SN 35.152 — What’s the Goal of the Spiritual Life?

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/sn35.152/en/sujato
Source revision: 3bc8665e0e28e70518eba94304a2fafcab80f933
License: CC0-1.0 — https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/

Text

Linked Discourses 35.152

15. The Old and the New

What’s the Goal of the Spiritual Life?

“Mendicants, if wanderers who follow another religion were to ask you: ‘Reverends, what’s the goal of leading the spiritual life under the ascetic Gotama?’

You should answer them: ‘The goal of leading the spiritual life under the Buddha is to completely understand suffering.’

If wanderers of other religions were to ask you: ‘Reverends, what is that suffering?’

You should answer them: ‘The eye is suffering. The goal of leading the spiritual life under the Buddha is to completely understand this. Sights … Eye consciousness … Eye contact … The pleasant, painful, or neutral feeling that arises dependent on eye contact is also suffering. The goal of leading the spiritual life under the Buddha is to completely understand this.

The ear … nose … tongue … body … mind … The pleasant, painful, or neutral feeling that arises dependent on mind contact is also suffering. The goal of leading the spiritual life under the Buddha is to completely understand this. This is that suffering. The goal of leading the spiritual life under the Buddha is to completely understand this.’

When questioned by wanderers of other religions, that’s how you should answer them.”