SN 35.95 — Māluṅkyaputta

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Text

Linked Discourses 35.95

10. The Sixes

Māluṅkyaputta

Then Venerable Māluṅkyaputta went up to the Buddha … and asked him, “Sir, may the Buddha please teach me Dhamma in brief. When I’ve heard it, I’ll live alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute.”

“Well now, Māluṅkyaputta, what are we to say to the young monks, when even an old man like you, elderly and senior, advanced in years, having reached the final stage of life, asks for brief advice?”

“Sir, even though I’m an old man, elderly and senior, may the Buddha please teach me Dhamma in brief! May the Holy One please teach me in brief! Hopefully I can understand the meaning of what the Buddha says. Hopefully I can be an heir of the Buddha’s teaching!”

“What do you think, Māluṅkyaputta? Do you have any desire or greed or fondness for sights known by the eye that are unseen, unseen before, and which you neither see nor think might be seen?”

“No, sir.”

“Do you have any desire or greed or affection for sounds known by the ear …

smells known by the nose …

tastes known by the tongue …

touches known by the body …

ideas known by the mind that are unknown, unknown before, and which you neither know nor think might be known?”

“No, sir.”

“In that case, when it comes to things that ought be seen, heard, thought, and known: in the seen will be merely the seen; in the heard will be merely the heard; in the thought will be merely the thought; in the known will be merely the known. When this is the case, you won’t be ‘by that’. When you’re not ‘by that’, you won’t be ‘in that’. When you’re not ‘in that’, you won’t be in this life or the next or in between the two. Just this is the end of suffering.”

“This is how I understand the detailed meaning of the Buddha’s brief statement:

‘When you see a sight, mindfulness is lost
as you focus on a pleasant feature.
Experiencing it with a mind full of desire,
you keep clinging to it.
Many feelings grow
arising from sights.
The mind is damaged
by covetousness and cruelty.
Heaping up suffering like this,
you’re said to be far from extinguishment.
When you hear a sound, mindfulness is lost
as you focus on a pleasant feature.
Experiencing it with a mind full of desire,
you keep clinging to it.
Many feelings grow
arising from sounds.
The mind is damaged
by covetousness and cruelty.
Heaping up suffering like this,
you’re said to be far from extinguishment.
When you smell an odor, mindfulness is lost
as you focus on a pleasant feature.
Experiencing it with a mind full of desire,
you keep clinging to it.
Many feelings grow
arising from smells.
The mind is damaged
by covetousness and cruelty.

Heaping up suffering like this,
you’re said to be far from extinguishment.
When you enjoy a taste, mindfulness is lost
as you focus on a pleasant feature.
Experiencing it with a mind full of desire,
you keep clinging to it.
Many feelings grow
arising from tastes.
The mind is damaged
by covetousness and cruelty.
Heaping up suffering like this,
you’re said to be far from extinguishment.
When you sense a touch, mindfulness is lost
as you focus on a pleasant feature.
Experiencing it with a mind full of desire,
you keep clinging to it.
Many feelings grow
arising from touches.
The mind is damaged
by covetousness and cruelty.
Heaping up suffering like this,
you’re said to be far from extinguishment.
When you know an idea, mindfulness is lost
as you focus on a pleasant feature.
Experiencing it with a mind full of desire,
you keep clinging to it.
Many feelings grow
arising from ideas.
The mind is damaged

by covetousness and cruelty.
Heaping up suffering like this,
you’re said to be far from extinguishment.
There’s no desire for sights
when you see a sight with mindfulness.
Experiencing it with a mind free of desire,
you don’t keep clinging to it.
Even as you see a sight
and get familiar with how it feels,
you wear away, you don’t heap up:
that’s how to live mindfully.
Eroding suffering like this,
you’re said to be in the presence of extinguishment.
There’s no desire for sounds
when you hear a sound with mindfulness.
Experiencing it with a mind free of desire,
you don’t keep clinging to it.
Even as you hear a sound
and get familiar with how it feels,
you wear away, you don’t heap up:
that’s how to live mindfully.
Eroding suffering like this,
you’re said to be in the presence of extinguishment.
There’s no desire for odors
when you smell an odor with mindfulness.
Experiencing it with a mind free of desire,
you don’t keep clinging to it.
Even as you smell an odor
and get familiar with how it feels,

you wear away, you don’t heap up:
that’s how to live mindfully.
Eroding suffering like this,
you’re said to be in the presence of extinguishment.
There’s no desire for tastes
when you enjoy a taste with mindfulness.
Experiencing it with a mind free of desire,
you don’t keep clinging to it.
Even as you savor a taste
and get familiar with how it feels,
you wear away, you don’t heap up:
that’s how to live mindfully.
Eroding suffering like this,
you’re said to be in the presence of extinguishment.
There’s no desire for touches
when you sense a touch with mindfulness.
Experiencing it with a mind free of desire,
you don’t keep clinging to it.
Even as you sense a touch
and get familiar with how it feels,
you wear away, you don’t heap up:
that’s how to live mindfully.
Eroding suffering like this,
you’re said to be in the presence of extinguishment.
There’s no desire for ideas
when you know an idea with mindfulness.
Experiencing it with a mind free of desire,
you don’t keep clinging to it.
Even as you know an idea

and get familiar with how it feels,

you wear away, you don't heap up:

that's how to live mindfully.

Eroding suffering like this,

you're said to be in the presence of extinguishment.'

That's how I understand the detailed meaning of the Buddha's brief statement."

"Good, good, Māluṅkyaputta! It's good that you understand the detailed meaning of what I've said in brief like this." And he repeated the verses in full.

"This is how to see the detailed meaning of what I said in brief."

And then Venerable Māluṅkyaputta approved and agreed with what the Buddha said. He got up from his seat, bowed and respectfully circled the Buddha, keeping him on his right, before leaving. Then Māluṅkyaputta, living alone, withdrawn, diligent, keen, and resolute, soon realized the supreme culmination of the spiritual path in this very life. He lived having achieved with his own insight the goal for which gentlemen rightly go forth from the lay life to homelessness.

He understood: "Rebirth is ended; the spiritual journey has been completed; what had to be done has been done; there is nothing further for this place." And Venerable Māluṅkyaputta became one of the perfected.