AN 8.26 — AN 8:26 To Jīvaka (On Being a Lay Follower) | Jīvaka Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

To Jīvaka (On Being a Lay Follower)

Jīvaka Sutta (AN 8:26)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Rājagaha in Jīvaka's Mango Grove. Then Jīvaka Komārabhacca went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to the Blessed One, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: "Lord, to what extent is one a lay follower?"

"Jīvaka, when one has gone to the Buddha for refuge, has gone to the Dhamma for refuge, and has gone to the Saṅgha for refuge, then to that extent is one a lay follower."

“And to what extent, venerable sir, is one a virtuous lay follower?”

“Jīvaka, when a lay follower abstains from taking life, from stealing, from sexual misconduct, from lying, and from fermented & distilled drinks that lead to heedlessness, then to that extent is one a virtuous lay follower.”

“And to what extent, venerable sir, is one a lay follower who practices for his own benefit but not that of others?”

“Jīvaka, when a lay follower himself is consummate in conviction but does not encourage others in the consummation of conviction; when he himself is consummate in virtue but does not encourage others in the consummation of virtue; when he himself is consummate in generosity but does not encourage others in the consummation of generosity; when he himself desires to see the monks but does not encourage others to see the monks; when he himself wants to hear the true Dhamma but does not encourage others to hear the true Dhamma; when he himself habitually remembers the Dhamma he has heard but does not encourage others to remember the Dhamma; when he himself explores the meaning of the Dhamma he has heard but does not encourage others to explore the meaning; when he himself, knowing both the Dhamma & its meaning, practices the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma, but does not encourage others to practice the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma—then to that extent he is a lay follower who practices for his own benefit but not for the benefit of others.”

“And to what extent, venerable sir, is one a lay follower who practices both for his own benefit & the benefit of others?”

“Jīvaka, when a lay follower himself is consummate in conviction and encourages others in the consummation of conviction; when he himself is consummate in virtue and encourages others in the consummation of virtue; when he himself is consummate in generosity and encourages others in the consummation of generosity; when he himself desires to see the monks and encourages others to see the monks; when he himself wants to hear the true Dhamma and encourages others to hear the true Dhamma; when he himself habitually remembers the Dhamma he has heard and encourages others to remember the Dhamma; when he himself explores the meaning of the Dhamma he has heard and encourages others to explore the meaning; when he himself, knowing both the Dhamma & its meaning, practices the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma and encourages others to practice the Dhamma in line with the Dhamma—then to that extent he is a lay follower who practices both for his own benefit and for the benefit of others.”

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: AN 4:99; AN 5:175; AN 8:54