MN 6 — MN 6 If One Would Wish | Ākaṅkheyya Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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Text

If One Would Wish

Ākaṅkheyya Sutta (MN 6)

I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying near Sāvatthī in Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika’s monastery. There he addressed the monks, “Monks!”

“Yes, lord,” the monks responded to him.

The Blessed One said: “Monks, dwell consummate in virtue, consummate in terms of the Pāṭimokkha. Dwell restrained in accordance with the Pāṭimokkha, consummate in your behavior & sphere of activity. Train yourselves, having undertaken the training rules, seeing danger in the slightest faults.

“If a monk would wish, ‘May I be dear & pleasing to my companions in the holy life, respected by & inspiring to them,’ then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn’t neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

“If a monk would wish, ‘May I be someone who receives robes, alms food, lodgings, & medicinal requisites for curing the sick,’ then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn’t neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

“If a monk would wish, ‘Whatever I use or consume in terms of robes, alms food, lodgings, & medical requisites for curing the sick, may that be of great fruit, of great benefit to those who provided them,’ then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn’t neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

“If a monk would wish, ‘When my kinsmen & relatives who have died & passed away recollect me with brightened minds, may it be of great fruit, of great benefit,’ then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn’t neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

“If a monk would wish, ‘May I overcome displeasure & delight, and not be overcome by displeasure & delight. May I dwell conquering again & again any displeasure & delight that has arisen,’ then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn’t neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

“If a monk would wish, ‘May I overcome fear & dread, and not be overcome by fear & dread. May I dwell conquering again & again any fear & dread that have arisen,’ then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn’t neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

“If a monk would wish, ‘May I attain—whenever I want, without strain, without difficulty—the four jhānas that are heightened mental states, pleasant abidings in the here & now,’ then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn’t neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

“If a monk would wish, ‘May I dwell touching with the body those liberations that are peaceful, formless, transcending forms,’1 then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn’t neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

“If a monk would wish, ‘May I—with the ending of (the first) three fetters—be a stream-winner, certain, never again destined for the lower realms, headed for self-awakening,’ then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn’t neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

“If a monk would wish, ‘May I—with the ending of (the first) three fetters, and with the attenuation of passion, aversion, & delusion—be a once-returner, who, on returning only once more to this world, would make an ending to stress,’ then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn’t neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

“If a monk would wish, ‘May I—with the ending of the five lower fetters, be one who is due to arise spontaneously (in the Pure Abodes), there to be totally unbound, destined never again to return from that world,’ then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn’t neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

“If a monk would wish, ‘May I wield manifold supranormal powers. Having been one, may I become many; having been many, may I become one. May I appear & vanish. May I go unimpeded through walls, ramparts, & mountains as if through space. May I dive in & out of the earth as if it were water. May I walk on water without sinking as if it were dry land. Sitting cross-legged, may I fly through the air like a winged bird. With my hand may I touch & stroke even the sun and moon, so mighty and powerful. May I influence with my body even as far as the Brahmā worlds,’ then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn’t neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

“If a monk would wish, ‘May I hear—by means of the divine ear-element, purified and surpassing the human—both kinds of sounds: divine and human, whether near or far,’ then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn’t neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

“If a monk would wish, ‘May I know the awareness of other beings, other individuals, having encompassed it with my own awareness. May I discern a mind with passion as “a mind with passion,” and a mind without passion as “a mind without passion.” May I discern a mind with aversion as “a mind with aversion,” and a mind without aversion as “a mind without aversion.” May I discern a mind with delusion as “a mind with delusion,” and a mind without delusion as “a mind without delusion.” May I discern a restricted mind as “a restricted mind,” and a scattered mind as “a scattered mind.” May I discern an enlarged mind as “an enlarged mind,” and an unenlarged mind as “an unenlarged mind.” May I discern an excelled mind [one that is not at the most excellent level] as “an excelled mind,” and an unexcelled mind as “an unexcelled mind.” May I discern a concentrated mind as “a concentrated mind,” and an unconcentrated mind as “an unconcentrated mind.” May I discern a released mind as “a released mind,” and an unreleased mind as “an unreleased

mind,'" then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn't neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

"If a monk would wish, 'May I recollect my manifold past lives, i.e., one birth, two births, three births, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, one hundred, one thousand, one hundred thousand, many eons of cosmic contraction, many eons of cosmic expansion, many eons of cosmic contraction & expansion, (recollecting,) 'There I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose there. There too I had such a name, belonged to such a clan, had such an appearance. Such was my food, such my experience of pleasure & pain, such the end of my life. Passing away from that state, I re-arose here.' Thus may I recollect my manifold past lives in their modes & details,' then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn't neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

"If a monk would wish, 'May I see—by means of the divine eye, purified and surpassing the human—beings passing away and re-appearing, and may I discern how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate in accordance with their kamma: 'These beings—who were endowed with bad conduct of body, speech, and mind, who reviled the noble ones, held wrong views and undertook actions under the influence of wrong views—with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in a plane of deprivation, a bad destination, a lower realm, hell. But these beings—who were endowed with good conduct of body, speech, and mind, who did not revile the noble ones, who held right views and undertook actions under the influence of right views—with the break-up of the body, after death, have re-appeared in a good destination, a heavenly world.' Thus—by means of the divine eye, purified and surpassing the human—may I see beings passing away and re-appearing, and may I discern how they are inferior and superior, beautiful and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate in accordance with their kamma,' then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn't neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

"If a monk would wish, 'May I—with the ending of effluents—remain in the effluent-free awareness-release & discernment-release, having directly known & realized them for myself right in the here & now,' then he should be one who brings the precepts to perfection, who is committed to inner tranquility of awareness, who doesn't neglect jhāna, who is endowed with insight, and who frequents empty dwellings.

"'Monks, dwell consummate in virtue, consummate in terms of the Pāṭimokkha. Dwell restrained in accordance with the Pāṭimokkha, consummate in your behavior & sphere of activity. Train yourselves, having undertaken the training rules, seeing danger in the slightest faults.' Thus was it said. And in reference to this was it said."

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One's words.

Note

1. The formless attainments based on the fourth jhāna. See AN 9:43 and AN 9:45.

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: AN 3:85–86; AN 4:128; AN 8:70; AN 9:43; AN 10:71; Iti 45