AN 4.85 — From Darkness to Darkness

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Text

Numbered Discourses 4.85

9. Confirmed

From Darkness to Darkness

“Mendicants, 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. 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 … 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. 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. 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 … 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. That's how an individual is light and bound for light.

These are the four individuals found in the world."