

Ākaṅkheyya Sutta (MN 6)

If One Wishes

Translated by Bhante Suddhāso

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvatti, at Jeta's Grove, in Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. There the Blessed One addressed the monks: "Monks!" "Auspicious sir," those monks replied to the Blessed One. The Blessed One said this:

"Monks, live with¹ virtue, with adherence to the Pātimokkha; live with restraint in accordance with the Pātimokkha, with good behavior, seeing danger in even small errors; train yourselves in the training-rules.

"Monks, if a monk wishes, 'May I be loved, appreciated, respected, and honored by my fellow spiritual practitioners,' then he should be completely virtuous, be devoted to internal mental serenity, not neglect Jhāna, be committed² to insight, and live in an empty dwelling.

"Monks, if a monk wishes, 'May I acquire robes, food, dwellings, and medicine,' then he should be completely virtuous, be devoted to internal mental serenity, not neglect Jhāna, be committed to insight, and live in an empty dwelling.

"Monks, if a monk wishes, 'When I use those robes, food, dwellings, and medicine, may it be very fruitful and beneficial for the donors,' then he should be completely virtuous, be devoted to internal mental serenity, not neglect Jhāna, be committed to insight, and live in an empty dwelling.

"Monks, if a monk wishes, 'When my deceased family members and relatives remember me with a clear mind, may it be very fruitful and beneficial for them,' then he should be completely virtuous, be devoted to internal mental serenity, not neglect Jhāna, be committed to insight, and live in an empty dwelling.

"Monks, if a monk wishes, 'May I overcome discontent and preference, may discontent not overcome me, and may I continue defeating discontent whenever it arises,' then he should be completely virtuous, be devoted to internal mental serenity, not neglect Jhāna, be committed to insight, and live in an empty dwelling.

"Monks, if a monk wishes, 'May I overcome fear and terror, may fear and terror not overcome me, and may I continue defeating fear and terror whenever they arise,' then he should be completely virtuous, be devoted to internal mental serenity, not neglect Jhāna, be committed to insight, and live in an empty dwelling.

"Monks, if a monk wishes, 'May I easily gain the four Jhānas, aspects of the higher mind which are pleasant abidings here and now, without trouble or difficulty,' then he should be completely virtuous, be devoted to internal mental serenity, not neglect Jhāna, be committed to insight, and live in an empty dwelling.

1 *Sampanna*. This could be rendered "commitment to," as it is below.

2 Again, *sampanna*.

“Monks, if a monk wishes, ‘May I live having personally contacted those peaceful, non-physical liberations which transcend physicality,’ then he should be completely virtuous, be devoted to internal mental serenity, not neglect Jhāna, be committed to insight, and live in an empty dwelling.

“Monks, if a monk wishes, ‘With the complete elimination of three fetters, may I be a Stream-Enterer, one who is not capable of downfall, one who will certainly reach complete Awakening,’ then he should be completely virtuous, be devoted to internal mental serenity, not neglect Jhāna, be committed to insight, and live in an empty dwelling.

“Monks, if a monk wishes, ‘With the complete elimination of three fetters and the attenuation of lust and hatred, may I be a Once-Returner, one who will return just one to this world and reach the end of suffering,’ then he should be completely virtuous, be devoted to internal mental serenity, not neglect Jhāna, be committed to insight, and live in an empty dwelling.

“Monks, if a monk wishes, ‘With the complete elimination of the five lower fetters, may I be a celestial being³, there to attain enlightenment⁴ without returning from that world,’ then he should be completely virtuous, be devoted to internal mental serenity, not neglect Jhāna, be committed to insight, and live in an empty dwelling.

“Monks, if a monk wishes, ‘May I manifest various kinds of psychic powers: having been one, may I be many; having been many, may I be one; may I appear and disappear; may I move unobstructed through walls, fences, and mountains as if it was space; may I dive in and out of the earth as if it was water; may I move across water without sinking, as if it was earth; may I move cross-legged through the sky like a bird; with my hand may I touch and hold the sun and moon, so powerful and majestic; may I personally extend my authority as far as the Brahma-world,’ then he should be completely virtuous, be devoted to internal mental serenity, not neglect Jhāna, be committed to insight, and live in an empty dwelling.

“Monks, if a monk wishes, ‘With the divine ear-element, which is purified and transcends human hearing, may I hear both kinds of sounds – celestial and human, far and near,’ then he should be completely virtuous, be devoted to internal mental serenity, not neglect Jhāna, be committed to insight, and live in an empty dwelling.

“Monks, if a monk wishes, ‘Using my own mind, may I know the minds of other beings and other individuals: may I know a lustful mind as a lustful mind, or a lust-free mind as a lust-free mind; may I know a hate-filled mind as a hate-filled mind, or a hate-free mind as a hate-free mind; may I know a delusional mind as a delusional mind, or a delusion-free mind as a delusion-free mind; may I know a contracted mind as a contracted mind, or a scattered mind as a scattered mind; may I know an expanded mind as an expanded mind, or an unexpanded mind as an unexpanded mind; may I know a surpassable mind as a surpassable mind, or an unsurpassable mind as an unsurpassable mind; may I know a

3 *Opaṇātika*. Lit. “re-appearer.” This refers to the devas who come into being through spontaneous genesis (that is, without arising in a womb, egg, or any other visible form of birth).

4 *Parinibbāyī*. Lit. “one who attains complete Nibbāna.”

concentrated mind as a concentrated mind, or an unconcentrated mind as an unconcentrated mind; may I know a liberated mind as a liberated mind, or a non-liberated mind as a non-liberated mind,' then he should be completely virtuous, be devoted to internal mental serenity, not neglect Jhāna, be committed to insight, and live in an empty dwelling.

“Monks, if a monk wishes, ‘May I remember numerous past lives – one life, two lives, three lives... a hundred lives... a hundred thousand lives... many eons of universal expansion... many eons of universal contraction... many eons of universal expansion and contraction – “At that place I had this name, this family, this appearance, this food, this experience of pleasure and pain, this death. Falling from there, I appeared over there, where I had that name, that family, that appearance, that food, that experience of pleasure and pain, that death. Falling from there, I appeared here.” In this way, may I remember numerous past lives and their characteristics in detail,’ then he should be completely virtuous, be devoted to internal mental serenity, not neglect Jhāna, be committed to insight, and live in an empty dwelling.

“Monks, if a monk wishes, ‘With divine vision, which is purified and transcends human vision, may I see beings falling and appearing – inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in good places and bad places; may I understand how beings fare according to their actions: “These honorable beings engaged in physical, verbal, and mental misconduct; they disparaged noble beings, they held wrong view, and they based their actions on wrong view. When they were separated from their bodies after death, they appeared in deprivation, a bad destination, downfall – hell. However, these honorable beings engaged in good physical, verbal, and mental conduct; they did not disparage noble beings, they held right view, and they based their actions on right view. When they were separated from their bodies after death, they appeared in a good destination – a heavenly world.” In this way, with divine vision, which is pure and surpasses human vision, may I see beings falling and appearing – inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, in good places and bad places; may I understand how beings fare according to their actions,’ then he should be completely virtuous, be devoted to internal mental serenity, not neglect Jhāna, be committed to insight, and live in an empty dwelling.

“Monks, if a monk wishes, ‘With the elimination of the corruptions, may I here and now reach and dwell in the corruption-free mental liberation – liberation by wisdom – having personally realized⁵ it with higher knowledge,’ then he should be completely virtuous, be devoted to internal mental serenity, not neglect Jhāna, be committed to insight, and live in an empty dwelling.

“Monks, ‘Live with virtue, with adherence to the Pātimokkha; live with restraint in accordance with the Pātimokkha, with good behavior, seeing danger in even small errors; train yourselves in the training-rules’ - this is what was said, and this is what it refers to.”

This is what the Blessed One said. Satisfied, those monks delighted in the Blessed One’s speech.

5 *Sacchikatvā*. Lit. “having seen it with my own eyes.”