

The Characteristics of Not-Soul-SN 22.59

One time, the auspicious one was living in Bārāṇasi in the deer grove at rishi's fall. There the auspicious one addressed the group of five monks.

"Monks," he said.

"Sir," those monks replied to the auspicious one.

The auspicious one said this:

"Monks, form is not the soul. Monks, if form were this soul, then form would not lead this to oppression, and one would be able to control form—'Let my form be like this. Let my form not be like that.' Monks, because form is not the soul, form leads to oppression, and one is not able to control form—'Let my form be like this. Let my form not be like that.'

Sensation is not the soul. Monks, If sensation were this soul, sensation would not lead this to oppression, and one could control sensation—'Let my sensation be like this. Let my sensation not be like that.' And because, monks, sensation is not the soul, sensation leads to oppression, and one can't control sensation—'Let my sensation be like this. Let my sensation not be like that.'

Recognition is not the soul. Monks, if recognition were this soul, recognition would not lead this to oppression, and one would be able to control recognition—'Let my recognition be like this. Let my recognition not be like that.' And because, monks, recognition is not the soul, recognition leads to oppression, and one cannot control recognition—'Let my recognition be like this, let my recognition not be like that.'

Mergings are not the soul. Monks, If mergings were this soul, mergings would not lead this to oppression, and one would be able to control mergings—'Let my mergings be like this. Let my mergings not be like that.' And because, monks, mergings are not the soul, mergings lead to oppression, and one cannot control mergings—'Let my mergings be like this. Let my mergings not be like that.'

Perception is not the soul. Monks, if perception were this soul, perception would not lead this to oppression, and one would be able to control perception—'Let my perception be like this. Let my perception not be like that.' And because monks, perception is not the soul, perception leads to oppression, and one is not able to control perception—'Let my perception be like this. Let my perception not be like that.' "

"What do you think, monks, is material form permanent or transient?"

"Transient, Sir."

"Is that which is transient, painful or pleasurable?"

"Painful, Sir."

"And that which is transient, painful, and has a changing quality, would it be sound to conclude—'This is mine. I am this. This is my soul.'?"

"No, It wouldn't, Sir."

"What do you think, monks, is sensation permanent or transient?"

"Transient, Sir."

"Is that which is transient, painful or pleasurable?"

"Painful, Sir."

"And that which is transient, painful, and has a changing quality, would it be sound to conclude—'This is mine. I am this. This is my soul.'?"

"No, It wouldn't, Sir."

"What do you think, monks, is recognition permanent or transient?"

"Transient, Sir."

"Is that which is transient, painful or pleasurable?"

"Painful, Sir."

"And that which is transient, painful, and has a changing quality, would it be sound to conclude—'This is mine. I am this. This is my soul.'?"

"No, It wouldn't, Sir."

"What do you think, monks, are mergings permanent or transient?"

"Transient, Sir."

"Is that which is transient, painful or pleasurable?"

"Painful, Sir."

“And that which is transient, painful, and has a changing quality, would it be sound to conclude—‘This is mine. I am this. This is my soul.’?”

“No, It wouldn’t, Sir.”

What do you think, monks, is perception permanent or transient?

“Transient, Sir.”

“And is that which is transient, painful or pleasurable?”

“Painful, Sir.”

“And for that which is transient, painful, has the quality of change, would it be sound to conclude—‘This is mine. I am this. This is my soul.’?”

“No, It wouldn’t, Sir.”

“Because of that, monks, whatever material form, past, future, or present, internal or external, crude or subtle, bad or good, near or far, all material form is to be seen as it is with right awareness just like this: ‘This is not mine. I am not this. This is not my soul.’

Whatever sensation, past, future, or present, internal or external, coarse, or subtle, good or bad, near or far, all sensation is to be seen as it is, with right awareness just like this: ‘This is not mine. I am not this. This is not myself.’

Whatever recognition, past, future, or present, internal or external, coarse, or subtle, good or bad, near or far, all recognition is to be seen as it is, with right awareness just like this: ‘This is not mine. I am not this. This is not myself.’

Whatever mergings, past, future, or present, internal or external, coarse, or subtle, good or bad, near or far, all mergings are to be seen as they are, with right awareness just like this: ‘This is not mine. I am not this. This is not myself.’

Whatever perception, past, future, or present, internal or external, coarse or subtle, bad or good, near or far, all perceptions are to be seen as they are with right awareness just like this: ‘This is not mine, I am not this. This is not my soul.’

Having seen this, monks, a disciple who has learned from the noble ones, becomes disenchanted with material form, becomes disenchanted with sensation, becomes disenchanted with recognition, becomes disenchanted with mergings, becomes disenchanted with perception. Having become disenchanted, infatuation fades away. Without infatuation, he is freed. In freedom, there is the knowledge of freedom. He is aware, “Births have run out. The supreme life has been fulfilled. What was to be done has been done. There is no more coming back here again.”

The auspicious one said this. Pleased, the group of five monks delighted in the auspicious one’s words. While this response was being spoken, the group of five monks’ psyches, by not taking on anything, were freed from the impulses.

Saṃyutta Nikāya 22.59