AN 7.64 — Kodhana Sutta: The Wretchedness of Anger

English translation by Ñanamoli Thera.

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Text

"Bhikkhus, seven things gratifying and helpful to an enemy befall one who is angry, whether a woman or a man. What are the seven?

"Here, bhikkhus, an enemy wishes thus for his enemy: 'Let him be ugly.' Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy's beauty. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, be he ever so well bathed, and well anointed, with hair and beard trimmed, and clothed in white, yet he is ugly through his being a prey to anger. This is the first thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is angry, whether a woman or a man.

"Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy: 'Let him lie in pain.' Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy's lying in comfort. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, for all he may lie on a couch spread with rugs, blankets and counterpanes with a deerskin cover, a canopy and red cushions for the head and feet, yet he lies only in pain

through his being a prey to anger. This is the second thing gratifying to an enemy that befalls one who is angry, whether a woman or a man.

"Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy: 'Let him have no prosperity.' Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy's prosperity. Now when this person is angry, prey to anger, ruled by anger, he mistakes bad for good and he mistakes good for bad, and each being taken wrongly in the other's sense, these things for long conduce to his harm and suffering, through his being a prey to anger. This is the third thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is angry, whether a woman or a man.

"Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy: 'Let him not be rich.' Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy's having riches. Now when a person is angry, a prey to anger, should he have riches gained by endeavor, built up by the strength of his arm, earned by sweat, lawful and lawfully acquired, yet the king's treasury gathers (in fines) through his being a prey to anger. This is the fourth thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is a prey to anger, whether a woman or a man.

"Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy: 'Let him not be famous.' Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy's having fame. Now when a person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, what fame he may have acquired by diligence he loses through his being a prey to anger. This is the fifth thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is a prey to anger, whether a woman or a man.

"Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy: 'Let him have no friends.' Why is that? No enemy relishes and enemy's having friends. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, the friends he may have, his companions, relatives and kin, will keep away from him through his being a prey to anger. This is the sixth thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is a prey to anger, whether a woman or a man.

"Also an enemy wishes thus for his enemy: 'Let him on the dissolution of the body, after death, reappear in a state of deprivation, in a bad destination, in perdition, even in hell.' Why is that? No enemy relishes an enemy's going to a good destination. Now when this person is angry, a prey to anger, ruled by anger, he misconducts himself in body, speech and mind, and by his misconduct in body, speech and mind, on the dissolution of the body, after death, he reappears in a state of deprivation, in a bad destination, in perdition, even in hell, through his being a prey to anger. This is the seventh thing gratifying and helpful to an enemy that befalls one who is angry, whether a woman or a man."

When anger does possess a man; He looks ugly; he lies in pain; What benefit he may come by He misconstrues as a mischance; He loses property (through fines) Because he has been working harm Through acts of body and speech By angry passion overwhelmed; The wrath and rage that madden him Gain him a name of ill-repute; His fellows, relatives and kin Will seek to shun him from afar; And anger fathers misery: This fury does so cloud the mind Of man that he cannot discern This fearful inner danger. An angry man no meaning knows, No angry man sees the Dhamma, So wrapped in darkness, as if blind, Is he whom anger dogs. Someone a man in anger hurts; But, when his anger is later spent With

difficulty or with ease, He suffers as if seared by fire. His look betrays the sulkiness Of some dim smoky smoldering glow. Whence may flare up an anger-blaze That sets the world of men aflame. He has no shame or conscience curb, No kindly words come forth from him, There is no island refuge for The man whom anger dogs. Such acts as will ensure remorse, Such as are far from the true Dhamma: It is of these that I would tell, So harken to my words. Anger makes man a parricide, Anger makes him a matricide, Anger can make him slay the saint As he would kill the common man. Nursed and reared by a mother's care, He comes to look upon the world, Yet the common man in anger kills The being who gave him life. No being but seeks his own self's good, None dearer to him than himself, Yet men in anger kill themselves, Distraught for reasons manifold: For crazed they stab themselves with daggers, In desperation swallow poison, Perish hanged by ropes, or fling Themselves over a precipice. Yet how their life-destroying acts Bring death unto themselves as well, That they cannot discern, and that Is the ruin anger breeds. This secret place, with anger's aid, Is where mortality sets the snare. To blot it out with discipline, With vision, strength, and understanding, To blot each fault out one by one, The wise man should apply himself, Training likewise in the true Dhamma; "Let smoldering be far from us." Then rid of wrath and free from anger, And rid of lust and free from envy, Tamed, and with anger left behind, Taintless, they reach Nibbana.