Snp 3.5 — Māgha Sutta — To The Young Brahmin Māgha

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Source: https://www.mindreleased.com/s/Sutta-Nipta_Bhikkhu_Candana_2026-2ggf.pdf#page=163
Source revision: ff6fa85ebaed058886a2d52b1b0d3e1b29eeca3b26995a23bff6a50066e84495
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Text

Snp. 3.5

Māgha Sutta

“To The Young Brahmin Māgha”

I have personally heard this.

Once, when The Blessed One was living in the Gijjha Peaks in Rājagaha, Māgha the young brahmin approached Him, and after paying his respect by venerating The Blessed One, he exchanged friendly greetings, and then sat to one a side and said:

“Master Gautama, I am a supporter, giving donations to the needy, and doing so in a generous and open-handed manner to whomever that comes asking for assistance. And from the wealth I possess, which I earn through my rightful and blameless livelihood, I give to others abundantly, be they just one person, two people, or three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, or ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred people, or even more.

“Now, Master Gautama, in being so generous, I would like to ask whether I am, in fact, obtaining and accruing any merits.”

The Blessed One then replied by saying:

“Certainly, young brahmin, a supporter giving donations to the needy, and doing so in a generous and open-handed manner to whomever that comes asking for assistance; who earns his wealth through rightful and blameless livelihood, giving to others abundantly, be they just one person, two people, or three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, or ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, a hundred people, or even more; in being so generous, you would, indeed, be obtaining and accruing many merits.”

487. Then, Māgha the young brahmin addressed The Blessed One in verse, by saying:

“Being a householder who supports the needy, giving food and drinks in an open-handed manner, to whomever comes asking for assistance as I seek to make merits, I ask the boundlessly generous Gautama, the maroon-robed homeless recluse, in what way, could these sacrifices and generous acts of mine become truly pure?”

488. And The Blessed One replied, in verse:

“Indeed, Māgha, for when a householder seeking merits, engages in supporting the needy, giving food and drinks in an open-handed manner to whomever that comes asking for his assistance, such a person would certainly attain to his heart’s desire of merits gained. Thus, one’s acts of generosity become pure because of the very purity of the recipients, who are indeed worthy to be receiving such gifts and offerings, in the first place.”

489. Then, the young brahmin Māgha said:

“O! Blessed One, I, being a householder who supports the needy, giving food and drinks in an open-handed manner to whomever that comes asking for assistance, as I seek to make merits, please kindly explain to me how to identify such a recipient, who is truly worthy of generous gifts.”

490. “Those who wander this world completely unattached, blameless, and spotless in character, who possess nothing, living restrained and fully in control of their behavior, having accomplished the goal of the Holy Life – it is they, the truly worthy ones, who should be presented with the generous offerings at the appropriate time, by the brahmin, seeking to gain boundless merits.

491. “Breaking all those shackles and fetters that bind, living tamed and fully released, free from misery and anguish, with nothing more to desire or hope for – it is they, the truly worthy ones, who should be presented with the generous offerings at the appropriate time, by the brahmin, seeking to gain boundless merits.

492. “Those who have finally liberated themselves from all things and fetters that bind, living tamed and fully released, free from misery and anguish, with nothing more to desire or hope for – it is they, the truly worthy ones, who should be presented with the generous offerings at the appropriate time, by the brahmin, seeking to gain boundless merits.

493. “Abandoning lust and anger, along with delusion, leaving them all behind, and having completely destroyed the heart’s contaminants (āsavas) too, they are indeed the ones who have lived the Holy Life to the fullest – it is they, the truly worthy ones, who should be presented with the

generous offerings at the appropriate time, by the brahmin, seeking to gain boundless merits.

494. “The ones whose hearts are completely void of deception or conceit, with all contaminants eradicated too; they are indeed the ones who have lived the Holy Life to the

fullest – it is they, the truly worthy ones, who should be presented with the generous offerings at the appropriate time, by the brahmin, seeking to gain boundless merits.

495. “Those who no longer fall prey to craving, remaining considerate of others and empty of expectations, are the ones who have indeed crossed the flood and now wander selflessly – it is they, the truly worthy ones, who should be presented with the generous offerings at the appropriate time, by the brahmin, seeking to gain boundless merits.

496. “Those with hearts that have not even a single drop of craving left in them, whether for things offered by this or any other world – it is they, the truly worthy ones, who should be presented with the generous offerings at the appropriate time, by the brahmin, seeking to gain boundless merits.

497. “Those who gave up entirely the search for sensual pleasures, wandering the world without having a place to call ‘home;’ living purposefully as they keep to the one single course of action, just like a shuttle, without digressing – it is they, the truly worthy ones, who should be presented with the generous offerings at the appropriate time, by the brahmin, seeking to gain boundless merits.

498. “Those who have freed themselves from lust, being fully in control of their sense faculties, and are just like the Moon released from the grip of the eclipsing Rāhu – it is they, the truly worthy ones, who should be presented with the generous offerings at the appropriate time, by the brahmin, seeking to gain boundless merits.

499. “Those who have calmed their heart, liberating it from the heaviness of lust and its agitation, for whom there are no future rebirths at all, having already rid themselves of the thirst to re-become, while still living this very life – it is they, the truly worthy ones, who should be presented with the generous offerings at the appropriate time, by the brahmin, seeking to gain boundless merits.

500. “Those who have abandoned birth and death altogether, without any leftover desires to re-experience things or exist further; the ones who have gone beyond all doubts – it is they, the truly worthy ones, who should be presented with the generous offerings at the appropriate time, by the brahmin, seeking to gain boundless merits.

501. “Those who tread lightly upon this world, having become their own island of refuge and sources of light wherever they go; not having or possessing anything, they are released – it is they, the truly worthy ones, who should be presented with the generous offerings at the appropriate time, by the brahmin, seeking to gain boundless merits.

502. “Those who, here and now, know and understand directly as it truly is: ‘This is my very last birth. There are no more renewed or future existences for me, anywhere!’ – it is they, the truly worthy ones, who should be presented with the

generous offerings at the appropriate time, by the brahmin, seeking to gain boundless merits.

503. “Those who possess the Higher Knowledges, are mindful throughout, as they correctly engage in the practice of the jhānas, and having attained Full Awakening themselves, they are now a refuge for the many – it is they, the truly worthy ones, who should be presented with the generous offerings at the appropriate time, by the brahmin, seeking to gain boundless merits.”

504. “So happy am I, for having asked my question! For it proved itself not to have been asked in vain, but useful and helpful indeed! The Blessed One has now explained and clarified to me how to identify the truly worthy recipient of generous gifts! You, indeed, are the One who knows the truth about such things. You, O! Lord, are the One who understands the Dhamma, clearly seeing the truth of it, directly as it is.”

505. Then, the young brahmin Māgha continued by saying:

“O! Blessed One, I, being a householder, who supports the needy, giving food and drinks in an open-handed manner to whomever that comes asking for assistance, as I seek to make merits; please, kindly explain to me, how one could make a worthy offering, appropriately and satisfactorily.”

506. And The Blessed One said:

“Be generous when you give, Māgha! While bestowing your gift, make sure your mind is bright and your heart joyful, remaining fully confident in the purity of your giving! It is

because so much depends on the very manner in which an offering is made by the giver; this is the catalyst that could bring so many blessings to the one making the offering, by removing the stains from one’s heart.

507. “The one empty of lust, having already expelled hatred from his heart, cultivates in himself the feeling of Mettā, that is the essence of benevolent universal loving kindness. And whether by day or by night, he stays constantly vigilant and mindful, while pervading all directions with the boundless Mettā, he feels in his heart.”

508. Then, Māgha, the young brahmin asked one more question:

“Who is the one purified, the one released and Awakened from all things that bind, Lord? How can one be able to take himself to the realm of Brahmā? This, I do not know, so, please kindly explain it to me. For all I can say is that despite my ignorance, The Blessed One is my witness that Brahmā has been seen today, in person! For us, truly there is no difference between seeing The Blessed One or Brahmā! Do explain please, O! Brilliant One, how one can be born in the radiant realm of Brahmā.”

509. And The Blessed One said:

“Whenever one makes an offering while putting into practice the three requirements in bestowing a gift, that is: before making an offering, the donor’s heart is glad and happy;

while in the process of giving, one's mind is bright and clear; and once having given, the heart feels joyfully contented, each time the act of generosity is remembered;

and if, Māgha, they would be making their offering to the ones truly worthy of generous gifts, then I declare that such a generous person is certain to be reborn in the realm of Brahmā."

When this was said, Māgha, the young brahmin exclaimed:

"It is excellent, O! Blessed One! It is marvelous, Lord! The Blessed One has made the Dhamma clear to me in many ways. I feel as though The Blessed One has turned upright what was overturned, revealing what was hidden, showing the correct path to someone who was lost, as if bringing a lamp into the darkness, for all those with eyesight to see.

"Bhante, I go for refuge to The Blessed One, to the Dhamma, and to the Sangha of Bhikkhus. May The Blessed One accept me as one of his lay disciples, who has taken refuge in Him, from today until the end of my life."