

## ***Upajjhatthana Sutta (AN 5:57)*** **Five Things to Frequently Contemplate**

*Translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu [Suttas/AN/5:57](#)*

“Monks, there are five things that should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic. What five?

“‘I am subject to decay; I am not exempt from decay.’ This should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

“‘I am subject to sickness; I am not exempt from sickness.’ This should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

“‘I am subject to dying; I am not exempt from dying.’ This should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

“‘Everything that is beloved and pleasing will change and be separated from me.’ This should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

“‘I am the owner of my karma, the recipient of my karma, born from my karma, bound to my karma, inseparable from my karma. Any action that I do – whether it is good or evil – I will receive its result.’ This should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

“Monks, for what benefit should ‘I am subject to decay; I am not exempt from decay’ be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic? Monks, there are beings who are intoxicated with youth. Because of that intoxication, they engage in physical misconduct, verbal misconduct, and mental misconduct. When they frequently contemplate this, that intoxication with youth is either diminished or completely abandoned. Monks, it is for this benefit that ‘I am subject to decay; I am not exempt from decay’ should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

“Monks, for what benefit should ‘I am subject to sickness; I am not exempt from sickness’ be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic? Monks, there are beings who are intoxicated with health. Because of that intoxication, they engage in physical misconduct, verbal misconduct, and mental misconduct. When they frequently contemplate this, that intoxication with health is either diminished or completely abandoned. Monks, it is for this benefit that ‘I am subject to sickness; I am not exempt from sickness’ should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

“Monks, for what benefit should ‘I am subject to dying; I am not exempt from dying’ be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic? Monks, there are beings who are intoxicated with life. Because of that intoxication, they engage in physical misconduct, verbal misconduct, and mental misconduct. When they frequently contemplate this, that intoxication with life is either diminished or completely abandoned. Monks, it is for this benefit that ‘I am subject to dying; I am not exempt from dying’ should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

“Monks, for what benefit should ‘Everything that is beloved and pleasing will change and be separated from me’ be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic? Monks, there are beings who have interest and passion for things that are beloved and pleasing. Because of that passion, they engage in physical misconduct, verbal misconduct, and mental misconduct. When they frequently contemplate this, that interest and passion for things that are beloved and pleasing is either diminished or completely abandoned. Monks, it is for this benefit that ‘Everything that is beloved and pleasing will change and be separated from me’ should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

“Monks, for what benefit should ‘I am the owner of my karma, the recipient of my karma, born from my karma, bound to my karma, inseparable from my karma. Any action that I do – whether it is good or evil – I will receive its result’ be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a

layperson or a monastic? Monks, there are beings who have committed physical misconduct, verbal misconduct, or mental misconduct. When they frequently contemplate this, that misconduct is either diminished or completely abandoned. Monks, it is for this benefit that ‘I am the owner of my karma, the recipient of my karma, born from my karma, bound to my karma, inseparable from my karma. Any action that I do – whether it is good or evil – I will receive its result’ should be frequently contemplated, whether one is a woman or a man, a layperson or a monastic.

“Monks, a disciple of the noble ones considers this: ‘It is not just me that is subject to decay and not exempt from decay. All beings that come and go, die and reappear, are subject to decay and are not exempt from decay.’ When one frequently contemplates this, the path is produced. One practices that path, develops it, and commits to it. When one practices that path, develops it, and commits to it, the fetters are completely abandoned and the underlying tendencies are destroyed.

“Monks, a disciple of the noble ones considers this: ‘It is not just me that is subject to sickness and not exempt from sickness. All beings that come and go, die and reappear, are subject to sickness and are not exempt from sickness.’ When one frequently contemplates this, the path is produced. One practices that path, develops it, and commits to it. When one practices that path, develops it, and commits to it, the fetters are completely abandoned and the underlying tendencies are destroyed.

“Monks, a disciple of the noble ones considers this: ‘It is not just me that is subject to dying and not exempt from dying. All beings that come and go, die and reappear, are subject to dying and are not exempt from dying.’ When one frequently contemplates this, the path is produced. One practices that path, develops it, and commits to it. When one practices that path, develops it, and commits to it, the fetters are completely abandoned and the underlying tendencies are destroyed.

“Monks, a disciple of the noble ones considers this: ‘It is not just what is beloved and pleasing to me that changes and is separated from me. What is beloved and pleasing to all beings that come and go, die and reappear, changes and is separated from them.’ When one frequently contemplates this, the path is produced. One practices that path, develops it, and commits to it. When one practices that path, develops it, and commits to it, the fetters are completely abandoned and the underlying tendencies are destroyed.

“Monks, a disciple of the noble ones considers this: ‘It is not just me that is the owner of my karma, the recipient of my karma, born from my karma, bound to my karma, inseparable from my karma, and that receives the result of any action I do – whether it is good or evil. All beings that come and go, die and reappear, are the owners of their karma, the recipients of their karma, born from their karma, bound to their karma, inseparable from their karma, and receive the results of any actions that they do – whether those actions are good or evil.’ When one frequently contemplates this, the path is produced. One practices that path, develops it, and commits to it. When one practices that path, develops it, and commits to it, the fetters are completely abandoned and the underlying tendencies are destroyed.

“Subject to sickness, subject to decay, and subject to dying;  
This is the nature of beings, which ordinary people despise.

If I despise that, and the beings who have that nature,  
It would not be appropriate, as I am just the same.

Considering this, I knew the state free of acquisition,  
I knew intoxication with health, youth, and life.

I overcame all intoxication, and saw the safety of renunciation.  
I made an effort, and saw Nibbāna.

Now it is not possible for me to indulge in sensuality.  
I will not return – I have completed the spiritual life.”

## **The Five Regular Reflections.**

### **Yoniso manisikhara : wise reflection**

Contemplation is not thinking about a subject.

It is not an intellectual exercise as such, but to open up to our feelings.

Here we are trying to accept something that is difficult for us.

We choose a phrase or passage that touches us, sometimes stings us.

By repeating it gently into the heart we are allowing the heart to accept the way it is.

There's a surrender. And with it comes a sense of relief, that can bring a smile to the face.

These phrases are to be repeated quietly into the heart.

Stay with the heart's reaction.

Wait for them to be digested.

**Sickness** is a mini-death, a preparation for death. The body manifests its vulnerability. There is discomfort or pain and there is some disability.

This undermines the obsession with health and beauty.

*Sickness is unpreventable.*

*This body is subject to disease*

*This body is of a nature to fall in.*

*This body has not gone beyond sickness.*

**Ageing** as progressive dying.

This contemplation undermines our intoxication with youth, of trying to stay for ever young..

*Ageing is inevitable.*

*This body is subject to ageing.*

*This body has not gone beyond ageing.*

*This body is now in a process of ageing.*

## **Life is uncertain : Death is certain.**

This undermines the overwhelming clinging to life at all costs. To shoring it up, barricading it with fame, riches and power.

Sayings from the Buddha:

*Death is inescapable.*

*Everyone must die*

*The remainder of our life span is decreasing continually.*

*Death will come regardless of whether or not we have made time to practice the Dhamma*

*We don't know when we are going to die.*

*Human life expectancy is uncertain*

*There are many causes of death*

*The human body is very fragile*

*Only the practice of Dhamma can help us at the time of our death*

*Our wealth cannot help us*

*Our loved ones cannot help us*

*Our own body cannot help us*

*Death as inescapable:*

*This body is subject to death.*

*This body has not gone beyond death.*

*This body will die.*

I must be parted and separated from everyone  
and everything dear and agreeable to me.

## **Contemplations on Karma.**

*I own my actions.*

*I inherit the results of my actions.*

*I am born of my actions.*

*I form relations through my actions*

*I live dependent on my actions.*

*Whatever I do for good or for ill, I shall inherit the results.*

## **Contemplations to bring a sense of urgency to our practice.**

This body is subject to disease

This body is of a nature to fall in.

This body has not gone beyond sickness.

This body is subject to ageing.

This body has not gone beyond ageing.

This body is now in a process of ageing.

This body is subject to death.

This body has not gone beyond death.

This body will die.

I will be parted and separated from everyone  
and everything dear and pleasing to me.

I own my actions.

I inherit the results of my actions.

I am born of my actions.

I form relations through my actions

I live dependent on my actions.

Whatever I do for good or for ill,  
I shall inherit the results.