

SN 23.1
Saṃyutta Nikāya
The Connected Discourses

Khandhavagga Saṃyutta
Group of Discourses Connected to the Aggregates
Rādhā Saṃyutta
Connected Discourses to the Venerable Rādhā
Paṭhama Māra Vagga
(Section on Māra – Part 1)

Māra Sutta
“Who or What is Māra?”

Translated by Candana Bhikkhu

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Once, while The Blessed One was residing in Sāvathī, the Venerable Rādhā went and approached Him, and after respectfully paying homage to The Teacher, he sat to one side, and began asking a question:

“Bhante, people keep exclaiming: ‘*O This is Māra!*’ or ‘*That was Māra!*’ But, Bhante, who or what exactly is being referred to here, by the term ‘Māra’?”

“How is one to clearly get a definition of this ‘Māra’?”

a. “Rādhā, while encountering any kind of form (*rūpa*), it is necessary to know how that form itself could be none other than Māra himself! That is, the form one is witnessing may end up ultimately being there to trap and assassinate him, to murder and destroy him. And thus, form becomes the very representative of death, the gateway and the means by which the person ends up being stuck in the cycles of death!

“Therefore, Rādhā, you must constantly be vigilant in knowing and seeing that any kind of form could be Māra himself! That is, the form could be there, as a matter of fact, to simply trap and assassinate you, to murder and destroy you, because ultimately, form is the very representative of death, the gateway and the means by which you end up being stuck in the cycles of death!

“So, you must strive to see form as none other than a wound that keeps oozing with pus; a disease or sickness to heal from. You should look upon form as a poisonous arrow, a miserable pain, and the very source itself of such misery.

“For this reason, those who indeed have the right vision, that is, the ability to correctly see form for what it truly is, are the ones who witness and experience form in just this manner, Rādhā.

b. “Rādhā, while encountering any kind of feeling (*vedanā*), it is necessary to know how that feeling itself could be none other than Māra himself! That is, the feeling one is witnessing may end up ultimately being there to trap and assassinate him, to murder and destroy him. And thus, feeling becomes the very representative of death, the gateway and the means by which the person ends up being stuck in the cycles of death!

“Therefore, Rādhā, you must constantly be vigilant in knowing and seeing that any kind of feeling could be Māra himself! That is, the feeling could be there, as a matter of fact, to simply trap and assassinate you, to murder and destroy you, because ultimately, feeling is the very representative of death, the gateway and the means by which you end up being stuck in the cycles of death!

“So, you must strive to see feeling as none other than a wound that keeps oozing with pus; a disease or sickness to heal from. You should look upon feeling as a poisonous arrow; a miserable pain, and the very source itself of such misery.

“For this reason, those who indeed have the right vision, that is, the ability to correctly see feeling for what it truly is, are the ones who witness and experience feeling in just this manner, Rādhā.

c. “Rādhā, while encountering any kind of perception or memory (*saññā*), it is necessary to know how that perception itself could be none other than Māra himself! That is, the perception one is witnessing may end up ultimately being there to trap and assassinate him, to murder and destroy him. And thus, perception becomes the very representative of death, the gateway and the means by which the person ends up being stuck in the cycles of death!

“Therefore, Rādhā, you must constantly be vigilant in knowing and seeing that any kind of perception could be Māra himself! That is, the perception could be there, as a matter of fact, to simply trap and assassinate you, to murder and destroy you, because ultimately, perception is the very representative of death, the gateway and the means by which you end up being stuck in the cycles of death!

“So, you must strive to see perception as none other than a wound that keeps oozing with pus; a disease or sickness to heal from. You should look upon perception as a poisonous arrow, a miserable pain, and the very source itself of such misery.

“For this reason, those who indeed have the right vision, that is, the ability to correctly see perception for what it truly is, are the ones who witness and experience perception in just this manner, Rādhā.

d. “Rādhā, while encountering any kind of *saṅkhāra* or habitual tendency, it is necessary to know how that habitual tendency itself could be none other than Māra himself! That is, the habitual tendency one is witnessing may end up ultimately being there to trap and assassinate him, to murder and destroy him. And thus, habitual tendency becomes the very representative of death, the gateway and the means by which the person ends up being stuck in the cycles of death!

“Therefore, Rādhā, you must constantly be vigilant in knowing and seeing, that any kind of habitual tendency could be Māra himself! That is, the habitual tendency could be there, as a matter of fact, to simply trap and assassinate you, to murder and destroy you, because ultimately, habitual tendency is the very representative of death, the gateway and the means by which you end up being stuck in the cycles of death!

“So, you must strive to see habitual tendency as none other than a wound that keeps oozing with pus; a disease or sickness to heal from. You should look upon habitual tendency as a poisonous arrow, a miserable pain, and the very source itself of such misery.

“For this reason, those who indeed have the right vision, that is, the ability to correctly see habitual tendency for what it truly is, are the ones who witness and experience habitual tendency in just this manner, Rādhā.

e. “Rādhā, while encountering any kind of *viññāṇa* or consciousness, it is necessary to know how that consciousness itself could be none other than Māra himself! That is, the consciousness one is witnessing may end up ultimately being there to trap and assassinate him, to murder and destroy him. And thus, consciousness becomes the very representative of death, the gateway and the means by which the person ends up being stuck in the cycles of death!

“Therefore, Rādhā, you must constantly be vigilant in knowing and seeing that any kind of consciousness could be Māra himself! That is, the consciousness could be there, as a matter of fact, to simply trap and assassinate you, to murder and destroy you, because ultimately, consciousness is the very representative of death, the gateway and the means by which you end up being stuck in the cycles of death!

“So, you must strive to see consciousness as none other than a wound that keeps oozing with pus; a disease or sickness to heal from. You should look upon consciousness as a poisonous arrow, a miserable pain, and the very source itself of such misery.

“For this reason, those who indeed have the right vision, that is, the ability to correctly see consciousness for what it truly is, are the ones who witness and experience consciousness in just this manner, Rādhā.

1. Then, the Venerable Rādhā asked a further question:

“As to ‘*right vision*’ Bhante, for what purpose is it, the capacity to see correctly?”

And The Blessed One replied by saying:

“The purpose of right vision, Rādhā, of having the capacity to see correctly, is experiencing disgust, becoming disillusioned.”

2. “Bhante, for what purpose is the experiencing of disgust and becoming disillusioned?”

“The purpose of experiencing disgust and disillusionment, Rādhā, is to experience dispassion and the fading away of all manner of passions.”

3. “But, Bhante, for what purpose is the experiencing of dispassion and the fading away of all passions?”

“The purpose of experiencing dispassion and the fading away of all passions, Rādhā, is to experience freedom and release.”

4. “But, Bhante, for what purpose is the experiencing of freedom and release?”

“The purpose of experiencing freedom and release, Rādhā, is to experience Nibbāna.”

5. “Bhante, for what purpose is the experiencing of Nibbāna?”

“Ah Rādhā, now you’ve asked a question that is far beyond your level of understanding! You should therefore know, that there are limits to your questioning, and what it is that such queries could provide for you, that is, with mere intellectual responses you’re seeking!

“However, know this, Rādhā -

“The Holy Life unmistakably flows and merges into Nibbāna!

“The main goal and consummation of living The Holy Life is Nibbāna itself!

“Therefore, Nibbāna itself is the culmination and very purpose of living The Holy Life!”

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