

MN 71: To Vacchagotta on the Threefold True Knowledge
Tevijjavacchagotta Sutta

and

MN 75: To Māgandiya
Māgandiya Sutta

Dhamma Talk presented by Bhante Vimalaramsi
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SK: It's May the 28th, 2009.
Dhamma Sukha Meditation Center.
Bhante Vimalaramsi.

Majjhima Nikāya Number 71.
Tevijjavacchagotta Sutta.
To Vacchagotta on the Threefold True Knowledge.

BV: This particular sutta has to do with...a lot of teachers during the time of the Buddha claimed that they were omniscient; they knew everything that was going to happen before it happened. And the Buddha said that he wasn't...he wasn't like that. He could direct his mind to look into the future but he didn't spend time looking into what's going to happen tomorrow or the next day or the next day. He was too busy for that sort of thing.

Anyway, this sutta is somewhat about that but it's more about the Three Knowledges.

MN 71:

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Vesālī in the Great Wood in the Hall with the Peaked Roof.

2. Now on that occasion the wanderer was staying in the Wanderers' Park of the Single White-Lotus Mango Tree.

3. Then, when it was morning, the Blessed One dressed, and taking his bowl and outer robe, went into Vesālī for alms. Then the Buddha thought: "It's too early to wander for alms in Vesālī. Suppose I went to the wanderer Vacchagotta in the Wanderers' Park in the Single White-Lotus Mango Tree."

4. Then the Blessed One went to the wanderer Vacchagotta

BV: Gotta...Vacchagotta. Excuse me.

MN:

in the Wanderers' Park of the Single White-Lotus Mango Tree. The wanderer Vacchagotta saw the Blessed One coming in the distance and said to him: "Let the Blessed One come, venerable sir! Welcome to the Blessed One! It is long since the Blessed One found an opportunity to come here. Let the Blessed One be seated; this seat is ready." The Blessed One sat down on the seat made ready, and the wanderer Vacchagotta took a low seat and sat down at one side, and said to the Blessed One:

5. "Venerable sir, I have heard thus: 'The recluse Gotama claims to be omniscient, all-seeing, to have complete knowledge and vision thus: "Whether I am walking or standing or sleeping or awake, knowledge and vision are continuously and uninterruptedly present in me." Venerable sir, do those who speak thus say what has been said by the Blessed One, and not misrepresented him with what is contrary to fact? Do they explain in accordance to the Dhamma in such a way that nothing which provides a ground for censure can be legitimately deduced from their assertion?"

"Vaccha, those who say thus do not say what has been said by me, but misrepresented me with what is untrue and contrary to fact."

6. "Venerable sir, how should I answer that I may say what has been said by the Blessed One and not misrepresented him with what is

contrary to fact? How may I explain in accordance to the Dhamma in such a way that nothing which provides a ground for censure can be legitimately deduced from my assertion?"

"Vaccha, if you answer thus: 'The recluse Gotama has the threefold true knowledge,' you will be saying what has been said by me and not misrepresent me with what is contrary to fact. You will explain in accordance to the Dhamma in such a way that nothing which provides a ground for censure can be legitimately deduced from your assertion.

7. "For in so far as I wish, I recollect many past lifetimes, that is, one birth, two births, three..., four..., five..., ten..., twenty..., thirty..., forty..., fifty..., a hundred..., a thousand..., a hundred thousand births, many aeons of world-contraction, many aeons of world-expansion, many aeons of world-contraction and expansion: 'There I was so named, such a clan, with such an appearance, such was my nutriment, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my life-term; and passing away from there, I reappeared elsewhere; and there too I was so named, of such a clan, with such an appearance and such was my nutriment, such my experience of pleasure and pain, such my lifetime; and passing away from there, I reappeared here.' Thus with their aspects and particulars he recollects the manifold past lives.

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8. "And in so far as I wish, with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, I see beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and I understand how beings pass on according to their actions: 'These worthy beings who were ill conducted in body, speech, and mind, revilers of noble ones, wrong in their views, giving effect to wrong view in their actions, on the dissolution of the body, after death, have reappeared in a state of deprivation, in a bad destination, even in hell; but these worthy beings who were well conducted in body, speech and mind, not revilers of noble ones, right in their views, giving effect to right view in their actions, on the dissolution of the

body, after death, have reappeared in a good destination, even in the heavenly world.' Thus with the divine eye, which is purified and surpasses the human, he sees beings passing away and reappearing, inferior and superior, fair and ugly, fortunate and unfortunate, and he understands how beings come to pass according to their actions.

9. "And by realizing for myself with direct knowledge, I here and now entered upon and abided in the deliverance of mind and deliverance by wisdom that are taintless with the destruction of the taints.

10. "If you answer thus: 'The recluse Gotama has a threefold true knowledge,' you will be saying what has been said by me and not misrepresent me with what is contrary to fact. You will explain in accordance with the Dhamma in such a way that nothing which provides a ground for censure can be legitimately deduced from your assertion."

11. When this was said, the wanderer Vacchagotta asked the Blessed One: "Master Gotama, is there any householder who, without abandoning the fetter of householdership, on the dissolution of body has made an end of suffering?"

BV: Sound like an interesting question to you?

MN:

12. "Master Gotama, is there any householder who, without abandoning the fetter of householdership, on the dissolution of the body has gone to heaven?"

"Vaccha, not only one hundred or two or three or four or five hundred, but far more householders, without abandoning the fetter of householdership, on the dissolution of the body has gone to heaven."

13. "Master Gotama, is there any Ājivaka who, on the dissolution of body, has made an end of suffering?"

"Vaccha, there is no Ājivaka

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BV: That's a sect.

MN:

who, on the dissolution of the body, has made an ending of suffering."

14. "Master Gotama, is there any Ājivaka who, on the dissolution of the body, has gone to heaven?"

"When I recollect the past ninety-one aeons, Vaccha, I do not recall any Ājivaka who, on the dissolution of the body, went to heaven, with one exception, and he held the doctrine of moral efficacy of action, the moral efficacy of deeds.

BV: The Ājivaka sect was a sect that was, "Eat, drink and be merry because tomorrow you die."

SK: So Jivaka...

BV: Ājivaka.

SK: ~~

BV: I only know Jivaka as a name, it's the name of the Buddha's attendant...

SK: Oh, okay.

BV: A doctor more or less.

But the sect of Ājivaka is...they're really into, "I don't care what happens next, I'm just going to have fun!" It's like the...oh, Brittany Spears is a great example of that. She was having all kinds of problems and she came out in one of the tabloids as saying, "Well, I'm just trying to have fun!" And she overindulges in sex and overindulges in alcohol and overindulges in everything that she

possibly can. But that way does not lead...I mean, after 91...what did it say?...91 aeons only one person got into a heavenly realm. That would say that that's probably not a good thing to do.

I had a book...

ST: [to dog] Come on, you can go over there...~~. Come on.

ST: Yeah, I know ~~

BV: We've got to get some different food for him. That food is causing...

ST: Yeah. I've tried five different foods.

BV: Well, we've gotta keep trying, that's all I can say! [laughs]

ST: I want one that says "Anti-Gas".

BV: Bear! Bear! Go!

ST: Oh! Hey! That stinks! [laughs]

ST: Yeah!

BV: [laughs] That'll wake Jerry up.

ST: It's just a smell! It's just a smell!

ST: Yeah. We ought to 6R that smell.

ST: Remember, a smell is just a smell.

BV: Uh huh. And as long as that smell is a long ways away, there's no problem! [laughs]

MN:

15. "That being so, Master Gotama. That sectarian fold is empty even

of one who goes to heaven.”

That is what the Blessed One said. {...}

BV: I thought that that was just kind of an interesting little interlude before I went to another sutta.

So, now we're going to go to Sutta Number 75 in the Middle Length Sayings. This is basically about somebody that's very much a hedonist, and the Buddha shows him why it's not so good to do that sort of thing.

{14:50}

MN 75:

1. **THUS HAVE I HEARD.** On one occasion the Blessed One was living in the Kuru country where there was a town of the Kurus named Kammāsadhamma, on a spread of grass in a fire chamber of the brahmin belonging to the Bhāradvāja clan.

2. Then, when it was morning, the Blessed One dressed, and taking a bowl and outer robe, went in Kammāsadhamma for alms. When he had wandered for alms in Kammāsadhamma and had returned from his almsround, after his meal he went on a certain grove for the day's abiding. Having entered the grove, he sat down at the root of a tree for the day's abiding.

3. Then the wanderer Māgandiya, while walking and wandering for exercise, went to the fire chamber of the brahmin belonging to this clan. There he saw a spread on the grass prepared and asked the brahmins: "For whom has this spread of grass been prepared in the fire chamber? It seems like it might be a recluse's bed."

4. "Master, there is the recluse Gotama, the son of the Sakyans, who went forth from the Sakyan clan. Now a good report of Master Gotama has been spread to this effect: 'That the Blessed One is accomplished, fully enlightened, perfect in true knowledge and

conduct, sublime, knower of worlds, incomparable leader of persons to be tamed, teacher of gods and humans, enlightened, and blessed.' This bed has been prepared for the Master Gotama."

5. "Indeed, Master, it is an ill sight we see when we see the bed of this destroyer of growth, Master Gotama."

"Be careful what you say, Māgandiya, be careful what you say! Many learned nobles, learned brahmins, learned householders, learned recluses have full confidence in Master Gotama, and have been disciplined by him in the noble true way, in the Dhamma that is wholesome."

"Master, even if we saw that Master Gotama face to face, we would tell him to his face: 'The recluse Gotama is a destroyer of growth.' Why is that? Because that is recorded in our scriptures."

"If Master Māgandiya has no objection, may I tell this to the Master Gotama?"

"Let Master be at ease and tell him what I have said."

6. Meanwhile, with the divine ear, which is purified and surpasses the human, the Blessed One heard this conversation between the brahmin of the clan and the wanderer Māgandiya. Then, when it was evening, the Blessed One rose from meditation, went to the brahmin's fire chamber, and sat down on a spread of grass made ready. When the brahmin of the clan went to the Blessed One and exchanged greetings with him. When this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side. The Blessed One asked him: "Friend, did you have any conversation with the wanderer Māgandiya about this very same spread of grass?"

When this was said, the brahmin, awestruck with his hair standing on end, replied: "We wanted to tell Master Gotama about that very thing, but Master Gotama has anticipated us."

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BV: That's one of the things that can happen very easily when you go deep enough with your meditation is you start developing the divine ear and you start developing the divine eye. The divine eye...all you have to do is place your attention on wanting to see something at a distance. Like, your mother is in Panama and you want to see what kind of house she's in. You direct your mind that way and you'll be able to see it and you can describe it. You'll be able to see the colors and the shapes and the furniture and you might even be able to see her. That has happened. And you can hear them talk. That's what the divine ear is all about. You can hear devas talking, you can hear brahmins talking, you can hear people talking at a distance. So if you wanted to find out what ~ was saying right now in Berlin, all you would have to do is direct your mind towards that and you would be able to hear which makes you very much more careful with the things that you talk about because you can have eavesdroppers.

MN:

7. But this discussion between the Blessed One and the brahmin of the brahmin clan was left unfinished, for then the wanderer Māgandiya, while walking and wandering for exercise, came to the brahmin's fire chamber and went up to the Blessed One. He exchanged greetings with the Blessed One, and when this courteous and amiable talk was finished, he sat down at one side. The Blessed One said to him:

8. "Māgandiya, the eye delights in forms, takes delight in forms, rejoices in forms; that has been tamed by the Tathāgata, guarded and protected, and restrained, and he teaches the Dhamma for its restraint. Was it with reference to that you said: 'The recluse Gotama is a destroyer of growth?'"

"It was with reference to this, Master Gotama, that I said: 'The recluse Gotama is a destroyer of growth.' Why is that? Because it is recorded in our scriptures."

"The ear delights in sounds...The nose delights in odors...The tongue delights in flavors...The body delights in tangibles...and mind delights

in mind-objects, takes delight in these objects, rejoices in mind-objects; that has been tamed by the Tathāgata, guarded, protected, and restrained, and his teaching of the Dhamma for its restraint. Was this with reference to that you said: 'The recluse Gotama is a destroyer of growth?'"

"It was with reference to this, Master Gotama, that I said: 'The recluse Gotama is a destroyer of growth.' Why is that? Because it is recorded in our sacred scriptures."

9. "What do you think? Here someone may have formerly enjoyed himself with forms cognizable by the eye that are wished for, desired, agreeable, and likeable, connected with sensual desire and provocative of lust. On a later occasion, having understood as they actually are the origin, the disappearance, the gratification, the danger, and the escape in the case of forms, he might abandon craving for forms, remove fever for forms, and abide without thirst, with a mind inwardly at peace. What would you say to him, Māgandiya?" – "Nothing, Master Gotama."

"What do you think, Māgandiya? Here someone may have formerly enjoyed himself with sounds cognizable by the ear..., odors cognizable by the nose..., flavors cognizable by the tongue..., tangibles cognizable by the body that are wished for, desired, agreeable, and likeable, connected with sensual desire and provocative of lust. On a later occasion, having understood as they actually are the origin, the disappearance, the gratification, the danger, the escape in the case of these things, he might abandon craving for tangibles and the rest of these things, remove fever for them, abide without thirst, with a mind inwardly at peace. What would you say to him, Māgandiya?" – "Nothing, Master Gotama."

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10. "Māgandiya, formerly I lived a home life, I enjoyed myself, provided and endowed with the five cords of sensual pleasure: for forms cognizable by the eye...for sounds cognizable by the ear...for odors cognizable by the nose...for flavors cognizable by the

tongue...with tangibles cognizable by the body that are wished for, desired, agreeable, and likeable, connected with sensual desire and provocative of lust. I had three palaces, one for the rainy season, one for the winter, one for the summer. I lived in the rains palace for four months of the rainy season, enjoying myself with musicians, none of whom were men, and I did not go down to the lower palace.

“On a later occasion, having understood as they actually are the origin, disappearance, gratification, the danger, and escape in the case of sensual pleasures, I abandoned craving for sensual pleasures, I removed fever for sensual pleasures, and I abide without thirst, with a mind inwardly at peace. I see other beings who are not free from lust for sensual pleasures being devoured by craving for sensual pleasures, burning with fever for sensual pleasures, indulging in sensual pleasures, I do not envy them, nor do I delight therein. Why is that? Because there is, Māgandiya, a delight apart from sensual pleasures, apart from unwholesome states, which surpasses even divine bliss. Since I take delight in that, I do not envy what is inferior, nor do I delight therein.

11. “Suppose, Māgandiya, a householder or a householder’s son was rich, with great wealth, property, and being provided and endowed with the five cords of sensual pleasure, he might enjoy himself with forms cognizable by the eye...

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BV: This reminds me of a story of...there was one young prince that he played with all of his very, very rich playmates and they sat around one day and they started talking about where food came from. And the young prince said, “Well, food comes from a gold plate that has a gold cover on it. You open it up and there’s the food.” And all of the other rich kids, they thought pretty much the same kind of thing. It’s just brought from the kitchen and then it’s put on the table. That’s where it comes from.

ST: Very pater-centric(?).

BV: Yeah. And then one day...let me preface this...the young prince in a past lifetime had seen a Paccakabuddha and he gave very lavishly to this Buddha. And he made the determination that he would never again hear, "There is no more."

So, these kids got together and they started playing with marbles and they started betting on it. And the young prince lost. And he had to pay back by bringing some very fancy cakes. So, he gave the cakes back...paid off his debt and started playing again and lost again. And he went and told the servant to go get some more cakes and bring them back so they could have them. The third time he lost he went to...he sent the servant to his mother to get more cakes and she said, "There is no more. I don't have any more cakes." And the young prince...that isn't how it goes. So what she did was she just put a plate with a thing over the top and sent it back trying to show him that there was no more. But because he made that determination, the devas said, "Oh, we can let this happen!" So they put heavenly food underneath the lid. And it goes to the young prince and he opens it up and it smells better than anything he's ever smelled before. And he tastes some of it and he'd never tasted anything this good.

So they broke up and he went back and started complaining to his mother, "Why didn't you ever give me any more of...any of those "no-more cakes"? Don't you love me?" And he started really giving her a hard time and she didn't know how to answer because she was just sending back empty plates. And he was getting the food as...so as time went by and he kept on thinking that food just came from this...a platter. And he started becoming older; he was a medium-teenager...seventeen, eighteen years old, like that. And the Buddha came around. Now, he was from a royal family and he was thinking...Uh, the older brother went to listen to the Buddha and he came back and wanted his young prince brother to become a monk. And he said, "I don't want to be a monk! I want to enjoy my sensual pleasures!" So he said, "Well, if you stay a monk then that means I can leave and become a monk, but because I'm the oldest brother I shouldn't do that. I should become the next king. If you were to become the next king do you know all of the responsibilities you

would have? That you'd have to go out every year and you'd have to do the plowing ceremony and you'd kill a lot of beings when you'd do that."

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And the young prince started thinking about that and started thinking about, "You'd have to take care of all the books. You'd have to take care of all these different people and make sure everybody's paid what needs to be paid and all of that. And I don't want to do that. So, okay I'll become a monk." So, he went to his mother and he said, "Mom, I want to become a Buddhist monk." And she said, "No, no, no, no! You can't do that. I won't allow that." And he just laid down on the floor and he said, "I'm not going to eat or drink! I'd rather die than live like this!" And she started feeling very sorry for him and she came to him and said, "I'll let you become a monk if your best friend, who's going to be king next week of another kingdom...if he'll become a monk I'll allow you to become a monk."

So, he goes to his friend and he said, "I really want to become a monk so that we don't have to have anymore rebirths and that sort of thing." And he started convincing his friend and his friend said, "Well, in one week I'm going to become king. And I have all of these duties that I have to take care of. I'll become a monk in seven years." And the young prince, he said, "No, no, no. It's got to be sooner than that." So he kept on talking and convincing and trying to get his best friend to become a monk and finally he says, "Okay, I just want to be king for seven months and then I'll become a monk." And the young prince said, "No, I can't do that. I can't wait that long. It has to be soon." And he kept on convincing, and finally he convinced his best friend to become a monk but he was going to have to wait for seven days. And he couldn't make it any faster than that because he had to arrange for somebody else to be king and take care of all the necessary things and transfer all of his family's wealth to other people and that sort of thing.

After seven days he went with the young prince and became a monk and within a few short days...or weeks I guess it was...they both

became arahats. And it was Ānanda's brother who was the young prince. His name was Anuruddha. So, I guess I don't know why I'm telling you that story. I just thought it was a neat one.

Anyway.

{.....}

MN:

13. "Suppose, Māgandiya, there was a leper with sores and blisters on his limbs, being devoured by worms, scratching the scabs off the openings of his wounds with his nails, cauterizing his body with burning charcoal pit. Then his friends and companions and kinsmen and relatives, would bring a physician to treat him. The physician would make medicine for him and by means of that medicine the man would be cured of his leprosy and would become well and happy, independent, master of himself, able to go where he likes.

BV: He'd probably be one scarred mess.

MN:

Then he might see another leper with sores and blisters on his limbs, being devoured by worms, scratching the scabs off the openings of his wounds with his nails, cauterizing his body over a burning charcoal pit. What do you think, Māgandiya? Would that man envy the leper for his burning charcoal pit or his use of medicines?"

"No, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because when there is a sickness, there is need for medicine, and when there is no sickness there is no need for medicine."

14. "So too, Māgandiya, formerly when I lived in the home life...(as in §12)

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BV: ...he indulged in all the sensual pleasures.

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MN:

...Since I take delight in that, and I do not envy what is inferior, nor do I delight therein.

15. "Suppose, Māgandiya, there was a leper with sores and blisters on his limbs, being devoured by worms, scratching the scabs off the openings of his wounds with his nails, cauterizing his body over a burning charcoal pit. Then his friend and companions, kinsmen and relatives, brought a physician to treat him. The physician would make medicine for him and by means of that medicine the man would be cured of his leprosy and would become happy and well, independent, master of himself, able to go where he likes. Then two strong men would seize him by the arms and drag him towards the burning charcoal pit. What do you think, Māgandiya? Would that man twist his body this way and that?"

"Yes, Master Gotama. Why is that? Because that fire is indeed painful to the touch, hot, and scorching."

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BV: During the time of the Buddha they used herbs to heal leprosy...a lot of major illnesses. And Jivaka, the Buddha's attendant, doctor, healer, whatever you wanted to call it, he had somebody that had worms that were in their brain, and he opened up their brain and pulled the worms out...did surgery like that. We have to think that we are the ones that really know about this sort of stuff and we really understand this sort of stuff, but we don't understand half of what they did. They could heal cataracts by using different oils with herbs mixed with them...things like that. We don't know how to do that. Cataracts always grow back, things like that. They had the know-how with the herbs and oils that they used for healing.

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MN:

“Master Gotama, that fire is now painful to the touch, hot, and searing, and previously too that fire was painful to touch, hot, and searing. For when a man was a leper with sores and blisters on his limbs, being devoured by worms, scratching the scabs off the openings of his wound with his nails, his faculties were impaired; thus, though the fire was actually painful to the touch, he acquired a mistaken perception of it as pleasant.”

16. “So too, Māgandiya, in the past sensual pleasures were painful to the touch, hot, and searing; in the future sensual pleasures will be painful to touch, hot, and searing; and now in the present sensual pleasures are painful to touch, hot, and searing. But these beings who are not free from lust for sensual pleasures, who are devoured by craving for sensual pleasures, who burn with fever for sensual pleasures, have faculties that are impaired; thus, though the sensual pleasures are actually painful to the touch, they acquire a mistaken perception of them as pleasant.

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17. “Suppose, Māgandiya, there was a leper with sores and blisters on his limbs, being devoured by worms, scratching off the scabs, cauterizing his body over a burning charcoal pit; the more he scratches the scabs and cauterizes his body, the fouler, and more evil-smelling and more infected the openings of his wound would become, yet he would feel a certain measure of satisfaction and enjoyment in scratching the openings of his wounds. So too, Māgandiya, beings who are not free from sensual pleasures, who are devoured by craving for sensual pleasures, who burn with fever of sensual pleasure, still indulge in sensual pleasures; the more such beings indulge in sensual pleasures, the more their craving for sensual pleasures increases and the more they are burned by their fever for sensual pleasures, yet they find a certain measure of satisfaction and enjoyment in dependence of the five cords of sensual pleasure.

18. “What do you think, Māgandiya? Have you ever seen or heard of

a king or a king's minister enjoying himself, provided and endowed with the five cords of sensual pleasure who, without abandoning craving for sensual pleasures, without removing fever for sensual pleasures, was able to abide free from thirst, with a mind inwardly at peace, or who is able or who will be able to so abide?" – "No, Master Gotama."

"Good, Māgandiya. I too have never seen or heard of a king or a king's minister enjoying himself, provided and endowed with the five cords of sensual pleasure who, without abandoning the craving for sensual pleasures, without removing fever for sensual pleasures, was able to abide free from lust, with a mind inwardly at peace, and who is able or who will be able to so abide. On the contrary, those recluses or brahmins who abided or abide or will abide free from thirst, with a mind inwardly at peace, all do so after having understood as they actually are the origin, the disappearance, the gratification, the danger, and the escape in the case of sensual pleasures, and it is after abandoning craving for sensual pleasures and removing fever for sensual pleasures that they abided or abide or will abide free from lust, with a mind inwardly at peace."

19. Then at that point the Blessed One uttered this exclamation:

"The greatest of all gains is health,
Nibbāna is the greatest bliss,
The eightfold path is the greatest of paths
For it leads safely to the Deathless."

When this was said, the wanderer Māgandiya said to the Blessed One: "It is wonderful, Master Gotama, it is marvelous how well that has been expressed by Master Gotama:

'The greatest of all gains is health,
Nibbāna is the greatest bliss.'

We too have heard this said by early wanderers in the tradition of teachers, and it agrees, Master Gotama."

“But, Māgandiya, when you heard that said by early wanderers in the tradition of the teachers, what is that health, and what is Nibbāna?”

When this was said, the wanderer Māgandiya rubbed his own limbs with his hands and said: “This is that health, Master Gotama, this is that Nibbāna; for I am now healthy and happy and nothing afflicts me.”

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20. “Māgandiya, suppose there was a man born blind who could not see dark or light forms, who could not see blue, yellow, red, pink forms, who could not see what was even and uneven, who could not see the stars, the sun and moon. He might hear a man with good eyesight saying: ‘Good indeed, sirs, is white cloth, beautiful, spotless, and clean!’ and he would go in search of white cloth. Then a man who would cheat him with a dirty soiled garment thus: ‘Good man, here is a white cloth for you, beautiful, spotless, and clean.’ And he would accept it and he would put it on, and being satisfied with it, he would utter words of satisfaction thus: ‘Good indeed, sirs, is white cloth, beautiful, spotless, and clean!’ What do you say, Māgandiya? When that man born blind accepted that dirty soiled garment, and put it on, and being satisfied with it, uttered the words of satisfaction thus: ‘Good indeed, sirs, is a white cloth, beautiful, spotless, and clean!’ – did he do so knowing and seeing, or out of faith in the man with the good eyesight?”

“Venerable sir, he would have done so unknowing and unseeing, out of faith in the man with good eyesight.”

21. “So too, Māgandiya, the wanderer of other sects are blind and visionless. They do not know health, they do not see Nibbāna, yet they utter this stanza thus:

‘The greatest of all gains is health,
Nibbāna is the greatest gift.’

This stanza was uttered by the early Accomplished Ones, Fully

Enlightened Ones, thus:

'The greatest of all gains is health,
Nibbāna is the greatest gift,
The eightfold path is the best of paths
For it leads safely to Deathless.'

Now it has gradually become current among ordinary people. And although this body, Māgandiya, is a disease, a tumor, a dart, a calamity, and an affliction, referring to this body you say that: 'This is that health, Master Gotama, that this is that Nibbāna.' You do not have that noble vision, Māgandiya, by means of which you might know health and see Nibbāna."

22. "I have confidence in Master Gotama thus: 'Master Gotama is capable of teaching me the Dhamma in such a way that I can come to know health and to see Nibbāna.'"

"Māgandiya, suppose there was a man born blind who could not see dark and light forms...or the sun and moon. When his friends and companions, his kinsmen and relatives, would bring a physician to treat him. The physician would make a medicine for him yet by means of that medicine the man's vision would not arise or be purified. What do you think, Māgandiya, would that doctor reap weariness and disappointment?" – "Yes, Master Gotama." – "So too, Māgandiya, if I were to teach you the Dhamma thus: 'This is that health, this is that Nibbāna,' you might not know health or see Nibbāna, and that would be wearisome and troublesome for me."

23. "I have confidence in Master Gotama thus: 'Master Gotama is capable of teaching me the Dhamma in such a way that I can come to know health and see Nibbāna.'"

"Suppose there was a man born blind who could not see dark and light forms...or the sun and moon. He might hear a man with good eyesight saying: 'Good indeed, sirs, is a white cloth, beautiful, spotless, and clean!' and he would go in search of white cloth. Then a man would cheat him with dirty soiled garment thus: 'Good man,

here is a white cloth for you, beautiful, spotless, and clean.’ And he would accept it and put it on. Then his friends and companions, his kinsmen and relatives, would bring a physician to treat him. The physician would make medicine – emetics and purgatives, ointments and counter-ointments and nasal treatment – and by means of that medicine the man’s vision would arise and be purified, Together with the arising of his vision, his desire and liking for that dirty soiled garment would be abandoned; then he might burn with indignation and enmity towards that man and might think that he ought to be killed for this: ‘Indeed, I have long been tricked and cheated, and defrauded by this man with the dirty soiled garment when he told me: “Good man, this is a white cloth for you, beautiful, spotless, and clean.”’

{56:03}

24. “So too, Māgandiya, if I were to teach you the Dhamma thus: ‘This is that health, this is that Nibbāna,’ you might know health, you might see Nibbāna. Together with the arising of your vision, your desire and lust for the five aggregates affected by craving and clinging might be abandoned. Then perhaps you might think: ‘Indeed, I have long been tricked, cheated, and defrauded by this mind. For when craving and clinging, I have been craving and clinging just to material form, I have been craving and clinging just to feeling, I have been craving and clinging just to perception, I have been craving and clinging just to formations, I have been craving and clinging just to consciousness. With my craving and clinging as condition, habitual tendency comes to be; with habitual tendency as condition, birth; with birth as condition, ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair comes to be. Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering.’”

25. “I have confidence in Master Gotama thus: ‘Master Gotama is capable of teaching me the Dhamma in such a way that I might rise up from this seat cured of my blindness.’”

“Then, Māgandiya, associate with true men. When you associate with true men, you will hear the true Dhamma. When you hear the true

Dhamma, you will practice in accordance with the true Dhamma. When you practice in accordance with the true Dhamma, you will know and see for yourself thus: 'These are diseases, tumors, and darts; but here these diseases, tumors and darts cease without remainder. With the cessation of my craving and clinging comes cessation of habitual tendency; with the cessation of habitual tendency, cessation of birth; with the cessation of birth, cessation of ageing and death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.'"

26. When this was said, the wanderer Māgandiya said: "Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent, Master Gotama has made the Dhamma clear in many ways, as though he were turning upright what had been overthrown, revealing what was hidden, showing the way to one who was lost, or holding up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see forms. I go to Master Gotama for refuge and to the Dhamma and to the Sangha of monks. I would receive the going forth under Master Gotama, I would receive full admission."

27. "Māgandiya, one who formerly belonged to another sect and desires the going forth and the full admission in this Dhamma and Discipline lives on probation for four months. At the end of four months, if the monks are satisfied with him, they give him the going forth and the full admission to the monks. But I recognize individual differences in this matter."

{1:00:11}

"Venerable sir, if those who formerly belonged to another sect and desire the going forth and the full admission in this Dhamma And Discipline live on probation for four months, and if at the end of the four months the monks being satisfied with them give them the going forth and full admission to the monks, then I will live on probation for four years. At the end of four years if the monks are satisfied with me, let them give me the going forth and the full admission to the monks' state."

28. Then the wanderer Māgandiya received the going forth under the

Blessed One, and he received full admission. And soon, not long after his full admission, dwelling alone, withdrawn, diligent, ardent, and resolute, the venerable Māgandiya, by realizing for himself with direct knowledge, here and now entered upon and abided in that supreme goal of the holy life for the sake of which clansmen rightly go forth from the home life to homelessness. He directly knew: "Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being." And the venerable Māgandiya became one of the arahats.

{1:01:55}

BV: The thing with Māgandiya is that he'd been practicing very...he'd been practicing a lot of discipline for a long period of time. He had to have his thinking cleared up because of his belief systems and that was what the Buddha was doing this whole time. He was attached...he was what you call a "spiritual materialist". He was willing to suffer as long as he was comfortable. That's kind of like the American way.

You go to these different meditation centers and they're five-star places. I mean, they're really fancy and they're really comfortable. And you go into the meditation hall and everybody has their cushions and pillows and...we have some of that here, too, but we have chairs. And there was a Dhamma talk given at Berry(?) that this lady gave and she said a student came up to her and talked about, "Not all the chairs in the dining hall were the same height." What kind of meditation is that? "Oh, I'm a perfectionist! I have to have all the chairs at one height at one table..." But that's a material spiritual practice. Giving in to your indulgences. Giving in to your...one of the reasons we take eight precepts is because it allows you the opportunity to develop the discipline and it's a higher kind of discipline than the ordinary layman. That means you have to be more careful. You don't go into your singing and dancing and perfumes and beautifications and make-ups and all of this kind of stuff because during the time of your meditation retreat it just doesn't matter. And if you get into your singing and dancing and that sort of thing it causes your mind to be agitated. That's why you take the eight

precepts so you don't have that sort of thing.

The thing with the high and luxurious beds...the reason I don't keep it in with the eight precepts is because during the time of the Buddha the beds that were high and luxurious were exceptionally soft. And you get in and you sleep too soundly and it's hard to wake up. You sleep on a mat like this, that's this thick, you sleep so long and all of a sudden you start getting a little stiff here and a little stiff there and now it's time to get up.

ST: I experienced that.

BV: [laughs] But that's why you do it so you don't oversleep...indulge in sleeping. And that's what they used to do during the time of the Buddha, especially if you were rich. You always took three or four hours after a meal to lay down and relax. But the high beds, they were high because underneath the bed they put statues to keep away evil spirits. Now, there is a rule for the monks where it can't be more...higher than this, and for short people that turns out to be about there. And I've been to a lot of monasteries that you didn't have any kind of pad to sleep on. It was just on the wood. And that's...they're used to sleeping like that. In Asia they don't sleep on mattresses so much, at least in the countryside. In the cities they're starting to more and more.

{1:07:25}

But, it's kind of an interesting phenomenon. The superstition and the fear-factor is really quite strong. There was a monk that stayed in a room and he left the lights on like this all night. And I asked him if we could turn them off and he got upset and he said, "Okay, I'll let you keep that but I have to have..." We devised a little screen so that he could have light when he slept because he was afraid of the dark.

I know meditation teachers that were actually quite advanced meditation teachers...couldn't sleep alone in a room because they were used to...oh, they had a big family, they'd always been in a room with somebody else, and they couldn't sleep in a room

separately from anybody else. I always thought that was...and these are forty year old monks. I mean, these forty year old men can't sleep in a room by them self? And here I'm going out to the forest to find a cave to be in or a small hut that I can stay in and be by myself and live with only candles. I like that! No problem.

Anyway, the more you can discipline yourself, the more you can keep your five precepts without breaking them, the easier and quicker you progress in your meditation. And keeping the five precepts is absolutely essential otherwise you wind up having a lot of hindrances. And the hindrances are caused from past actions.

So, you got any questions? Did you see how the Buddha worked in very nicely part of Dependent Origination? That was nice! And when he was talking about health he was talking about mental health, he wasn't talking about physical health. So, that just kind of goes along with what I was talking about last night of keeping the five precepts. And the closer you keep them the more you have good things coming to you and the less you have bad things coming to you.

So...

{1:11:07}

ST: Bhante?

BV: Yes.

ST: I heard something else including this one that the ~ the way they said it, like scratches the wound and...

BV: Well, if you've ever been around anybody that has leprosy you know that that's not exaggerating.

ST: Oh...

BV: And they take sticks, get them red hot and they put it right on there...burning.

ST: Oh...There was some suttas ~ It's like, it's really kind of scary to imagine that...

BV: Well, leprosy is a scary disease. I don't know whether...I didn't see any in Indonesia, but in Malaysia, in the way deep in the woods, there were still leper colonies. And I went to visit them and things like their nose would fall off or their ear would fall off, or they had very few fingers. Because it fell off because of the disease. And it's really sad because now there's medicine that will take care of that. It'll cure it, actually, and it does it fairly quickly. But, getting the medicine from the big city out into the forest is not an easy thing. It was a hard way to go. We took all day to go twelve miles. I know...that far. We had to build bridges over the rivers and stuff, you know, logs. It's interesting.

ST: They couldn't take you in by helicopter, huh?

BV: No. Too thick. It's really, really, really dense forest. It's dense enough that you didn't see the sun.

ST: The light hurts the eyes so bad. Historically, the biggest tragedy about the leprosy is they always thought it was, you know, contagious but it wasn't. It's not. And it looks so horrible they're terrified of it.

BV: And then they start smelling so bad you don't want to be around it.

ST: From the rotten pieces falling off?

BV: The flesh rots basically is what happens. And then they burn it because that relieves the itching.

There's a story about Kassapa. Venerable Kassapa was going out for alms round and there was a leper that wanted to give him some food. And he held out the bowl and the leper gave him some food and his finger dropped off in the bowl. Now, he didn't eat the

finger...[laughs]...but he ate the food...he ate the food. Eating the finger is against the rules. It is! Thank God! [laughs]

ST: No! You have to eat what's in your bowl! Don't give me any problem with this! Eat what's in your bowl!

ST: How about, like, chicken feet?

BV: Anytime I got chicken feet I gave it away.

ST: Some people really like chicken feet.

BV: I know. I've seen people walking down the street munching on a chicken foot but I know where they've been walking. [laughs]

ST: Those chickens!

BV: I know where the chickens have been walking! I don't really like the idea of munching on the feet.

ST: That's funny.

BV: But, I guess...I suppose that's cultural.

Okay, why don't we share some merit.

{1:15:47}

May suffering ones, be suffering free
And the fear struck, fearless be
May the grieving shed all grief
And may all beings find relief.

May all beings share this merit that we have thus acquired
For the acquisition of all kinds of happiness.

May beings inhabiting space and earth
Devas and nagas of mighty power

Share this merit of ours.

May they long protect the Buddha's dispensation.

Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . . Sadhu . . .

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