SN 48.53 — SN 48:53 The Learner | Sekha Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

The Learner

Sekha Sutta (SN 48:53)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Kosambī at Ghosita’s monastery. There he addressed the monks, “Monks, is there a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner [i.e., a person who has attained at least stream-entry, but has not yet reached arahantship], standing at the level of a learner, can discern that ‘I am a learner,’ and whereby a monk who is an adept [i.e., an arahant], standing at the level of an adept, can discern that ‘I am an adept’?”

“For us, lord, the teachings have the Blessed One as their root, their guide, & their arbitrator. It would be good if the Blessed One himself would explicate the meaning of this

statement. Having heard it from the Blessed One, the monks will remember it."

"In that case, monks, listen & pay close attention. I will speak."

"As you say, lord," the monks responded.

The Blessed One said, "There is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that 'I am a learner,' and whereby a monk who is an adept, standing at the level of an adept, can discern that 'I am an adept.'

"And what is the manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that 'I am a learner'? There is the case where a monk is a learner. He discerns, as it has come to be, that 'This is stress... This is the origination of stress... This is the cessation of stress... This is the path of practice leading to the cessation of stress.' This is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that 'I am a learner.'

"And further, the monk who is a learner reflects, 'Is there outside of this (Dhamma & Vinaya) any contemplative or brahman who teaches the true, genuine, & accurate Dhamma like the Blessed One?' And he discerns, 'No, there is no contemplative or brahman outside of this who teaches the true, genuine, & accurate Dhamma like the Blessed One.' This too is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that 'I am a learner.'

"And further, the monk who is a learner discerns the five faculties: the faculty of conviction... persistence... mindfulness... concentration... discernment. He sees clear through with discernment their destiny, excellence, rewards, & consummation, but he does not touch them with his body. This too is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is a learner, standing at the level of a learner, can discern that 'I am a learner.'

"And what is the manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is an adept, standing at the level of an adept, can discern that 'I am an adept'? There is the case where a monk who is an adept discerns the five faculties: the faculty of conviction... persistence... mindfulness... concentration... discernment. He touches with his body and sees clear through with discernment what their destiny, excellence, rewards, & consummation are. This is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is an adept, standing at the level of an adept, can discern that 'I am an adept.'

"And further, the monk who is an adept discerns the six sense faculties: the faculty of the eye... ear... nose...tongue... body... intellect. He discerns, 'These six sense faculties will disband entirely, everywhere, & in every way without remainder, and no other set of six sense faculties will arise anywhere or in any way.' This too is a manner of reckoning whereby a monk who is an adept, standing at the level of an adept, can discern that 'I am an adept.'"

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: DN 16; MN 48; AN 10:75