MN 75 — Magandiya Sutta: To Magandiya

English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu.

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Source revision: sha256:7c411108530c04aafcca0ac43267ed12227cbb2653320e8ae0bb686e566bb783

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Changes: Presentation only: original HTML markup reflowed into plain text; wording, numbering and source repetitions retained. No repetitions expanded.

Completeness: PARTIAL. Complete source excerpt preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure; source omits part of the canonical discourse.

Text

"Magandiya, suppose that there was a leper covered with sores and infections, devoured by worms, picking the scabs off the openings of his wounds with his nails, cauterizing his body over a pit of glowing embers. His friends, companions, & relatives would take him to a doctor. The doctor would concoct medicine for him, and thanks to the medicine he would be cured of his leprosy: well & happy, free, master of himself, going wherever he liked. Then suppose two strong men, having grabbed him with their arms, were to drag him to a pit of glowing embers. What do you think? Wouldn't he twist his body this way & that?"

"Yes, master Gotama. Why is that? The fire is painful to the touch, very hot & scorching."

"Now what do you think, Magandiya? Is the fire painful to the touch, very hot & scorching, only now, or was it also that way before?"

"Both now & before is it painful to the touch, very hot & scorching, master Gotama. It's just that when the man was a leper covered with sores and infections, devoured by worms, picking the scabs off the openings of his wounds with his nails, his faculties were impaired, which was why, even though the fire was actually painful to the touch, he had the skewed perception of 'pleasant.'"

"In the same way, Magandiya, sensual pleasures in the past were painful to the touch, very hot & scorching; sensual pleasures in the future will be painful to the touch, very hot & scorching; sensual pleasures at present are painful to the touch, very hot & scorching; but when beings are not free from passion for sensual pleasures — devoured by sensual craving, burning with sensual fever — their faculties are impaired, which is why, even though sensual pleasures are actually painful to the touch, they have the skewed perception of 'pleasant.'

"Now suppose that there was a leper covered with sores & infections, devoured by worms, picking the scabs off the openings of his wounds with his nails, cauterizing his body over a pit of glowing embers. The more he cauterized his body over the pit of glowing embers, the more disgusting, foul-smelling, & putrid the openings of his wounds would become, and yet he would feel a modicum of enjoyment & satisfaction because of the itchiness of his wounds. In the same way, beings not free from passion for sensual pleasures — devoured by sensual craving, burning with sensual fever — indulge in sensual pleasures. The more they indulge in sensual pleasures, the more their sensual craving increases and the more they burn with sensual fever, and yet they feel a modicum of enjoyment & satisfaction dependent on the five strings of sensuality.

"Now what do you think, Magandiya? Have you ever seen or heard of a king or king's minister — enjoying himself, provided & endowed with the five strings of sensuality, without abandoning sensual craving, without removing sensual fever — who has dwelt or will dwell or is dwelling free from thirst, his mind inwardly at peace?"

"No, master Gotama."

"Very good, Magandiya. Neither have I ever seen or heard of a king or king's minister — enjoying himself, provided & endowed with the five strings of sensuality, without abandoning sensual craving, without removing sensual fever — who has dwelt or will dwell or is dwelling free from thirst, his mind inwardly at peace. But whatever brahmans or contemplatives who have dwelt or will dwell or are dwelling free from thirst, their minds inwardly at peace, all have done so having realized — as it actually is present — the origination & disappearance, the allure, the danger, & the escape from sensual pleasures, having abandoned sensual craving and removed sensual fever."

Then at that moment the Blessed One exclaimed,

Freedom from disease: the foremost good fortune. Unbinding: the foremost ease. The eightfold: the foremost of paths going to the Deathless, Secure.

When this was said, Magandiya the wanderer said to the Blessed One, "It's amazing, master Gotama. It's astounding, how this, too, is well-stated by master Gotama: 'Freedom from disease: the foremost good fortune. Unbinding: the foremost ease.' We have also heard this said by earlier wanderers in the lineage of our teachers: 'Freedom from disease: the foremost good fortune. Unbinding: the foremost ease.' This agrees with that."

"But as for what you have heard said by earlier wanderers in the lineage of your teachers, Magandiya — 'Freedom from disease: the foremost good fortune. Unbinding: the foremost ease' — which freedom from disease is that, which Unbinding?"

When this was said, Magandiya the wanderer rubbed his own limbs with his hand. "This is that freedom from disease, master Gotama," he said. "This is that Unbinding. For I am now free from disease, happy, and nothing afflicts me."

"Magandiya, it's just as if there were a man blind from birth who couldn't see black objects... white... blue... yellow... red... or pink objects; who couldn't see even or uneven places, the stars, the sun, or the moon. He would hear a man with good eyesight saying, 'How wonderful, good sirs, is a white cloth — beautiful, spotless, & clean.' He would go in search of something white. Then another man would fool him with a grimy, oil-stained rag: 'Here, my good man, is a white cloth — beautiful, spotless, & clean.' The blind man would take it and put it on. Having put it on, gratified, he would exclaim words of gratification, 'How wonderful, good sirs, is a white cloth — beautiful, spotless, & clean.' Now what do you think, Magandiya? When that man blind from birth took the grimy, oil-stained rag and put it on; and, having put it on, gratified, exclaimed words of gratification, 'How wonderful, good sirs, is a white cloth — beautiful, spotless, & clean': Did he do so knowing & seeing, or out of faith in the man with good eyesight?"

"Of course he did it not knowing & not seeing, master Gotama, but out of faith in the man with good eyesight."

"In the same way, Magandiya, the wanderers of other sects are blind & eyeless. Without knowing freedom from disease, without seeing Unbinding, they still speak this verse:

Freedom from disease: the foremost good fortune. Unbinding: the foremost ease.

"This verse was stated by earlier worthy ones, fully self-awakened:

Freedom from disease: the foremost good fortune. Unbinding: the foremost ease. The eightfold: the foremost of paths going to the Deathless, Secure.

"But now it has gradually become a verse of run-of-the-mill people.

"This body, Magandiya, is a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction. And yet you say, with reference to this body, which is a disease, a cancer, an arrow, painful, an affliction: 'This is that freedom from disease, master Gotama. This is that Unbinding,' for you don't have the noble vision with which you would know freedom from disease and see Unbinding."

"I'm convinced, master Gotama, that you can teach me the Dhamma in such a way that I would know freedom from disease, that I would see Unbinding."

"Magandiya, it's just as if there were a man blind from birth who couldn't see black objects... white... blue... yellow... red... the sun or the moon. His friends, companions, & relatives would take him to a doctor. The doctor would concoct medicine for him, but in spite of the medicine his eyesight would not appear or grow clear. What do you think, Magandiya? Would that doctor have nothing but his share of weariness & disappointment?"

"Yes, master Gotama."

"In the same way, Magandiya, if I were to teach you the Dhamma — 'This is that freedom from disease; this is that Unbinding' — and you on your part did not know freedom from disease or see Unbinding, that would be wearisome for me; that would be troublesome for me."

"I'm convinced, master Gotama, that you can teach me the Dhamma in such a way that I would know freedom from disease, that I would see Unbinding."

"Magandiya, it's just as if there were a man blind from birth who couldn't see black objects... white... blue... yellow... red... the sun or the moon. Now suppose that a certain man were to take a grimy, oil-stained rag and fool him, saying, 'Here, my good man, is a white cloth — beautiful, spotless, & clean.' The blind man would take it and put it on.

"Then his friends, companions, & relatives would take him to a doctor. The doctor would concoct medicine for him: purges from above & purges from below, ointments & counter-ointments and treatments through the nose. And thanks to the medicine his eyesight would appear & grow clear. Then together with the arising of his eyesight, he would abandon whatever passion & delight he felt for that grimy, oil-stained rag. And he would regard that man as an enemy & no friend at all, and think that he deserved to be killed. 'My gosh, how long have I been fooled, cheated, & deceived by that man & his grimy, oil-stained rag! — "Here, my good man, is a white cloth — beautiful, spotless, & clean."'

"In the same way, Magandiya, if I were to teach you the Dhamma — 'This is that freedom from Disease; this is that Unbinding' — and you on your part were to know that freedom from Disease and see that Unbinding, then together with the arising of your eyesight you would abandon whatever passion & delight you felt with regard for the five clinging-aggregates. And it would occur to you, 'My gosh, how long have I been fooled, cheated, & deceived by this mind! For in clinging, it was just form that I was clinging to... it was just feeling... just perception... just fabrications... just consciousness that I was clinging to. With my clinging as a requisite condition, there arises becoming... birth... aging & death... sorrow, lamentation, pains, distresses, & despairs. And thus is the origin of this entire mass of stress.'"

"I'm convinced, master Gotama, that you can teach me the Dhamma in such a way that I might rise up from this seat cured of my blindness."

"In that case, Magandiya, associate with men of integrity. When you associate with men of integrity, you will hear the true Dhamma. When you hear the true Dhamma, you will practice the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma. When you practice the Dhamma in accordance with the Dhamma, you will know & see for yourself: 'These things are diseases, cancers, arrows. And here is where diseases, cancers, & arrows cease without trace. With the cessation of my clinging comes the cessation of becoming. With the cessation of becoming comes the cessation of birth. With the cessation of birth then aging & death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair all cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of suffering & stress."

When this was said, Magandiya the wanderer said, "Magnificent, Master Gotama! Magnificent! Just as if he were to place upright what was overturned, to reveal what was hidden, to point out the way to one who was lost, or to carry a lamp into the dark so that those with eyes could see forms, in the same way has Master Gotama — through many lines of reasoning — made the Dhamma clear. I go to Master Gotama for refuge, to the Dhamma, & to the community of monks. Let me obtain the going forth in Master Gotama's presence, let me obtain admission."

"Anyone, Magandiya, who has previously belonged to another sect and who desires the going forth & admission in this doctrine & discipline, must first undergo probation for four months. If, at the end of four months, the monks feel so moved, they give him the going forth & admit him to the monk's state. But I know distinctions among individuals in this matter."

"Master Gotama, if anyone who has previously belonged to another sect and desires the going forth & admission in this doctrine & discipline must first undergo probation for four months; and if, at the end of four months, the monks feel so moved, they give him the going forth & admit him to the monk's state; then I am willing to undergo probation for four years. If, at the end of four years, the monks feel so moved, let them give me the going forth & admit me to the monk's state."

Then Magandiya the wanderer received the going forth & the admission in the Blessed One's presence. And not long after his admission — dwelling alone, secluded, heedful, ardent, & resolute — he in no long time reached & remained in the supreme goal of the holy life, for which clansmen rightly go forth from home into homelessness, knowing & realizing it for himself in the here & now. He knew: "Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for the sake of this world." And thus Ven. Magandiya became another one of the arahants.