SN 48.42 — SN 48:42 Uṇṇābha the Brahman | Uṇṇābha Brāhmaṇa Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

Uṇṇābha the Brahman

Uṇṇābha Brāhmaṇa Sutta (SN 48:42)

Near Sāvatthī. Then Uṇṇābha the brahman went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, “Master Gotama, these five faculties have different domains, different ranges, and do not experience one another’s range or domain. Which five? The faculty of the eye, the faculty of the ear, the faculty of the nose, the faculty of the tongue, & the faculty of the body. Now, of these five faculties that have different domains, different ranges, and do not experience one another’s range or domain, what is their arbitrator? And what experiences their range & domain?”

“Brahman, these five faculties have different domains, different ranges, and do not experience one another’s range or domain. Which five? The faculty of the eye, the faculty of the ear, the faculty of the nose, the faculty of the tongue, & the faculty of the body. Now, of these five faculties that have different domains, different ranges, and do not experience one another’s range or domain, the intellect is their arbitrator. The intellect experiences their range & domain.”

“And what, Master Gotama, is the arbitrator of the intellect?”

“Mindfulness, brahman, is the arbitrator of the intellect.”

“And what, Master Gotama, is the arbitrator of mindfulness?”

“Release, brahman, is the arbitrator of mindfulness.”

“And what, Master Gotama, is the arbitrator of release?”

“Unbinding, brahman, is the arbitrator of release.”

“And what, Master Gotama, is the arbitrator of unbinding?”

“You’ve gone too far, brahman. You can’t keep holding on up to the limit of questions. For the holy life is lived to gain a footing in unbinding, to culminate in unbinding, to have unbinding as its final end.”

Then Uṇṇābha the brahman, delighting & rejoicing in the Blessed One’s words, rose from his seat, and—after bowing down to him & circumambulating him—left.

Then, not long after he had left, the Blessed One addressed the monks, “Suppose, monks, that there were a gabled house or gabled hall with a window on the east. When the sun rises and a sunbeam enters the window, where does it land?” [literally, “where is it established?”]

“On the western wall, lord.”

“In the same way, monks, Uṇṇābha the brahman’s conviction in the Tathāgata is settled, rooted, established, firm. It cannot be shaken by a contemplative or a brahman or a deva or a Māra or a Brahmā or anyone at all in the cosmos. If he were to die at this time, there is no fetter, fettered by which, Uṇṇābha the brahman would come back to this world.”

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 44; SN 12:64; SN 51:15