SN 23.1 — SN 23:1 Mortality | Māra Sutta

English translation by Ṭhānissaro Bhikkhu.

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

Completeness: ABBREVIATED. Every source-unit character is preserved, including introductions, notes and verse structure. Thanissaro's collection-level note explicitly states that repetitions were cut: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/about.html. This is evidence about the translation method, not an assertion that every individual unit contains an omission; no repetitions reconstructed.

Text

Mortality

Māra Sutta (SN 23:1)

Near Sāvathī. Then Ven. Rādha went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to the Blessed One, “‘Māra, Māra,’ it is said, lord. To what extent is there said to be Māra?”

“Rādha, when there is form, there would be Māra (Mortality) or what mortalizes or what is mortalized. Therefore, Rādha, see form as ‘Māra’ or ‘mortalizing’ or ‘mortalized.’ See it as a disease, a cancer, an arrow, a misery, a great misery. Those who see it this way see it rightly.

“When there is feeling…

“When there is perception…

“When there are fabrications…

“When there is consciousness, there would be Māra (Mortality) or what mortalizes or what is mortalized. Therefore, Rādha, see consciousness as ‘Māra’ or ‘mortalizing’ or ‘mortalized.’ See it as a disease, a cancer, an arrow, a misery, a great misery. Those who see it this way see it rightly.

“But seeing rightly, lord, has what as its purpose?”

“Seeing rightly, Rādha, has disenchantment as its purpose.”

“And disenchantment, lord, has what as its purpose?”

“Disenchantment, Rādha, has dispassion as its purpose.”

“And dispassion, lord, has what as its purpose?”

“Dispassion, Rādha, has release as its purpose.”

“And release, lord, has what as its purpose?”

“Release, Rādha, has unbinding as its purpose.”

“And unbinding, lord, has what as its purpose?”

“The question has gone too far, Rādha. You can’t hold on up to the limit of questions, for this holy life is lived with unbinding as its foothold, with unbinding as its culmination, unbinding as its final end.”

Publisher references (not part of the sutta)

See also: MN 44; SN 22:60; SN 22:79; SN 22:85; AN 9:36; AN 10:58