

LIVING WITH THE SALLEKHA SUTTA: EFFACEMENT, MAJJHIMA NIKĀYA 8

*One by one, little by little,
moment by moment,
a wise man should remove his own impurities
as a smith removes the dross from silver.*

Dhammapada verse 239
Translated by Acharya Buddharakkhita

INSTRUCTIONS

1. After reading MN 8 Sallekha Sutta, choose three of the unwholesome qualities that you will examine in your life for the next three months. Fill in the blanks in each section taking the wording from the sutta. For easy reference, include the number from the sutta for each quality. This will also remind you that you have only taken a selection of qualities to work with.
2. Determine a time each day to do the reflections on these qualities using the method found in the sutta itself. Work with them in exactly the way that they are given in the sutta using each of the five methods reading the introduction to each section as well as the conclusion. At the beginning and at the end of each day may be most effective. You may also want to do this reflection before or after meditation. Place this worksheet in a conspicuous spot such as your pillow or meditation cushion so you are constantly reminded.
3. Once a week, read the entire sutta again so you do not lose touch with the fact that the Blessed One pointed out many unwholesome qualities to abandon and many wholesome qualities to cultivate.
4. As you actively and faithfully explore the teachings of the Blessed One in other texts, you will naturally pay special attention to teachings that relate to the wholesome qualities you are now trying to cultivate. Consider putting particularly helpful passages into your personal anthology.

As explained in the notes to the Wisdom Publication translation, many of these qualities are part of a set and can be found in other suttas.

- (2)-(11) The ten courses of wholesome and unwholesome action (kammāpatha) (see MN 9.4, 9.6)
- (11-18) the eight factors of the eightfold path—wrong and right
- (19)-(20) sometimes added to eightfold path (see MN 117.34-36)
- (21)-(23) last three of the five hindrances (see MN 10.36) the first two being identical with (9) and (10)
- (24)-(33) ten of the 16 imperfections that defile the mind (see MN 7.3)
- (37)-(43) Seven bad and good qualities (saddhammā) mentioned in MN 53.11-7

5. At the end of the three month period, choose another three qualities to examine and begin the process again.

The excerpt of Sallekha Sutta in this worksheet from *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, Translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, Wisdom Publications, Boston, 2001. A translation of this sutta by Venerable Nyanaponika Thera can also be found on accesstoinsight.org. Verse numbers (indicated with the § symbol) are the same for both versions.

Date Begun _____

Date to begin next three _____

EFFACEMENT

§12. “Now, Cunda, here effacement should be practised by you:

() Others will _____; we shall _____ here
—effacement should be practised thus.

() Others will _____; we shall _____ here
—effacement should be practised thus.

() Others will _____; we shall _____ here
—effacement should be practised thus.

INCLINATION OF MIND

§13. “Cunda, I say that even the inclination of the mind towards wholesome states is of great benefit, so what should be said of bodily and verbal acts conforming [to such a state of mind]? Therefore, Cunda:

() Mind should be inclined thus:

‘Others will _____; we shall _____ here.’

() Mind should be inclined thus:

‘Others will _____; we shall _____ here.’

() Mind should be inclined thus:

‘Others will _____; we shall _____ here.’

AVOIDANCE

§14. “Cunda, suppose there were an uneven path and another even path by which to avoid it; and suppose there were an uneven ford and another even ford by which to avoid it. So too:

() A person given to _____ has _____ by which to avoid it.

() A person given to _____ has _____ by which to avoid it.

() A person given to _____ has _____ by which to avoid it.

THE WAY LEADING UPWARD

§15. “Cunda, just as all unwholesome states lead downwards and all wholesome states lead upwards, so too:

- () A person given to _____ has _____ to lead him upwards.
- () A person given to _____ has _____ to lead him upwards.
- () A person given to _____ has _____ to lead him upwards.

THE WAY OF EXTINGUISHING

§16. “Cunda, that one who is himself sinking in the mud should pull out another who is sinking in the mud is impossible; that one who is not himself sinking in the mud should pull out another who is sinking in the mud is possible.

That one who is himself untamed, undisciplined, [with defilements] unextinguished, should tame another, discipline him, and help extinguish [his defilements] is impossible; that one who is himself tamed, disciplined, [with defilements] extinguished, should tame another, discipline him, and help extinguish [his defilement] is possible. So too:

- () A person given to _____ has _____ by which to extinguish it.
- () A person given to _____ has _____ by which to extinguish it.
- () A person given to _____ has _____ by which to extinguish it.

CONCLUSION

§17. “So, Cunda, the way of effacement has been taught by me, the way of inclining the mind has been taught by me, the way of avoidance has been taught by me, the way leading upwards has been taught by me, and the way of extinguishing has been taught by me.

§18. “What should be done for his disciples out of compassion by a teacher who seeks their welfare and has compassion for them, that I have done for you, Cunda. There are these roots of trees, these empty huts. Meditate, Cunda, do not delay or else you will regret it later. This is our instruction to you.”

That is what the Blessed One said. The venerable Mahā Cunda was satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

Use this table to complete Effacement and Inclination of Mind sections

OTHERS WILL... WE SHALL... (1) be cruel/not be cruel (2) kill living beings/abstain from killing living beings (3) take what is not given/abstain from taking what is not given (4) be uncelibate/be celibate (5) speak falsehood/abstain from false speech (6) speak maliciously/abstain from malicious speech (7) speak harshly/abstain from harsh speech (8) gossip/abstain from gossip (9) be covetous/not be covetous (10) have ill will/be without ill will (11) be of wrong views/be of right view (12) be of wrong intention/be of right intention (13) be of wrong speech/be of right speech (14) be of wrong actions/be of right actions (15) be of wrong livelihood/be of right livelihood (16) be of wrong effort/be of right effort (17) be of wrong mindfulness/be of right mindfulness (18) be of wrong concentration/be of right concentration (19) be of wrong knowledge/be of right knowledge (20) be of wrong deliverance/be of right deliverance (21) be overcome by sloth and torpor/be free from sloth and torpor (22) be restless/not be restless (23) be doubters/go beyond doubt (24) be angry/not be angry (25) be resentful/not be resentful (26) be contemptuous/not be contemptuous (27) be insolent/not be insolent (28) be envious/not be envious (29) be avaricious/not be avaricious (30) be fraudulent/not be fraudulent (31) be deceitful/not be deceitful (32) be obstinate /not be obstinate (33) be arrogant/not be arrogant (34) be difficult to admonish/be easy to admonish (35) have bad friends/have good friends (36) be negligent/be diligent (37) be faithless/be faithful (38) be shameless/be shameful (39) have no fear of wrongdoing/be afraid of wrong doing (40) be of little learning/be of great learning (41) be lazy/be energetic (42) be unmindful/be established in mindfulness (43) lack wisdom /possess wisdom (44) adhere to their own views, hold on to them tenaciously and relinquish them with difficulty/not adhere to our own views or hold on to them tenaciously, but shall relinquish them easily

Use this table to complete Avoidance, The Way Leading Upward, and The Way of Extinguishing sections.

ONE GIVEN TO ...HAS ... BY WHICH TO AVOID IT, etc. (1) cruelty/non-cruelty (2) killing living beings/abstention from killing living beings (3) taking what is not given/abstention from taking what is not given (4) be uncelibate/celibacy (5) false speech/abstention from false speech (6) malicious speech/abstention from malicious speech (7) harsh speech/abstention from harsh speech (8) gossip/abstention from gossip (9) covetousness/uncovetousness (10) ill will/non-ill will (11) wrong view/right view (12) wrong intention/right intention (13) wrong speech/right speech (14) wrong actions/right actions (15) wrong livelihood/right livelihood (16) wrong effort/right effort (17) wrong mindfulness/right mindfulness (18) wrong concentration/right concentration (19) wrong knowledge/right knowledge (20) wrong deliverance/right deliverance (21) sloth and torpor/freedom from sloth and torpor (22) restless/non-restlessness (23) doubt/the state beyond doubt (24) anger/non-anger (25) resentment/non-resentment (26) contempt/non-contempt (27) insolence/non-insolence (28) envy/non-envy (29) avarice/non-avarice (30) fraud/non-fraud (31) deceit/non-deceit (32) obstinancy/non-obstinancy (33) arrogance/non-arrogance (34) being difficult to admonish/being easy to admonish (35) making bad friends/making good friends (36) negligence/diligence (37) faithlessness/faith (38) shamelessness/shame (39) fearlessness of wrongdoing/fear of wrong doing (40) little learning/great learning (41) laziness/the arousal of energy (42) unmindfulness/the establishment of mindfulness (43) lack of wisdom/the acquisition of wisdom (44) adhere to his own views, who holds on to them tenaciously and relinquishes them with difficulty/non-adherence to his own views, not holding on to them tenaciously and relinquishing them easily