Snp 5.7 — Upasīvamāṇavapucchā Sutta — Questions of the Brahmin Upasīva

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.
Source: https://www.mindreleased.com/s/Sutta-Nipta_Bhikkhu_Candana_2026-2ggf.pdf#page=353
Source revision: ff6fa85ebaed058886a2d52b1b0d3e1b29eeca3b26995a23bff6a50066e84495
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Text

Snp. 5.7

Upasīvamāṇavapucchā Sutta

“Questions of the Brahmin Upasīva”

1069. Then the brahmin Upasīva said:

“O! Sākyan, I find myself utterly alone in my despair, stuck without any support, as I struggle to cross over and beyond the great flood. O! Guide with Pure Vision, please give me an object of meditation, with which I may finally be able to cross over this great flood.”

1070. And The Blessed One said:

“Carefully stay present, as you mindfully look straight at nothingness in the mind, depending on which you will safely be crossing the flood. Abandoning all sense stimulation, while maintaining noble silence within, by cutting off all conversations to an absolute minimum; always stand guard day and night, patiently keeping watch for the destruction of craving to take place.”

1071. And the brahmin Upasīva said:

“The one freed from passion towards all kinds of sensual pleasures and left with nothingness as his only support;

having abandoned and left behind every other state of being, along with everything else, who now looks at the release from perception as his ultimate liberation, would such a person continue to live, but no longer be subject to wandering in saṃsāra?”

1072. And The Blessed One replied:

“The one freed from passion towards all kinds of sensual pleasures and left with nothingness as his only support, Upasīva, such a person having already abandoned and left behind every other state of being, along with everything else, who now looks at the release from perception as his ultimate liberation, would continue to live, but no longer be subject to wandering in saṃsāra.”

1073. The brahmin Upasīva said:

“O! All Seeing One, if he were to continue living but without being susceptible to saṃsāra anymore, then, could his lifespan be extended to a vast number of years, during which time, when he attains Final Nibbāna, would his consciousness then simply disappear and vanish?”

1074. Then The Blessed One answered:

“Upasīva, just like when fire is blown out by the wind, no one could know as to what could be identified as a ‘flame’ anymore, likewise the Sage, once released from the ‘nāma group,’ he goes out of recognition once and for all, and could no longer be identified as a ‘Sage.’”

1075. Then the brahmin Upasīva said:

“By having gone out of recognition, does that mean he no longer exists, though? Or does he remain untouched, and thus continues living forever? May the Great Sage, please explain this to me, as he has known and understood it Himself, directly.”

1076. And The Blessed One said:

“Once he has gone out, Upasīva, he can neither be defined nor reckoned! And whatever means of measuring those around him might have used previously in describing him, all those become obsolete once he is Awakened, for all modes of description that are familiar to people no longer apply to him, anymore.

“This, because when all conditioned phenomena are totally removed from oneself, then all means of speaking about him, are also eradicated.”