**Suttas on the Five Aggregates**

**SN 22:56:** “So long as I did not directly know as they really are the five aggregates subject to clinging in four phases, I did not claim to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment in this world…. But when I directly knew all this as it really is, then I claimed to have awakened to the unsurpassed perfect enlightenment. And how, monks, are there four phases? I directly knew form, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation. I directly knew feeling … perception … volitional formations … consciousness, its origin, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation.” (See table below.)

**SN 22:82**

(1) “Aren’t these the five aggregates subject to clinging, Bhante: that is, the form aggregate subject to clinging, the feeling aggregate subject to clinging, the perception aggregate subject to clinging, the volitional formations aggregate subject to clinging, the consciousness aggregate subject to clinging?” – “They are, monk.”

(2) “In what way, Bhante, does the designation ‘aggregates’ apply to the aggregates?”

“Whatever kind of form there is, monk, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near: this is called the form aggregate. Whatever kind of feeling there is, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near: this is called the feeling aggregate. Whatever kind of perception there is, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near: this is called the perception aggregate. Whatever kind of volitional formations there are, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near: this is called the volitional formations aggregate. Whatever kind of consciousness there is, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near: this is called the consciousness aggregate. It is in this way, monk, that the designation ‘aggregates’ applies to the aggregates.”

Saying, “Good, Bhante,” that monk delighted and rejoiced in the Blessed One’s statement. Then he asked the Blessed One a further question:

(3) “But, Bhante, in what are these five aggregates subject to clinging rooted?”

“These five aggregates subject to clinging, monk, are rooted in desire.”

(4) “Is that clinging, Bhante, the same as these five aggregates subject to clinging, or is the clinging something apart from the five aggregates subject to clinging?”

“That clinging is neither the same as the five aggregates subject to clinging, nor is the clinging something apart from the five aggregates subject to clinging. But rather, the desire and lust for them, that is the clinging there.”

(5) “Bhante, how should one know and see so that, in regard to this body with consciousness and in regard to all external objects, I-making, mine-making, and the tendency to conceit no longer occur within?”

“Any kind of form whatsoever, monk, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near—one sees all form as it really is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’

“Any kind of feeling whatsoever … Any kind of perception whatsoever … Any kind of volitional formations whatsoever … Any kind of consciousness whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near—one sees all consciousness as it really is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’

“When one knows and sees thus, monk, then in regard to this body with consciousness and in regard to all external objects, I-making, mine-making, and the tendency to conceit no longer occur within.”

**SN 22:45**

“Monks, form is impermanent. What is impermanent is suffering. What is suffering is nonself. What is nonself should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ When one sees this thus as it really is with correct wisdom, the mind becomes dispassionate and is liberated from the taints by nonclinging.

“Feeling is impermanent…. Perception is impermanent…. Volitional formations are impermanent…. Consciousness is impermanent. What is impermanent is suffering. What is suffering is nonself. What is nonself should be seen as it really is with correct wisdom thus: ‘This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.’ When one sees this thus as it really is with correct wisdom, the mind becomes dispassionate and is liberated from the taints by nonclinging.”

**Table on The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandhā)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Aggregate | Characteristic  (SN 22:79) | Contents  (SN 22:56, 57) | Condition  (SN 22:56, 57) | Additional  Conditions  (Commentaries) | Simile  (SN 22:95) |
| form  (*rūpa*) | “It is deformed (*ruppati*) by heat, cold, sun, wind, etc.” | Four great elements and form derived from the four elements | nutriment | ignorance  craving  kamma | a lump of foam |
| feeling  (*vedanā*) | “It feels: pleasure,  pain, neither pain nor pleasure.” | 6 classes of feeling: feeling born of contact through eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind | contact | ignorance  craving  kamma | a water bubble |
| perception  (*saññā*) | “It perceives:  blue, yellow, red, white.” | 6 classes of perception: perception of forms, sounds, odors, tastes, tactiles, and mental phenomena | contact | ignorance  craving  kamma | a shim­mering mirage |
| volitional activities  (constructive activities)  (*saṅkhārā*) | “They construct the constructed; therefore they are called constructive activities: they construct material form as material form etc.” | 6 classes of volition: volition regarding forms, sounds, odors, tastes, tactile objects, and mental phenomena | contact | ignorance  craving  kamma | the trunk of a banana tree |
| consciousness  (*viññāṇa*) | “It cognizes: cognize sour, bitter, sweet, salty, etc.” | 6 classes of consciousness: eye-consciousness, ear-, nose-, tongue-, body-, and mind-consciousness | name-and-form  (mentality-materiality)  (nāma-rūpa) | ignorance  craving  kamma | a magical illusion |

**Suttas on the Six Sense Bases**

The Six Internal and External Sense Bases

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Internal sense bases | External sense bases | Types of consciousness arisen from the sense bases |
| eye | forms | eye-consciousness |
| ear | sounds | ear-consciousness |
| nose | smells | nose-consciousness |
| tongue | tastes | tongue-consciousness |
| body | tactile objects | body-consciousness |
| mind | mental objects | mind-consciousness |

**SN 56:14**

“And what, monks, is the noble truth of suffering? It should be said: ‘The six internal sense bases.’ What six? The eye base, the ear base, the nose base, the tongue base, the body base, the mind base.”

**SN 35:26: The All**

“Monks, without directly knowing and fully understanding the all, without developing dispassion toward it and abandoning it, one is incapable of destroying suffering.

“And what, monks, is that all? Without directly knowing and fully understanding the eye, without developing dispassion toward it and abandoning it, one is incapable of destroying suffering. Without directly knowing and fully understanding forms … eye-consciousness … eye-contact … and whatever feeling arises with eye-contact as condition … without developing dispassion toward it and abandoning it, one is incapable of destroying suffering.

“Without directly knowing and fully understanding the ear … the mind … and whatever feeling arises with mind-contact as condition … without developing dispassion toward it and abandoning it, one is incapable of destroying suffering.

“This, monks, is the all. Without directly knowing and fully understanding this all … one is incapable of destroying suffering.

**SN 35:28: The Fire Sermon**

“Monks, all is burning. And what is the all that is burning? The eye is burning, forms are burning, eye-consciousness is burning, eye-contact is burning, and whatever feeling arises with eye-contact as condition—whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant—that too is burning. The ear is burning … The mind is burning … and whatever feeling arises with mind-contact as condition—whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant—that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hatred, with the fire of delusion; burning with birth, aging, and death; with sorrow, lamentation, pain, dejection, and despair, I say.

“Seeing thus, monks, the instructed noble disciple becomes disenchanted with the eye … with the mind … with whatever feeling arises with mind-contact as condition…. Becoming disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion [his mind] is liberated. When it is liberated there comes the knowledge: ‘It’s liberated.’ He understands: ‘Destroyed is birth, the spiritual life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming back to any state of being.’”

**SN 35:85: The World Is Empty**

Venerable Ānanda approached the Blessed One and said to him: “Bhante, it is said, ‘Empty is the world, empty is the world.’ In what way is this said?”

“It is, Ānanda, because it is empty of self and of what belongs to self that it is said, ‘Empty is the world.’ And what is empty of self and of what belongs to self? The eye is empty of self and of what belongs to self. Forms are empty of self and of what belongs to self. Eye-consciousness is empty of self and of what belongs to self. Eye-contact is empty of self and of what belongs to self…. Whatever feeling arises with mind-contact as condition—whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant—that too is empty of self and of what belongs to self. It is because it is empty of self and of what belongs to self that it is said, ‘Empty is the world.’”

**SN 35:147–149 combined: The Way to Attain Nibbāna**

“Monks, I will teach you the way to attain nibbāna. And what, monks, is the way to attain nibbāna? Here, one sees the eye as impermanent, forms as impermanent, eye-consciousness as impermanent, eye-contact as impermanent; one sees as impermanent whatever feeling arises with eye-contact as condition, whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant.

“One sees the ear as impermanent … the mind as impermanent, mental objects as impermanent, mind-consciousness as impermanent, mind-contact as impermanent; one sees as impermanent whatever feeling arises with mind-contact as condition, whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant. This, monks, is the way to attain Nibbāna.”

“One sees the eye as suffering … one sees as suffering whatever feeling arises with mind-contact as condition, whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant. This, monks, is the way to attain Nibbāna.

“One sees the eye as nonself … one sees as nonself whatever feeling arises with mind-contact as condition, whether pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant. This, monks, is the way to attain Nibbāna.”