

ĀLAVAKA SUTTA

The Discourse on Ālavaka
(Sutta Nipāta)

Evaṃ me sutam,

Ekam samayaṃ Bhagavā Ālaviyaṃ viharati Ālavakassa yakkhassa bhavane. Atha kho Ālavako yakkho yena Bhagavā tenupasaṅkami, upasaṅkamtvā Bhagavantam etadavoca: “Nikkhama, samaṇā”ti. “Sādhāvuso”ti Bhagavā nikkhāmi. “Pavisa samaṇā”ti. “Sādhāvuso”ti Bhagavā pāvisi. Dutiyampi kho Ālavako yakkho Bhagavantam etadavoca: “Nikkhama Samaṇā”ti. “Sādhāvuso”ti Bhagavā nikkhāmi. “Pavisa Samaṇā”ti. “Sādhāvuso”ti Bhagavā pāvisi. Tatiyampi kho Ālavako yakkho Bhagavantam etadavoca: “Nikkhama Samaṇā”ti. “Sādhāvuso”ti Bhagavā nikkhāmi. “Pavisa Samaṇā”ti. “Sādhāvuso”ti Bhagavā pāvisi.

Thus it has been heard by me:

Once upon a time the Lord was sojourning in Ālavi at the dwelling place of the yakkha Ālavaka. Then the yakkha Ālavaka approached where the Lord was. Having approached (he) spoke to the Lord thus: “Get out, recluse.” (Saying) “Yes friend,” the Lord got out. “Enter, recluse” (said Ālavaka). (Saying) “Yes friend,” the Lord entered. For the second time also, indeed, the yakkha Ālavaka spoke to the Lord thus: “Get out, recluse.” (Saying) “Yes friend,” the Lord got out. “Enter, recluse” (said Ālavaka). (Saying) “Yes friend,” the Lord entered. For the third time also, indeed, the yakkha Ālavaka spoke to the Lord thus: “Get out, recluse.” (Saying) “Yes friend,” the Lord got out. “Enter, recluse” (said Ālavaka). (Saying) “Yes friend,” the Lord entered.

Catutthampi kho Ālavako yakkho Bhagavantam etadavoca: “Nikkhama Samaṇā”ti. “Nakhvāham āvuso nikkhamissāmi, Yan te karaṇīyaṃ taṃ karohi”ti. “Pañham taṃ Samaṇa pucchissāmi. Sace me na vyākarissasi cittaṃ vā te khipissāmi, hadayaṃ vā te phālessāmi, pādesu vā gahetvā pāraṅgāyaṃ khipissāmi”ti. “Nakhvāhantaṃ āvuso passāmi sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake sassamaṇabrāhmaṇiyā pajāya sadevamanussāya yo me cittaṃ vā khipeyya hadayaṃ vā phāleyya pādesu vā gahetvā pāraṅgāya khipeyya apica tvaṃ āvuso puccha yadākaṅkhasi”ti. Atha kho Ālavako yakkho Bhagavantam gāthāya ajjhabhāsi:

For the fourth time also indeed, the yakkha Ālavaka spoke to the Lord thus: “Get out, recluse.” (The Lord replied) “I shall not indeed, friend, get out. Whatever should be done by you, do that.” (Ālavaka said) “I shall, O recluse, ask you a question. If you do not explain, I shall either upset your mind or break your heart asunder or I shall take you by the feet and throw (you) on to the other side of the river.” (The Lord said) “I do not, indeed, friend, see in the world together with the devās, together with the mārās, together with the brahmās, among beings together with the recluses and brahmanās with its devās and human beings, anyone who could upset my mind or break (my) heart asunder or take (me) by the feet and throw (me) to the other side of the river. Moreover, friend, question (me) whatever you desire.” Then indeed, the yakkha Ālavaka spoke to the Lord in a stanza:

- 1. Kiṃsūdhā vittam purisassa seṭṭham?
Kiṃsū suciṇṇo sukhamāvahāti?**

**Kimsū have sādutaraṃ rasānaṃ?
Kathaṃ jīviṃ jīvitamāhu seṭṭhanti?**

In this (world) what wealth to a man is best? What, when well practised bring about happiness? What indeed, is the sweetest of tastes? What do they say is the best life of a living man?

- 2. Saddhīdha vittaṃ purisassa seṭṭhaṃ,
Dhammo suciṇṇo sukhamāvahāti,
Saccaṃ have sādutaraṃ rasānaṃ,
Paññājīviṃ jīvitamāhu seṭṭhanti.**

In this (world) faith is the best wealth to a man. Righteousness well practised brings about happiness. Truth indeed, is the sweetest of tastes. Best, they say, is the life of a man living with wisdom.”

- 3. Kathaṃsu taratī oghaṃ?
Kathaṃsu taratī aṇṇavaṃ?
Kathaṃsu dukkhaṃ acceti?
Kathaṃsu parisujjhati?**

How does one cross the current? How does one cross the sea (of rebirth)? How does one get beyond suffering? How is one purified?

- 4. Saddhāya taratī oghaṃ,
Appamādena aṇṇavaṃ,
Viriyena dukkhaṃ acceti,
Paññāya parisujjhati.**

With faith one crosses the current. With diligence (one crosses) the sea. With effort one gets beyond suffering. With wisdom one is purified.

- 5. Kathaṃsu labhate paññaṃ?
Kathaṃsu vindate dhaṇaṃ?
Kathaṃsu kittiṃ pappoti?
Kathaṃ mittāni ganthati?
Asmā lokā paraṃ lokam
Kathaṃ pecca na socati?**

How does one obtain wisdom? How does one get wealth? How does one attain fame? How does one bind friends? From this world to the next world, having gone, how does one not grieve?”

- 6. Saddahāno arahataṃ,**

**Dhammaṃ Nibbāṇapattiyā,
Sussūsā labhate paññaṃ,
Appamatto vicakkhaṇo.**

Having faith in the Worthy Ones (i.e. Arahants), Doctrine, for the attainment of Nibbāna, (and) through desire to hear (that doctrine), One obtains wisdom, with diligence and attention.

- 7. Patirūpakārī dhuravā,
Uṭṭhātā vindate dhanaṃ,
Saccena kittiṃ pappoti,
Dadaṃ mittāni ganthati.**

Doing what is proper, with responsibility, being energetic, one gets wealth. One attains fame through truth. The giver binds friends.

- 8. Yassete caturo dhammā,
Saddhassa gharamesino,
Saccaṃ dhammo dhitī cāgo,
Sa ve pecca na socati.**

(If) to one (there are) those four qualities, to (that) faithful householder, (namely) truth, self-control, courage, generosity, such (a person) indeed does not grieve after having gone (from this life).

- 9. Ingha aññepi pucchassu,
Puthu samaṇabrāhmaṇe,
Yadi saccā damā cāgā,
Khantiyā bhiyyo na vijjati.”**

Then ask others also, (ask) the many recluses and brahmanas, if other than truth, self-control, generosity, forbearance, there is not seen anything further”

- 10. Kathannudāni puccheyyaṃ,
Puthu samaṇabrāhmaṇe?
Sohaṃ ajja pajānāmi,
Yo attho samparāyiko.**

Why should I ask now, the many (other) recluses and brahmanas? today I do know what that next world's benefit is.

- 11. Atthāya vata me Buddho,
Vāsāyālavimāgamā,
Sohaṃ ajja pajānāmi,
Yattha dinnāṃ mahapphalaṃ.**

Indeed, for my benefit, the Buddha did come to sojourn in Ālavi, (and) I know today where what is given brings much fruit.

**12. So ahaṃ vicarissāmi,
Gāmā gāmaṃ purā puram
Namassamāno Sambuddham,
Dhammassa ca sudhammatan” ti.**

(and) I shall wander from village to village, from city to city, paying homage to the Fully Enlightened One and the good qualities of the Dhamma.”

Evaṃ vatvā Ālavako yakkho Bhagavantaṃ etadavoca. “Abhikkantaṃ bho Gotama, abhikkantaṃ bho Gotama, seyyathāpi bho Gotama nikkujjitaṃ vā ukkujjeyya, paṭicchannaṃ vā vivareyya, mūlhasa vā maggaṃ ācikkheyya, andhakāre vā telapajjotaṃ dhāreyya ‘Cakkhumanto rūpāni dakkhintīti, evamevaṃ bhotā Gotamena anekapariyāyena Dhammo pakāsito, esāhaṃ bhagavantaṃ Gotamaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi Dhammañca Bhikkhusaṅghaṃca, upāsakaṃ maṃ bhavaṃ Gotamo dhāretu ajjatagge pāṇupetaṃ saraṇaṃ gatan” ti.

Having said thus, the yakkha Ālavaka spoke to the Lord thus: “It is extremely wonderful, O respectable Gotama, it is extremely wonderful, O respectable Gotama. Just as, O respectable Gotama, an overturned (vessel) is turned up or what is closed is opened up or (just as) one would show the road to one who has lost his way or (just as) one would hold an oil lamp in the dark wishing ‘May those who have eyes see forms,’ in similar manner the Dhamma has been declared by the respectable Gotama in many ways. (And) that I, take refuge in the respectable Gotama and the Dhamma and the Bhikkhu Sangha. May the respectable Gotama consider me as a lay disciple, who has from today till life lasts taken refuge.

**Etena sacca vajjena sotthi te (me) hotu sabbadā!
Etena sacca vajjena sabba rogo vinassatu!
Etena sacca vajjena hotu te (me) jayamangalaṃ!**

By the firm determination of this truth,
may you (I) be well!
By the firm determination of this truth,
may you (I) be healthy!
By the firm determination of this truth,
may joyous victory be yours (mine)!