

SN 7.2
Saṃyutta Nikāya
The Connected Discourses

Sagāthāvagga Saṃyutta
Group of Discourses Connected to Verses
Brāhmaṇa Saṃyutta
Connected Discourses Pertaining to Brahmins
Arahanta Vagga
The Section on the Arahants

Akkosa Sutta

“The Verbal Abuser”

Translated by Bhikkhu Candana

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Once, The Blessed One was living in Rājagaha, at the Bamboo Park Monastery, where the squirrels used to come to feed.

It was then, that a brahmin who was known as the grumpy and brutish Bhāradvāja came to hear about a certain member of his brahmin Bhāradvāja family who had in fact gone forth, by leaving behind his household life and taking the vows of a monastic in the presence of The Blessed One, the Recluse Gautama.

So, in wanting to show his anger and displeasure about this matter, the brahmin went and approached The Blessed One, as he began hurling insults, using foul language, while verbally attacking and trying to abuse The Great Teacher with crude and harsh accusations.

Then, once he had finished spewing all that negativity, The Blessed One spoke by saying this to the brahmin:

“Brahmin, what would you say to this:

“Have there ever been times where individuals like friends or family members, acquaintances, companions, or guests might come to pay you a visit?”

“Yes, Master Gautama, there have been such times,” replied the brahmin.

And The Blessed One continued:

“Then, on such occasions, would you find yourself serving those people who come to visit you various kinds of foods and drinks; providing them with whatever they might enjoy receiving from you, while on their visit to your home?”

“Yes, Master Gautama, there have been many times when I served and provided them with such things,” replied the brahmin.

“But what would happen, brahmin, if despite you offering and providing them with those things, they refuse or decline receiving them altogether? To whom would those things then belong?”

“In that case, Master Gautama, I would presume they would have to come back to me. Those offerings, not having been accepted, would then still be mine.”

“Brahmin, while you have come here barraging Us with your foul language; hurling insults, and verbally attacking and trying to abuse Us with your crude and harsh accusations, well, in just the same manner, We also refuse and decline receiving those things you came to offer, altogether!

“Thus, whatever you brought with you to Us here, into Our Presence, We reject, brahmin!

“All that anger and hatred you offered Us, not being received, is still yours to keep! They all still belong to you!

“After all, brahmin, when a person finds himself being subjected to someone else’s insults and foul language, being verbally attacked and abused by their crude and harsh accusation, and reacts by doing the same to those accusers, that is, abusing and trying to hurt them in a similar manner, then it means that such a person has taken the bait; they have not only accepted the offering but ate it, as well!

“However, that is not the case here, for We neither accept your offering of insults, nor therefore, will you find Us reacting to it, by offering you a similar treatment.

“Thus, whatever you brought here, brahmin, is still yours and yours alone!”

Then, the brahmin Bhāradvāja continued addressing The Blessed One and said:

“But we have heard even in the King’s assembly the following being spoken:

‘...Even The Recluse Gautama, despite being an Arahant, certainly gets upset and loses his temper at times!’

And The Blessed One replied in verse by saying to the brahmin:

*“From where would anger sprout, for The One lacking its very seed?
How could abuse or rage come out of the heart of The One who is tamed,
Following a livelihood that’s in complete balance with everything;
Someone who is released through the liberation that comes with perfect understanding;
The One who is utterly peaceful inside and out,
Remaining untouched and unaffected throughout,
By all things that create turmoil for others?”*

*“Getting angry yourself, or enraged at another
Who has come to hurl at you the flame of bitter spite they’ve been carrying,
Simply pulls you into the mire, making it even worse for you!
After all, refusing to react or getting angry and upset
At the one who abuses you,
Guarantees a win for you, that’s so difficult to secure!*

*“This because, when on seeing another who’s full of rage, and
Realizing the bitterness and vile intentions in their heart towards you,
You resist the temptation of stepping onto the sharp nails that are now laid, in front of you.
And instead, you choose to take another path,
One that is better for him and for you.
In this way, you’d be doing what others cannot do,
Because of your ever-present tranquility of heart;
The result of your mindful living.*

*“Yet, there will always be those who,
Being unfamiliar with The Dhamma and Its noble way of practice,
Will go on to blindly assume,
That one is indeed a fool
To refuse engaging in a battle of abuse.
Not realizing that such a wise person is, in fact,
The one who truly heals, not just himself but his abuser too.”*

Upon listening carefully to the words spoken by The Blessed One, Bhāradvāja, the brahmin, fell to his knees and uttered these inspired words:

“It is Excellent, Lord! It is Sublimely Beautiful, Bhante!

“The Blessed One has truly clarified The Dhamma for me, and in such a beautiful way! I feel as though The Tathagata has turned upright what was overturned, revealing what was hidden, showing the correct Path to someone who was lost, as though one were to bring a brilliantly burning oil lamp into the darkness, for all those with eyesight to see, finally!

“Bhante, I go for refuge to The Blessed One, to The Dhamma, and to The Sangha of Bhikkhus.

“Bhante, with my hands at my heart in respectful *anjalī*, I request the Going Forth in Your presence, so that I may lead the Holy Life in full. Therefore, I also request to receive the Higher Ordination!”

Then, not long after his ordination, while living alone and secluded from the crowd, continuing in his training, being withdrawn, diligent, and dedicated to his resolution to attain Release, the Venerable Bhāradvāja realized for himself, in this very life, and with his direct knowledge, the Highest Goal of the Holy Life, for the sake of which good sons of families rightly go forth from homelife into homelessness.

Thus, he now personally knew and understood with absolute certainty:

*“Destroyed is birth.
The Holy Life is now fully lived.
What had to be done, is now done and finally completed.
There is no more rebirth into any state of becoming.”*

Thus, the Venerable Bhāradvāja also became one of the Arahants.

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