is itself the very condition for ageing, decay, sickness, and death, all of which are the very conditions for the surfacing of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, anguish, and despair.

5. “Similarly, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who draw up their two premises or frames of reference in support of their claim that the self and existence arose or came about simply by chance or originated accidentally, each and every one of them, is making contact again and again, through the six sense doors.

“Thus, once contact has taken place, there arises a certain feeling, and it is due to being conditioned by that feeling that there develops craving, with its thirst for more. Now, due to being conditioned by that craving, the tendency to grab tenaciously manifests, which then leads to the arising of the desire for rebecoming. And, it is due to that desire to rebecome that birth takes place, which is itself the very condition for ageing, decay, sickness, and death, all of which are the very conditions for the surfacing of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, anguish, and despair.

6. “Similarly, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who draw up their eighteen premises or frames of reference in support of their claim about the very beginning of the past, each and every one of them, is making contact again and again, through the six sense doors.

“Thus, once contact has taken place, there arises a certain feeling, and it is due to being conditioned by that feeling that there develops craving, with its thirst for more. Now, due to being conditioned by that craving, the tendency to grab tenaciously manifests, which then leads to the arising of the desire for rebecoming. And, it is due to that desire to rebecome that birth takes place, which is itself the very condition for ageing, decay, sickness, and death, all of which are the very conditions for the surfacing of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, anguish, and despair.

7. “Similarly, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who draw up their sixteen premises or frames of reference in support of their claim about the self still existing *and* being percipient beyond death, each and every one of them, is making contact again and again, through the six sense doors.

“Thus, once contact has taken place, there arises a certain feeling, and it is due to being conditioned by that feeling that there develops craving, with its thirst for more. Now, due to being conditioned by that craving, the tendency to grab tenaciously manifests, which then leads to the arising of the desire for rebecoming. And, it is due to that desire to rebecome that birth

takes place, which is itself the very condition for ageing, decay, sickness, and death, all of which are the very conditions for the surfacing of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, anguish, and despair.

8. “Similarly, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who draw up their eight premises or frames of reference in support of their claim about the existence of the self and that it becomes non-percipient beyond death, each and every one of them, is making contact again and again, through the six sense doors.

“Thus, once contact has taken place, there arises a certain feeling, and it is due to being conditioned by that feeling that there develops craving, with its thirst for more. Now, due to being conditioned by that craving, the tendency to grab tenaciously manifests, which then leads to the arising of the desire for rebecoming. And, it is due to that desire to rebecome that birth takes place, which is itself the very condition for ageing, decay, sickness, and death, all of which are the very conditions for the surfacing of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, anguish, and despair.

9. “Similarly, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who draw up their eight premises or frames of reference in support of their claim about the existence of the self which they claim becomes neither percipient nor non-percipient beyond death, each and every one of them, is making contact again and again, through the six sense doors.

“Thus, once contact has taken place, there arises a certain feeling, and it is due to being conditioned by that feeling that there develops craving, with its thirst for more. Now, due to being conditioned by that craving, the tendency to grab tenaciously manifests, which then leads to the arising of the desire for rebecoming. And, it is due to that desire to rebecome that birth takes place, which is itself the very condition for ageing, decay, sickness, and death, all of which are the very conditions for the surfacing of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, anguish, and despair.

10. “Similarly, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who draw up their seven premises or frames of reference in support of their claim about the total annihilation of the self at the moment of death, which they claim becomes non-percipient beyond death, each and every one of them, is making contact again and again, through the six sense doors.

“Thus, once contact has taken place, there arises a certain feeling, and it is due to being conditioned by that feeling that there develops craving, with its thirst for more. Now, due to being conditioned by that craving, the tendency to grab tenaciously manifests, which then leads to the arising of the desire for rebecoming. And, it is due to that desire to rebecome that birth takes place, which is itself the very condition for ageing, decay, sickness, and death, all of which are the very conditions for the surfacing of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, anguish, and despair.

11. “Similarly, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who draw up their five premises or frames of reference in support of their claim about the total annihilation of the already existing self at the moment of attaining *nibbāna*, while becoming non-percipient beyond death, each and every one of them, is making contact again and again, through the six sense doors.

“Thus, once contact has taken place, there arises a certain feeling, and it is due to being conditioned by that feeling that there develops craving, with its thirst for more. Now, due to being conditioned by that craving, the tendency to grab tenaciously manifests, which then leads to the arising of the desire for rebecoming. And, it is due to that desire to rebecome that birth takes place, which is itself the very condition for ageing, decay, sickness, and death, all of which are the very conditions for the surfacing of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, anguish, and despair.

12. “Similarly, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who draw up their forty-four premises or frames of reference in support of their claim about ‘the ultimate end,’ each and every one of them, is making contact again and again, through the six sense doors.

“Thus, once contact has taken place, there arises a certain feeling, and it is due to being conditioned by that feeling that there develops craving, with its thirst for more. Now, due to being conditioned by that craving, the tendency to grab tenaciously manifests, which then leads to the arising of the desire for rebecoming. And, it is due to that desire to rebecome that birth takes place, which is itself the very condition for ageing, decay, sickness, and death, all of which are the very conditions for the surfacing of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, anguish, and despair.

13. “Similarly, Bhikkhus, all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins who draw up their sixty-two premises or frames of reference in support of their claim about ‘the very beginning of the past’ or ‘the ultimate end,’ each and every one of them, is making contact again and again, through the six sense doors.

“Thus, once contact has taken place, there arises a certain feeling, and it is due to being conditioned by that feeling that there develops craving, with its thirst for more. Now, due to being conditioned by that craving, the tendency to grab tenaciously manifests, which then leads to the arising of the desire for rebecoming. And, it is due to that desire to rebecome that birth takes place, which is itself the very condition for ageing, decay, sickness, and death, all of which are the very conditions for the surfacing of sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, anguish, and despair.

5. VIVATṬAKATHĀDI – PUTTING AN END TO THE WHIRLPOOL OF REBIRTH

“Bhikkhus, I declare this to you!

“At any time, in my dispensation, a Bhikkhu who understands with wisdom the six bases of contact, as they really are, and how they come to be; fully comprehending how they keep arising and then vanishing; how there is the pursuit in seeking satisfaction through them; the dangerous perils that occur because of that pursuit, but especially understands the very escape that comes from stepping out from that cycle, that Bhikkhu, indeed, far excels all those others in his penetrating wisdom, for he has transcended all those views.

“Now, Bhikkhus, I say this, because all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins mentioned, are in fact speculating about the past, speculating about the future, and speculating about the past and the future combined; holding on to their rigid and baseless beliefs and wrong views, whether about the past or the future, meanwhile assuming, theorizing, and coming up with all kinds of interpretations and conjectures about the past and the future.

“Thus, all of these people are indeed trapped in this vast net, that is split into its sixty-two divisions. So, in whichever manner they come out explaining, presenting or declaring themselves, they still are fully and hopelessly trapped and completely imprisoned, in their own confinement within this very net of wrong views.

“Bhikkhus, imagine how a fisherman or a fisherman’s skilled apprentice were to go down into a small pool of water with a finely woven net. Then, he would start reflecting –

‘Whatever sizeable fish there are in this small pool, none will be able to escape me, as I will have them all caught in this net. And when I pull it out of the water, they will all come up with this net, all caught and confined in it and tightly packed, with no chance of escape for them, at all!’

“Now, that is exactly the case with all those recluses, religious practitioners, and brahmins, who go on asserting their various views, while they all are caught in this super-net of sixty-two wrong views.”

“Bhikkhus, know that The Tathāgata’s body you behold, stands utterly free, for the cord that used to bind Him to the cycles of rebecoming is completely severed and torn asunder.

“Now, so long as this body continues to live, Devas and humans, all will be able to witness and see it.

“But the moment this body breaks down and is no more, Devas and humans will no longer be able to witness or see it, ever again.

“Imagine, Bhikkhus, a cluster of mangoes that is still attached to its stalk. But the moment the stalk is cut clean, then all those mangoes in the cluster will fall along with the entire stalk.

“So too, Bhikkhus, is The Tathāgata’s body which you now behold, standing utterly free, for the cord that used to bind Him to the cycles of rebirth has been entirely cut off and is no more.

“Now, so long as this body continues to live, Devas and humans, all will be able to witness and see it.

“However, the moment this body expires and dies, Devas and humans will no longer be able to witness or see this body, ever again.”

Once this was said, the Venerable Ānanda addressed The Blessed One with hands in anjalī, as he exclaimed:

“Bhante, it is simply and absolutely amazing! It is just marvelous...and truly, so lovely!”

“Bhante, by what name shall we remember and recollect this beautiful discourse on the Dhamma?”

“Well, Ānanda, you may remember this discourse on the Dhamma as: ‘*The Net that Captures Meanings,*’ or ‘*The Net of Dhamma,*’ or ‘*Brahma’s Net That Captures One and All,*’ or “*The All-Encompassing Net of Wrong Views,*’ or ‘*The Ultimate Victory Won in Battle.*’

This is what The Blessed One said, and the Bhikkhus were deeply inspired and moved with delight, in hearing The Blessed One’s words.

Meanwhile, throughout the duration of The Blessed One giving this discourse on The Dhamma, the entire galaxy, with its countless star systems, shook and trembled.

(Here ends the Brahmajāla Sutta)



Sadhu

Sadhu

Sadhu