

ĀLAVAKA SUTTA

The Discourse on Ālavaka
(Sutta Nipāta)

Evaṁ me sutam,

Ekaṁ samayaṁ Bhagavā Ālaviyam viharati Ālavakassa yakkhassa bhavane. Atha kho Ālavako yakkho yena Bhagavā tenupasaṅkami, upasaṅkamitvā Bhagavantam etadavoca: “Nikkhama, samaṇā”ti. “Sādhāvuso”ti Bhagavā nikkhomi. “Pavisa samaṇā”ti. “Sādhāvuso”ti Bhagavā pāvisi. Dutiyampi kho Ālavako yakkho Bhagavantam etadavoca: “Nikkhama Samaṇā”ti. “Sādhāvuso”ti Bhagavā nikkhomi. “Pavisa Samaṇā”ti. “Sādhāvuso”ti Bhagavā pāvisi. Tatiyampi kho Ālavako yakkho Bhagavantam etadavoca: “Nikkhama Samaṇā”ti. “Sādhāvuso”ti Bhagavā nikkhomi. “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 nikhamissāmi, Yan te karaṇīyam tam karohī”ti. “Pañham tam Samaṇa pucchissāmi. Sace me na vyākarissasi cittam vā te khipissāmi, hadayam vā te phālessāmi, pādesu vā gahetvā pāragaṅgāyam khipissāmī”ti. “Nakhvāhantam āvuso passāmi sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake sassamaṇabrahmaṇiyā pajāya sadevamanussāya yo me cittam vā khipeyya hadayam vā phāleyya pādesu vā gahetvā pāragaṅgāya khipeyya apica tvam āvuso puccha yadākaṅkhasī”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. Kimsūdha vittam purisassa setṭham?
Kimsū suciṇo sukhamāvahāti?

Kimsū have sādutaram rasānam?
Katham jīvīm jīvitamāhu setṭhanti?

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 vittam purisassa setṭham,**
Dhammo suciṇo sukhamāvahāti,
Saccam have sādutaram rasānam,
Paññājīvīm jīvitamāhu setṭhanti.

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 ogham?**
Kathaṃsu tarati aṇṇavam?
Kathaṃsu dukkham 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 ogham,**
Appamādena aṇṇavam,
Viriyena dukkham 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 paññam?**
Kathaṃsu vindate dhanam?
Kathaṃsu kittim pappoti?
Kathaṃ mittāni ganthati?
Asmā lokā param 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,**

Dhammañ Nibbāṇapattiya,
Sussūsā labhate paññam,
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 dhanam,
Saccena kittim pappoti,
Dadam 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,
Saccam 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 samaṇabrahmaṇe,
Yadi saccā damā cāgā,
Khantyā bhiyyo na vijjati.”

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

10. **Kathannudāni puccheyyam,**
Puthu samaṇabrahmaṇe?
Soham 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,
Soham ajja pajānāmi,
Yattha dinnañ mahapphalam.

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 aham vicarissāmi,
Gāmā gāmaṇ purā puraṇ
Namassamāno Sambuddhaṇ,
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.”

Evam vatvā Ālavako yakkho Bhagavantam etadavoca. “Abhikkantaṇ bho Gotama, abhikkantaṇ bho Gotama, seyyathāpi bho Gotama nikkujjitaṇ vā ukkujjeyya, paṭicchannam vā vivareyya, mūlhassa vā maggam ācikkheyya, andhakāre vā telapajjotam dhāreyya ‘Cakkhumanto rūpāni dakkhintīti, evamevaṇ bhotā Gotamena anekapariyāyena Dhammo pakāsito, esāhaṇ bhagavantam Gotamam saraṇam gacchāmi Dhammañca Bhikkhusaṅghañca, upāsakaṇ maṇ bhavaṇ Gotamo dhāretu ajjatagge pāṇupetam saraṇam 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 Bhikku 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) jayamangalam!**

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)!