

Sutta Nipāta: The Great Chapter  
9: The Dart (Salla Sutta)  
Translated by Bhikkhu Bodhi

Without a sign, unknown  
is the life of mortals here—  
it is difficult and short,  
and conjoined with suffering. (1)

For there is no way by which  
those who have been born will not die.  
Death occurs also when one has reached old age:  
for such is the nature of living beings. (2)

Just as when fruits have ripened,  
there is always fear of their falling;  
so for mortals who have taken birth,  
there is always fear of death. (3)

Just as the clay pots  
produced by a potter  
all finally end up by breaking,  
such is the life of mortals. (4)

Both the young and the old,  
both the foolish and the wise,  
all go under the control of death;  
all have death as their destination. (5)

When those overpowered by death  
are going from here to the next world,  
the father cannot protect his son,  
nor can one protect one's relatives. (6)

Even as the relatives are looking on  
and wailing profusely,  
see how each of the mortals is led away  
like a cow to be slaughtered. (7)

Thus the world is stricken  
by death and by old age;  
therefore the wise do not sorrow,  
having understood the way of the world. (8)

You who do not know the path  
by which he has come or gone,  
not perceiving either end,  
yet lament without purpose. (9)

If while he is lamenting,  
a bewildered person, injuring himself,  
could derive some benefit,  
a wise person too would do the same. (10)

It is not by weeping or sorrowing  
that one obtains peace of mind.  
One's suffering arises still more  
and one's body is harmed. (11)

One becomes thin and pale,  
and one inflicts injury upon oneself.  
The departed are not thereby sustained;  
thus lamentation is useless. (12)

Without abandoning sorrow,  
a person incurs still more suffering.  
Bemoaning the one who has died,  
one comes under the control of sorrow. (13)

Behold others, too, about to depart,  
people who fare according to their kamma:  
living beings just trembling here,  
having come under the control of death. (14)

In whatever way they conceive it,  
it turns out otherwise.  
Such is separation:  
see the way of the world! (15)

Even if a person were to live  
for a hundred years or longer,  
there is a separation from one's group of relatives  
when one abandons life here. (16)

Therefore, having heard it from the arahant,  
one should stop lamentation.  
Having seen that he has departed and died,  
realize, "I cannot [bring the dead back to life]." (17)

Just as, if one's shelter were blazing,  
one would extinguish the fire with water,  
so too a sensible person—  
wise, learned, skilled—  
would quickly blow away arisen sorrow,  
as the wind does a tuft of cotton wool. (18)

[Blow away] lamentation and muttering,  
and one's own dejection:  
seeking happiness for one's self,  
one should draw out the dart from oneself. (19)

With the dart drawn out, unattached,  
having attained peace of mind,  
having overcome all sorrow,  
sorrowless, one is quenched. (20)