SN 3.21 — Individuals

English translation by Bhikkhu Sujato.
Source: https://suttacentral.net/sn3.21/en/sujato
Source revision: 3bc8665e0e28e70518eba94304a2fafcab80f933
License: CC0-1.0 — https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/

Text

Linked Discourses 3.21

3. Kosala

Individuals

At Sāvatthī.

Then King Pasenadi of Kosala went up to the Buddha, bowed, and sat down to one side. The Buddha said to him:

“Great king, these four individuals are found in the world. What four?

The dark bound for darkness,

the dark bound for light,

the light bound for darkness,

and the light bound for light.

And how is an individual dark and bound for darkness? It’s when an individual is reborn in a low family—a family of corpse-workers, bamboo-workers, hunters, chariot-makers, or scavengers—poor, with little to eat or drink, where life is tough, and food and shelter are hard to find. And they’re ugly, unsightly, deformed, sickly—one-eyed, crippled, lame, or half-paralyzed. They don’t get to have food, drink, clothes, and vehicles; garlands, fragrance, and makeup; or bed, house, and lighting. And they do bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. When their body breaks up, after death, they’re reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.

This individual is like someone who goes from darkness to darkness, from blackness to blackness, from bloodstain to bloodstain. That’s how an individual is dark and bound for darkness.

And how is an individual dark and bound for light? It’s when an individual is reborn in a low family—a family of corpse-workers, bamboo-workers, hunters, chariot-makers, or scavengers—poor, with little to eat or drink, where life is tough, and food and shelter are hard to find. And they’re ugly, unsightly, deformed, sickly—one-eyed, crippled, lame, or half-paralyzed. They don’t get to have food, drink, clothes, and vehicles; garlands, fragrance, and makeup; or bed, house, and lighting. But they do good things by way of body, speech, and mind. When their body breaks up, after death, they’re reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.

This individual is like someone who ascends from the ground to a couch; from a couch to horseback; from horseback to an elephant; and from an elephant to a stilt longhouse. That's how an individual is dark and bound for light.

And how is an individual light and bound for darkness? It's when an individual is reborn in an eminent family—a well-to-do family of aristocrats, brahmins, or householders—rich, affluent, and wealthy, with lots of gold and silver, lots of property and assets, and lots of money and grain. And they're attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty. They get to have food, drink, clothes, and vehicles; garlands, fragrance, and makeup; and bed, house, and lighting. But they do bad things by way of body, speech, and mind. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a place of loss, a bad place, the underworld, hell.

This individual is like someone who descends from a stilt longhouse to an elephant; from an elephant to horseback; from horseback to a couch; and from a couch to the ground; and from the ground they enter darkness. That's how an individual is light and bound for darkness.

And how is an individual light and bound for light? It's when an individual is reborn in an eminent family—a well-to-do family of aristocrats, brahmins, or householders—rich, affluent, and wealthy, with lots of gold and silver, lots of property and assets, and lots of money and grain. And they're attractive, good-looking, lovely, of surpassing beauty. They get to have food, drink, clothes, and vehicles; garlands, fragrance, and makeup; and bed, house, and lighting. And they do good things by way of body, speech, and mind. When their body breaks up, after death, they're reborn in a good place, a heavenly realm.

This individual is like someone who shifts from one couch to another; from the back of one horse to another; from one elephant to another; or from one stilt longhouse to another. That's how an individual is light and bound for light. These are the four individuals found in the world."

That is what the Buddha said. …

"O King, some people are poor,

faithless and stingy.

Miserly, with bad intentions,

they lack regard, they have wrong view.

They abuse and insult

ascetics and brahmins

and other supplicants.

They're nihilists and bullies,

who prevent others from giving

food to beggars.

O King, ruler of the people:
when such people die
they fall into the terrible hell—
from darkness they’re bound for darkness.
O King, some people are poor,
but faithful and not stingy.
They give with best of intentions,
that peaceful-hearted person.
They rise for and bow to
ascetics and brahmins
and other supplicants.
Training in moral conduct,
they don’t prevent others from giving
food to beggars.
O King, ruler of the people:
when such people die
they go to the Third Heaven—
from darkness they’re bound for light.
O King, some people are rich,
but faithless and stingy.
Miserly, with bad intentions,
they lack regard, they have wrong view.
They abuse and insult
ascetics and brahmins
and other supplicants
They’re nihilists and bullies,
who prevent others from giving
food to beggars.
O King, ruler of the people:

when such people die
they fall into the terrible hell—
from light they’re bound for darkness.
O King, some people are rich,
faithful and not stingy.
They give with best of intentions,
that peaceful-hearted person.
They rise for and bow to
ascetics and brahmins
and other supplicants.
Training in moral conduct,
they don’t prevent others from giving
food to beggars.
O King, ruler of the people:
when such people die
they go to the Third Heaven—
from light they’re bound for light.”