

# AN 6.20: Maraṇassati Sutta

## *Mindfulness of Death*

Translated by Bhante Suddhāso

On one occasion the Fortunate One was dwelling at Nātika, in the Brick Hall. There the Fortunate One addressed the monks:

“Monks, when mindfulness of death is developed and advanced, it is of great fruit and great benefit, leading into the deathless, concluding in the deathless. Monks, how can mindfulness of death be developed and advanced such that it is of great fruit and great benefit, leads to the deathless, and concludes in the deathless?”

“Here, monks, when the day is ending and the night is returning, a monk considers: ‘There are many causes of death: A snake might bite me, or a scorpion might sting me, or a centipede might sting me, and I might die as a result – that would be inconvenient for me. Or I might stumble and fall, or a meal I have eaten might make me sick, or my bile could become disturbed, or my phlegm might become disturbed, or knife-like winds might disturb me, and I might die as a result – that would be inconvenient for me.’ Monks, that monk should consider, ‘Are there any harmful, unwholesome phenomena in me that have not been abandoned, and which would be obstructive to me if I were to die tonight?’”

“Monks, when a monk is reflecting in this way, if he knows, ‘There are harmful, unwholesome phenomena in me that have not been abandoned and which would be obstructive to me if I were to die tonight,’ then, monks, that monk should produce extraordinary interest, effort, exertion, and striving, with unfailing mindfulness and awareness, in order to abandon those harmful, unwholesome phenomena. Monks, just as a person whose clothing or head was on fire would, in order to extinguish their clothing or head, produce extraordinary interest, effort, exertion, and striving, with unfailing mindfulness and awareness, in the same way, monks, that monk should produce extraordinary interest, effort, exertion, and striving, with unfailing mindfulness and awareness, in order to abandon those harmful, unwholesome phenomena.”

“However, monks, when a monk is reflecting in this way, if he knows, ‘There are no harmful, unwholesome phenomena in me that have not been abandoned and which would be obstructive to me if I were to die tonight,’ then, monks, that monk is to live with euphoria and happiness, training day and night in wholesome phenomena.”

“Here, monks, when the night is ending and the day is returning, a monk considers: ‘There are many causes of death: A snake might bite me, or a scorpion might sting me, or a centipede might sting me, and I might die as a result – that would be inconvenient for me. Or I might stumble and fall, or a meal I have eaten might make me sick, or my bile could become disturbed, or my phlegm might become disturbed, or knife-like winds might disturb me, and I might die as a result – that would be inconvenient for me.’ Monks, that monk should consider, ‘Are there any harmful, unwholesome phenomena in me that have not been abandoned, and which would be obstructive to me if I were to die today?’”

“Monks, when a monk is reflecting in this way, if he knows, ‘There are harmful, unwholesome phenomena in me that have not been abandoned and which would be obstructive to me if I were to die today,’ then, monks, that monk should produce extraordinary interest, effort, exertion, and striving, with unfailing mindfulness and awareness, in order to abandon those harmful, unwholesome phenomena. Monks, just as a person whose clothing or head was on fire would, in order to extinguish their clothing or head, produce extraordinary interest, effort, exertion, and striving, with unfailing mindfulness and awareness, in the same way, monks, that monk should produce extraordinary interest, effort, exertion, and striving, with unfailing mindfulness and awareness, in order to abandon those harmful, unwholesome phenomena.

“However, monks, when a monk is reflecting in this way, if he knows, ‘There are no harmful, unwholesome phenomena in me that have not been abandoned and which would be obstructive to me if I were to die today,’ then, monks, that monk is to live with euphoria and happiness, training day and night in wholesome phenomena.

“Monks, when mindfulness of death is developed and advanced in this way, it is of great fruit and great benefit, leading into the deathless, concluding in the deathless.”