AN 3.72 — Ajivaka Sutta: To the Fatalists' Student

English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

I have heard that on one occasion Ven. Ananda was staying in Kosambi at Ghosita's monastery. Then a certain householder, a disciple of the Fatalists (Ajivakas), went to him and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to Ven. Ananda, "Among us, sir, whose Dhamma is well-taught? Who has practiced well in this world? Who in the world is well-gone?"

"In that case, householder, I will question you in return. Answer as you see fit. Now, what do you think: those who teach a Dhamma for the abandoning of passion, for the abandoning of aversion, for the abandoning of delusion — is their Dhamma well-taught or not? Or how does this strike you?"

"Sir, those who teach a Dhamma for the abandoning of passion, for the abandoning of aversion, for the abandoning of delusion — their Dhamma is well-taught. That's how it strikes me."

"And what do you think, householder: those who have practiced for the abandoning of passion, for the abandoning of aversion, for the abandoning of delusion — have they practiced well in this world or not? Or how does this strike you?"

"Sir, those who have practiced for the abandoning of passion, for the abandoning of aversion, for the abandoning of delusion — they have practiced well in this world. That's how it strikes me."

"And what do you think, householder: those whose passion is abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising; those whose aversion is abandoned... whose delusion is abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising: are they, in this world, well-gone or not? Or how does this strike you?"

"Sir, those whose passion... aversion... delusion is abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising: they, in this world, are well-gone. That's how it strikes me."

"In this way, householder, you have answered yourself: 'Those who teach a Dhamma for the abandoning of passion, for the abandoning of aversion, for the abandoning of delusion — their Dhamma is well-taught. Those who have practiced for the abandoning of passion, for the abandoning of aversion, for the abandoning of delusion — they have practiced well in this world. Those whose passion... aversion... delusion is abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising: they, in this world, are well-gone.'"

"How amazing, sir. How astounding, that there is neither extolling of one's own Dhamma nor deprecation of another's, but just the teaching of the Dhamma in its proper sphere, speaking to the point without mentioning oneself.

"You, venerable sir, teach the Dhamma for the abandoning of passion... aversion... delusion. Your Dhamma is well-taught. You have practiced for the abandoning of passion... aversion... delusion. You have practiced well in this world. Your passion... aversion... delusion is abandoned, its root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. You, in this world, are well-gone.

"Magnificent, Master Ananda! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to point out the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has Master Ananda — through many lines of reasoning — made the Dhamma clear. I go to the Buddha for refuge, to the Dhamma, & to the community of monks. May Master Ananda remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge from this day forward, for life."

See also:Sn 4.8; AN 3.78; AN 5.159; DN 16 (the Buddha's answer to Subhadda's question).