Viveka,nissita

The Dependent-on-Solitude Formula

[The stages to spiritual liberation]

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1 Formula of attaining the goal

The ***viveka,nissita*** pericope is one of the most important formulas commonly found in the Sutta.[1] The *viveka,nissita* formula runs thus:

> …dependent on solitude,[2] dependent on fading away (of lust) [dispassion],[3] dependent on cessation (of suffering),[4] ripening in letting go (of defilements).[5]
>
> *viveka,nissitaṁ virāga,nissitaṁ nirodha,nissitaṁ vossagga,pariṇāmiṁ*

The formula is a clear statement of the purpose of the religious life—spiritual liberation. The Nikāyas have many suttas that apply the *viveka,nissita* formula to the awakening factors (*bojjhaṅga*), the most famous of which serves as the conclusion of **the Ānâpāna,sati Sutta** (M 118) [2]. The formula is also found at the end of the noble eightfold path formula (in place of "right knowledge" and "right liberation"), for example, ine **the Nāvā Sutta** (S 51.158) [3].

However, the usage of the *viveka,nissita* formula is not restricted to only the awakening factors in the Nikāyas. In **the Mahā,vagga** (the Great Division) of the Saṁyutta Nikāya,[6] for example, the formula is systematically applied to the path factors (*magg'aṅga*), the awakening factors (*bojjhaṅga*), the faculties (*indriya*), and the powers (*bala*).[7] The Mahā,vagga, however, treats the *viveka,nissita* in terms of the seven sets[8] collectively.

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[1] For a detailed study of *viveka,nissita* formula, see Gethin 2001:9, 147, 162-168, 254 & Bodhi, S:B 1891 n7.

[2] Here "solitude" (***viveka***), or seclusion, has a special reference to the overcoming of the 5 mental hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇā*). This whole phrase, beginning with "dependent on solitude is called **the *viveka,nissita* formula**. See Gethin 2001:162-168. According to **Paṭisambhidā,magga,** there are 5 kinds of "solitude" (*viveka*), ie overcoming of the hindrances: (1) solitude through suppression (*vikkhambhana viveka*); (2) solitude through the substitution of opposite or displacement by opposites (*tad-aṅga viveka*); (3) solitude through cutting off (*samuccheda viveka*); (4) solitude through tranquillization (*paṭipassaddhi viveka*); and (5) solitude through escape (*nissaraṇa viveka*) (Pm 1:27, 2:219-224; Vism 13.12/410, 22.110/693). See also "Introduction to the Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas" = SD 13.1 §4.2c.

[3] ***Virāga,*** also tr as "dispassion."

[4] ***Nirodha,*** ie, "non-arising of suffering."

[5] MA says that there are 2 kinds of letting go or relinquishment (of suffering) (***vossagga***): "giving up" (*paric-cāga*), ie the abandonment of defilements, and "entering into" (*pakkhandana*), ie culminating in nirvana. **Gethin** notes that this phrase is not unique to the 7 *bojjhaṅgā*, but is also found in connection with the factors of the noble eightfold path, the *indriya* and *bala* (2001:162 f). This formula shows that that each *bojjhaṅga* is to be developed successively "as dependent on solitude, dispassion [fading away] and cessation" (Gethin 2001:166).

[6] S 5/5:1-478. For an intro to **Mahā,vagga** of S, see S:B 1485-1522. As noted by Gethin (2001:163 n87), here the sections referred to are common to all the seven sets (see **Bodhi,pakkhiyā Dhammā** = SD 10.1(1)) and the dhyanas (cf Gethin 2001 ch 7.5). The *viveka,nissita* formula, however, is applied in these only to the items named; see S 5:29-31, 32-34, 35 f, 38-42, 45-62, 134-140, 239-243, 249-253.

[7] See Gethin 2001:252-261 (§7.5).

[8] The "seven sets" refers to the 37 "limbs of awakening" (*bodhi,pakkhiya,dhamma*), viz, 4 focusses of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), 4 right efforts (*samma-p,padhāna*), 4 paths to spiritual power (*iddhi,pāda*), 5 spiritual faculties (*indriya*), 5 spiritual powers (*bala*), 7 awakening factors (*bojjhaṅga*), the noble eightfold path (*ariya aṭṭh'aṅgika magga*), which as a summary of the Buddha's teachings and as models for teaching and practice: see SD 10.1.

Elsewhere in **the Nikāyas**, we find the *viveka,nissita* formula, according to **Gethin,** applied on fourteen occasions[9] to the awakening factors (*bojjhaṅga*),[10] two to the path-factors (*maggaṅga*),[11] one to the faculties (*indriya*), and one to the powers (*bala*);[12] repeated altogether 64 occasions and 372 times (2001: 164). In **the Vibhaṅga,** the formula is restricted to the awakening factors and the path factors (Vbh 229, 236).

A number of suttas emphasize that the awakening factors (*bojjhaṅga*) and the focusses of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*) can only progress dependent on moral virtue (*sīla*).[13] Elewhere the term heedlessness [diligence] (*appamāda*) is used instead, but which is synonymous with moral virtue, but emphasizing how it benefits the cultivating mind, in such contexts.[14]

From his detailed survey of the usage of the *viveka,nissita* formula, Gethin however concludes that

> "in the Nikāyas the formula is in the first place to be associated with the *bojjhaṅga* alone; it should be seen as being applied to other sets of items by a process of attraction, that is to say, by virtue of their association or affinity with the seven *bojjhaṅgas.* (Gethin 2001:165)

As already mentions, the best known application of the formula is to the awakening factors (*bojjhaṅga*) in **the Ānâpāna,sati Sutta** (M 118).[15] In the short **Nāvā Sutta** (S 51.158), the *viveka,nissita* formula is applied to the noble eightfold path.[16] Let us now look at these examples in turn.

2 *Viveka,nissita* in the Ānâpāna,sati Sutta

The Ānâpāna,sati Sutta (M 118) famously concludes with the *viveka,nissita* formula applied to the seven awakening factors (*satta bojjhaṅga*). If you are not familiar with this passage, simply read it as it is first, getting to know it on a *word* level, thus:

> **41** And how, bhikshus, are **the seven awakening-factors** cultivated and often developed to bring true knowledge and liberation to perfection?[17]
>
> **42** Here, bhikshus,

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[9] Gethin: "Occasions" takes no account of the repeated itemizing of a list within a given sutta, or according to an extended Saṁyutta or Aṅguttara treatment; "times" takes into account all these repetitions, even when lost in the abbreviations of the texts. See Gethin 2001:163 n88.

[10] My search of CSCD, using keywords with wildcard asterisk: "vivekanissit*" and "bojjhaṅg*, yields these suttas: **Ānâpāna,sati S** (M 118.41-43/3:88); **Nandak'ovāda S** (M 146.13/3:275, 277); **Kuṇḍaliya S** (S 46.6/5:75); **Kūṭāgāra S** (S 46.7/5:76); **Bodhāya S** (S 46.21/5:83); **Taṇha-k,khaya S** (S 46.26/5:86); **Taṇhā,nirodha S** (S 46.27/5:87); **Nibbedha,bhāgiya S** (S 46.28/5:87 f); **Eka,dhamma S** (S 46.29/5:88); **Kusala S 1** (S 46.31/5:91); **Kusala S 2** (S 46.32/5:91); **Ādicca S** (S 46.48/5:101); **Ajjhattik'aṅga S** (S 46.49/5:101); **Bāhir'aṅga S** (S 46.50/-5:102); **Mettā,sahagata S** (S 46.54/5:119 f); **Abhaya S** (S 46.56/5:128); **Aṭṭhika,maha-p,phala S** (S 46.57a/-5:129); **Aññatara,phala S** (S 46.57b/5:129); **Mahattha S** (S 46.57c/5:130); **Yoga-k,khema S** (S 46.57d/5:130); **Saṁvega S** (S 46.57e/5:130); **Phāsu,vihara S** (S 46.57f/5:131); **Nirodha S** (S 46.76/5:133 f); **Gaṅgā,nadī,ādi S** (S 9.1-12/5:134 f, totalling 12 suttas); **Uddham,bhāgiya S** (S 46.130/5:137); **Ānanda S 1** (S 54.13/5:333); **Bhikkhu S 2** (S 54.16/5:340). Counting the Gaṅga *peyyāla* suttas, we have a total of 38 suttas where *viveka,nissita* formula is applied to *bojjhaṅga.* In many cases, this ends the sutta.

[11] **Appamāda S 2** (S 3.18/1:88), **Asaṅkhata S** (S 4:367 f, 32×).

[12] **Asaṅkhata S** (S 4:365-368, 32× for both *indriya* & *bala*).

[13] **Himavanta S** (S 46.1/5:63 f), **Pāṇā S** (S 46.11/78), **(Anubaddha) Bhikkhu S** (S 47.3/143 f), **Bāhiya S** (S 47.15/165 f), **Sīla S** (S 47.21/171 f), **Pāṭimokkha,saṁvara S** (47.6/187 f).

[14] **Kusala S 1** (S 46.31/5:91), **Patiṭṭhita S** (S 48.56/232, where *appamadā* is defined as *cittaṁ rakkhati* ,"he guards the mind").

[15] M 118.42/3:88 = SD 7.13.

[16] S 51.158.3/5:51 = SD 15.16.

[17] This closing section (M 118.41-44/3:88) is a pericope = **Ānanda S 1** (S 54.13-14/5:333) = **Ānanda S 2** (S 54.14/5:335).

(i) a monk cultivates the awakening-factor of mindfulness that is dependent on solitude,[18] dependent on fading away (of lust) [dispassion],[19] dependent on cessation (of suffering),[20] ripening in letting go (of defilements).[21]

(ii) He cultivates the awakening-factor of dharma-investigation…

(iii) He cultivates the awakening-factor of effort…

(iv) He cultivates the awakening-factor of joy…

(v) He cultivates the awakening-factor of tranquillity…

(vi) He cultivates the awakening-factor of concentration…

(vii) He cultivates the awakening-factor of equanimity that is dependent on seclusion, dependent on fading away (of lust), dependent on cessation (of suffering), ripening in letting go (of defilements).

43 Bhikshus, when the seven awakening-factors are thus cultivated, thus often developed, they bring true knowledge and liberation to perfection."[22] (M 118.41-43/3:88) = SD 7.13

Once you have read the passage twice at least, simply let the meaning sink in naturally (or not). Next, go on to read up on the seven awakening-factors (*satta bojjhaṅga*).[23] Once you have some idea what the awakening factors are about, re-read the above passage. Then, go on to read the whole **Ānâpāna,-sati Sutta** (M 118).

3 *Viveka,nissita* in the Nāvā Sutta

In **the Nāvā Sutta** (S 51.158), the *viveka,nissita* formula is applied to the noble eightfold path in this manner:

2c And how, bhikshus, does the monk cultivate, continuously develop the noble eightfold path[24] so that his fetters would easily weaken and waste [rot] away?

3 Here, bhikshus, cultivates

(1) right view (*sammā diṭṭhi*),
(2) right thought (*sammā saṅkappa*),
(3) right speech (*sammā vācā*),
(4) right action (*sammā kammanta*),
(5) right livelihood (*sammā ājīva*),

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[18] Here "solitude" (***viveka***) (or seclusion) has a special reference to the overcoming of the 5 mental hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇā*). This whole phrase, beginning with "dependent on solitude"—*viveka,nissitaṁ virāga,nissitaṁ nirodha,nissitaṁ vossagga,nissitaṁ vossagga,pariṇāmiṁ dhamma,vicaya,sambojjhaṅgaṁ*—is called **the *viveka,-nissita* formula**. See Gethin 2001:162-168. According to **Paṭisambhidā,magga,** there are 5 kinds of "solitude" (*viveka*), ie overcoming of the hindrances: (1) solitude through suppression (*vikkhambhana viveka*); (2) solitude through the substitution of opposite or displacement by opposites (*tad-aṅga viveka*); (3) solitude through cutting off (*samuccheda viveka*); (4) solitude through tranquillization (*paṭipassaddhi viveka*); and (5) solitude through escape (*nissaraṇa viveka*) (Pm 1:27, 2:219-224; Vism 13.12/410, 22.110/693). See also "Introduction to the Satipaṭṭhāna Suttas" = SD 13.1 §4.2c.

[19] ***Virāga,*** also tr as "dispassion."

[20] ***Nirodha,*** ie, "cessation of suffering."

[21] MA says that there are 2 kinds of letting go or relinquishment (of suffering) (***vossagga***): "giving up" (*paric-cāga*), ie the abandonment of defilements, and "entering into" (*pakkhandana*), ie culminating in nirvana. **Gethin** notes that this phrase is not unique to the 7 *bojjhaṅgā*, but is also found in connection with the factors of the noble eightfold path, the *indriyā* and *balā* (2001:162 f). This formula shows that that each *bojjhaṅga* is to be developed successively "as dependent on solitude, dispassion [fading away] and cessation" (Gethin 2001:166).

[22] MA says that the mindfulness that comprehends breathing is mundane. The mundane mindfulness of the breath perfects or fulfills the mundane focusses of mindfulness. The mundane focusses of mindfulness perfect the supramundane awakening-factors, and the supramundane awakening-factors perfect true knowledge and liberation, ie the fruit and nirvana.

[23] See eg **(Bojjhaṅga) Sīla S** (S 46.3/5:67-70) = SD 10.15 esp Intro (4-6).

[24] For an insightful study of the eightfold path, see Gethin 2001:190-226 (ch 6).

(6) right effort (*sammā vāyāma*),
(7) right mindfulness (*sammā sati*),
(8) right samadhi (*sammā samādhi*),

that is dependent on solitude, on letting go (of craving) [dispassion], on ending (of suffering), ripening in release. (S 51.158.3/5:51) = SD 20.16

This Nāvā Sutta passage looks for familiar as most of us have heard of the noble eightfold path. Here, the noble eightfold path or path-factor (*maggaṅga*) formula ends with the *nissita.viveka* formula. This formula is, in fact, an alternative statement to the last two path factors, that is, right knowledge (*sammā īāṇa*) and right liberation (*sammā vimutti*).

This is not difficult to understand, as the Dharma has only one taste: the taste of freedom, that is to say, liberation. More specifically, this refers to the attainment of arhathood. As such, we find in **the Cattārīsaka Sutta** (M 117), for example, the full list of the path factors (totally ten), that is, the above eight with the following final two:

(9) right knowledge (*sammā ñāṇa*), and
(10) right liberation (*sammā vimutti*). (M 117.34/3:75 f) = SD 6.10

The additional two factors are those of the arhat. Right knowledge is the review knowledge (*paccavekkhaṇa ñāṇa*) that he has destroyed all defilements, and right liberation is his experience of deliverance from defilements. (MA 4:135). We can also say that "right knowledge" is the theoretical understanding what constitutes awakening, but it is "right liberation" that is the truly real or direct experience of awakening. This tenfold set is technically known as "the 10 rightness" (*dasa sammatta*).[25]

4 *Viveka*

4.1 SOLITUDE AND THE HINDRANCES. Let us now examine the key terms of the formula, namely, *viveka, virāga, nirodha,* and *vossagga.* The first term—***viveka*** or "seclusion"—is frequently found in the stock passage of the dhyana:

Quite secluded from sensual pleasures, secluded from unwholesome mental states, he attains and dwells in the **first dhyana**, accompanied by initial application and sustained application, accompanied by zest and happiness, born of solitude. He permeates and pervades, suffuses and fills this very body[26] with the zest and happiness born of solitude.

So vivicc'eva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṁ savicaraṁ vivekajaṁ pīti,-sukhaṁ paṭhama-j,jhānaṁ upasampajja viharati. (D 2.75b/1:73) = SD 8.10

Here, "solitude" or "seclusion" (***viveka***) has a special reference to the overcoming of the five mental hindrances,[27] which leads to samadhi and dhyana.[28] According to **Buddhaghosa**, the phrase "quite secluded from sensual pleasures" (*vivicc'eva kāmehi*) refers to bodily solitude (or detachment); "secluded from unwholesome states" (*vivicca akusalehi dhammehi*) refers to mental solitude; and the words "born of solitude" (*vivekaja*) refers to the absence of the five hindrances. (Vism 4). Thus, **TW Rhys Davids** succintly says that "the stress is upon separation from the world, taking 'world' on the sense of all hindrances to spiritual progress, and especially the five chief Hindrances (Nīvaraṇa)." (D:RD 1:84).

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[25] D 3:271, 292; M 1:42; A 5:212.

[26] Here "body" (*kāya*) refers to the "mental body" (*nāma,kāya*), ie feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), formations (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness (*viññāṇa*) (Vism 4.175/169).

[27] The 5 mental hindrances (*pañca,nīvaraṇa*) are: sense-desire (*kāma-c,chanda*), ill will (*vyāpāda*)—both often conflated as "covetousness and discontent" (*abhijjhā,domanassa*), as in **Satipaṭṭhāna Ss** [SD 15.1(4.3e)]—sloth and torpor (*thīna,middha*), restlessness and worry (*uddhacca,kukkucca*), and persistent doubt (*vicikicchā*). See **(Nīvaraṇā) Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55) = SD 3.12.

[28] On **dhyana, see** SD 15.1(8) (theory) & SD 19.7(4) (practice).

The Saṁyutta Commentary on **the (Appamāda) Kalyāṇa,mitta Sutta** (S 3.18)[29] gives a more technical explanation of *viveka* as follows:

> In the sentence, "he cultivates…dependent on solitude (*bhāveti viveka,nissitaṁ*),"[30]…this meaning of ***viveka,nissita*** should be known: he cultivates right view dependent on solitude [separation] by displacement [by that aspect], dependent on seclusion by cutting off, dependent on solitude by escape. [4.3]
>
> For, at the moment of insight (*vipassana-k,khaṇe*), the meditator, devoted to the cultivation of the noble path, cultivates right view dependent on solitude by displacement by way of function, and dependent on seclusion by escape as inclination (since he inclines to nirvana). At the time of the path (*magga,kāle*), he cultivates right view dependent on seclusion by cutting off as function, and dependent on seclusion by escape as object (since the path takes nirvana as object). The same method applies to the terms "dependent on dispassion" (*virāga,nissita*) and "dependent on cessation" (*nirodha,nissita*). (SA 1:158)

In simple terms, the commentary means that the meditator who is on the path to awakening first cultivate insight wisdom by way of abandoning unwholesome by cultivating wholesome state (solitude by displacement) since it is his mind is set on awakening. At the moment of full awakening, the defilements are all uprooted (solitude by cutting off) and he attains nirvana.

4.2 THREE KINDS OF SOLITUDE. The explanation of "solitude" so far is what is known as "mental (or spiritual) solitude" (*citta,viveka*), that is, the mind that is totally free from the hindrances, so that it can easily be focussed. In the Suttas, the two kinds of solitude—that of the body and of the mind—specifically apply to the process of attaining the first dhyana, where, in **the Sāmaññ a,phala Sutta** (D 2), for example, we have this stock passage:

> **67 PHYSICAL SOLITUDE**. Possessing this aggregate of noble moral virtue, this aggregate of noble sense-restraint, this aggregate of noble mindfulness and full awareness, and this aggregate of noble contentment, he resorts to a secluded dwelling: a forest, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a gully [gorge], a hillside cave, a cemetery, a remote forest [jungle grove], the open air, a heap of straw.[31]
>
> Returning from his almsround, after his meal, he sits down, crosses his legs, keeps his body erect, and establishes mindfulness before him.
>
> **68 MENTAL SOLITUDE**. (1) Abandoning covetousness with regard to the world, he dwells with a mind devoid of covetousness. He cleanses his mind of covetousness.
>
> (2) Abandoning ill will and anger, he dwells with a mind devoid of ill will, sympathetic with the welfare of all living beings. He cleanses his mind of ill will and anger.
>
> (3) Abandoning sloth and torpor, he dwells with a mind devoid of sloth and torpor, mindful, alert, perceiving light. He cleanses his mind of sloth and torpor.
>
> (4) Abandoning restlessness and worry, he dwells undisturbed, his mind inwardly stilled. He cleanses his mind of restlessness and worry.
>
> (5) Abandoning spiritual doubt, he dwells having crossed over doubt, with no perplexity with regard to wholesome mental states. He cleanses his mind of doubt. (D 2.67-68/1:71) = SD 8.10

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[29] S 3.18/1:87-89.

[30] S 1:88, 4:367, 5:2-61 (26×); Pm 2:219+220; Vbh 236.

[31] *So iminā ca ariyena sīla-k,khandhena samannāgato iminā ca ariyena indriya,saṁvarena samannāgato iminā ca ariyena sati,sampajaññena samannāgato imāya ca ariyāya santuṭṭhitāya samannāgato vivittaṁ senâsanaṁ bhajati, araññaṁ rukkha,mūlaṁ pabbataṁ kandaraṁ giri,guhaṁ susānaṁ vana,patthaṁ abbhokāsaṁ palāla,puñjaṁ.* This stock phrase of 9 places conducive to meditation are found at D 1:72. 207, 2:242, 3:49; M 1:181, 269, 274, 346, 440, 441, 2:162, 226, 3:3, 35, 115-117; A 2:210, 3:92, 100, 4:436, 5:207; Nm 1:26, 140, 2:341; Miln 369. A shorter list of 3 places, probably later, is mentioned in **Anāpāna,sati S** (M 118): "Here, monks, a monk who has gone to the forest or to the foot of a tree or to an empty house, sits down, and having crossed his legs and keeping his body upright, establishes mindfulness before him." (M 118.17/3:82).

The third solitude—**the solitude from the substrates**—refers to the letting go of and freedom from the five aggregates, sensual desire, mental defilements, and karma, collectively known as "the substrates" (*upadhi*), the essentials of life or substratum of existence, or simply, the fuel of life. It is often mentioned in the Suttas, especially in the older sections.[32] The phrase "the abandoning of all substrates" (*sabb'upadhi paṭinissagga*) refers to nirvana.[33]

The three solitudes are often mentioned in the Commentaries[34] as follows:

(1) solitude of the body	(*kāya viveka*),	that is, physical solitude,
(2) solitude of the mind	(*citta viveka*),	that is, spiritual solitude, and
(3) solitude from the substrates	(*upadhi viveka*),	that is, nirvana.

Briefly, the "solitude of the body" is keeping aloof from socializing for the purpose of mental cultivation. The "solitude of the mind" is the letting go of mental defilements, especially in a mindful state. And the "solitude from the substrates" is the abandoning of all unwholesome states, that is, the attainment of awakening. They are explained in detail in **the Mahā Niddesa**, thus:

> What is **the solitude of the body**? Here, a monk abides in solitude when he resorts to a solitary lodging, such as a forest, the foot of a tree, a mountain, a gorge, a mountain cave, a cemetery, a remote forest, the open air, or a heap of straw, abiding in physical solitude. He travels alone, stands alone, sits alone, makes his bed alone, enters the village for almsround alone, returns alone, seats himself in a hidden place alone, does his pacing up and down (for exercise or meditation) alone, and he wanders, dwells, moves about, deports himself, proceeds, protects himself, sustains himself, maintains himself, alone. This is the solitude of the body.
>
> What is **the solitude of the mind**? It is the mind [heart]
>
> that has attained the first dhyana, separated from the hindrances;
>
> that has attained the second dhyana, separated from initial application and sustained application.
>
> that has attained the third dhyana, separated from zest;
>
> that has attained the fourth dhyana, separated from happiness and sorrow;
>
> that has attained the base of boundless space, separated from the perception of form, from the perception of sense-contact, from the perception of diversity;
>
> that has attained the base of boundless consciousness, separated from the base of boundless consciousness;
>
> that has attained the base of nothingness, separated from the base of boundless consciousness;
>
> that has attained the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, separated from the base of boundless consciousness;
>
> of the stream-winner, separated from self-identity view, doubt and attachment to rules and rituals, from the latent tendency towards them, and from the defilements associated with them;
>
> of the once-returner, separated from the gross form of the fetter of lust for sense-desire, the gross form of the fetter of ill will, from the latent tendency towards them, and from the defilements associated with them;
>
> of the non-returner, separated from the refined form of fetter of lust for sense-desire, the refined form of the fetter of sense-impingement, from the latent tendency towards them, and from the defilements associated with them;
>
> the mind of the arhat, separated from lust for form existence, from lust for formless existence, from conceit, from restlessness, from ignorance, from the latent tendency of conceit, from the latent tendency of becoming, the latent tendency of ignorance, from the defilements associated with them, and from all external signs. This is the solitude of the mind.
>
> What is **the solitude from the substrates**? "Substrate" (*upadhi*) refers to the defilements

[32] Sn 33c, 33d || 364a, 34c, 374c546a = 572a, 728ce = 1051ac.

[33] Occurrences of *upadhi* in the Nikāyas: **D** 2:36, 37; **M** 1:136, 137, 168, 436, 2:93, 245; **S** 3:133, 134, 136, 5:226 (×2); **A** 1:133, 2:118, 3:164, 4:423 (×2), 424, 425, 426 (×2), 5:8, 110, 111, 319, 320, 322, 354, 356, 357, 358.

[34] Nm 27, 140, 157, 341; DA 169; MA 2:142; UA 163, 206, 231, 396; SA 3:122; DhA 2:103, 3:129.

(*kilesa*), the aggregates (*khandha*), and the formations (*abhisaṅkhāra*). "The solitude from the substrates" refers to the deathless, nirvana. It is the stilling of all formations, the relinquishing of all substrates, the destruction of lust, fading away, cessation, nirvana. This is the solitude of the substrates.

Physical solitude is for those with bodily aloofness (*vūpakaṭṭha,kāya*), who delight in renunciation. Mental solitude is for those whose minds are completely pure, who have reached the highest purification. Solitude from the substrates is for those individuals who are without any substrate, who are attained to the freedom from formations (*visaṅkhāra,gata*).

(Nm 27; slightly abridged)[35]

4.3 FIVE KINDS OF SOLITUDE. The Paṭisambhidā,magga, however, mentions five kinds of "solitude" (*viveka*), referring to the levels at which the defilements are controlled or overcome, namely:[36]

(1) solitude through suppression (*vikkhambhana viveka*);
(2) solitude through displacement (*tad-aṅga viveka*);
(3) solitude through cutting off (*samuccheda viveka*);
(4) solitude through stilling (*paṭipassaddhi viveka*); and
(5) solitude through escape (*nissaraṇa viveka*).

Here, **(1) solitude through suppression,** refers to a temporary suppression of the mental hindrances, or defilements, especially during the first dhyana. The mind is free from unwholesome states only as long as that focussed state lasts, but they may arise again thereafter. On a simpler level, this refers to the wholesome control of one's mind so that moral virtue is maintained or cultivated, that is, at least by way of keeping the five precepts.

(2) Solitude through displacement refers to the momentary abandoning of an unwholesome state through substituting it for a wholesome thought. This can be done by way of consciously applying our attention in that direction, as taught, for example, in **the Vitakka,saṇṭhāna Sutta** (M 20).[37] Like (1), this is also a momentary measure, but regularly applied, becomes a wholesome habit that will conduce to our spiritual development. On a deeper level, this solitude refers to the overcoming of self-identity view (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*) by determining the physical and mental phenomena.[38]

(3) Solitude through cutting off is defined as operating "for one who develops the supramundane path that leads to the destruction of the cankers,"[39] and consists in "the abandoning of states that are fetters, etc, by means of the knowledge of the noble path, such that they do not occur again."[40]

Thus the basic point of contrast is that this last form of abandoning abandons defilements finally and absolutely, for once and for all, while the two preceding kinds of abandoning abandons defilements only temporarily—principally in meditation, be it calm (*samatha*) or insight (*vipassanā*). (Gethin 2001:49; cf 166-168)

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[35] For another tr, see UA:M 667 n263.

[36] Pm 1:27, 2:219-224; Vism 4.82/140, 13.12/410, 22.110/693; cf MA 1:85; UA 32. See also SD 13.1(4.2c) on *vineyya.*

[37] M 20.3/1:119 = SD 1.6.

[38] *Nāma,rūpa,pariccheda,* lit "the defining of name and form," ie understanding their true nature. This is a commentarial term. For other examples, see Vism 22.110 f/693 f.

[39] *Samuccheda-p,pahānañ ca lokuttara-khaya,gāmi,maggaṁ bhāvayato* (Pm 1:27). "**Cankers**" or mental cankers (*āsava*), comes from *ā-savati* "flows towards" (ie either "into" or "out" towards the observer). It has been variously tr as influxes, taints ("deadly taints," RD), corruptions, intoxicants, biases, depravity, misery, evil (influence), or simply left untr. The Abhidhamma lists **4 cankers**: the canker of (1) sense-desire (*kām'āsava*), (2) (desire for eternal) existence (*bhav'āsava*), (3) wrong views (*diṭṭh'āsava*), (4) ignorance (*avijjâsava*) (D 16.2.4, Pm 1.442, 561, Dhs §§1096-1100, Vbh §937). These 4 are also known as "floods" (*ogha*) and "yokes" (*yoga*). The list of 3 cankers (omitting the canker of views) [43] is probably older and is found more frequently in the Suttas (D 3:216, 33.1.10-(20); M 1:55, 3:41; A 3.59, 67, 6.63). The destruction of these āsavas is equivalent to arhathood. See BDict: āsava.

[40] *Ariya,magga,ñāṇena saṁyojanādīnaṁ dhammānaṁ yathā na puna pavattanti* (Vism 22.122/696). Pm 1:27 also mentions a variety of subsidiary types of abandoning.

(4) Solitude through stilling [tranquillization] occurs at the moment of path fruition.
(5) Solitude through escape is the cessation that is nirvana.[41]

In summary of what has been discussed in this section, it should be said that, Buddhist psychology, "solitude" refers to the state of the mind that is not caught up in the *duality* of subject and object, so that the mind is wholesomely focussed and joyful, ready for awakening, or enjoying the bliss of awakening.

5 *Virāga*

In **the Viveka,kathā** of the Paṭisambhisā,magga, probably the earliest exegesis of the *viveka,nissita* formula we have, there are five kinds of *viveka,* five kinds of *virāga,* five kinds of *nirodha,* and five kinds of *vossagga* (Pm 2:219-224). These sets of five levels of solitude, of fading away, of ending and of letting go are essentially synonymous. However, when applied as terms in their own right—as *virāga, nirodha* and *vossagga*—they correspond in part to the three kinds of "abandoning" (*pahāna*), namely, letting go through suppression (*vikkhambhana pahāna*), through displacement (*tad-aṅga pahāna*), and through cutting off (*samuccheda pahāna*).[42]

The term ***virāga*** (from *vi,* "away," + *rāga,* "lust") means "fading away (of lust)," that is, the absence of lust, dispassion. It often appears with *nirodha* ("cessation"), that is, the ending of suffering, with the following functions:

(1) as a term for nirvana, especially in the definition of the 3rd noble truth;[43]
(2) in the contemplations comprising the 4th tetrad of the mindfulness of the breath;[44]
(3) in the contemplation of the 18 principal insights (*mahā,vipassanā*).[45]

According to the Commentaries, *virāga* may mean

(1) the momentary non-arising of phenomena, or
(2) the total "fading away," that is, nirvana.

In the case of the two contemplations (2-3) above, it refers to the understanding of both, and the path attained by such understanding.[46]

5 *Nirodha*

The etymology of ***nirodha*** is *ni* ("without") + *rodha* ("prison, confine[s], obstacle, wall, impediment"), thus meaning, "without impediment," "free from confinement," that is to say, "free of impediments, namely, the confinement of *saṁsāra.*" Although "ending" or "cessation" is a common translation for *nirodha,* properly speaking, when applied to the four noble truths or the *viveka,nissita* formula, it is better rendered as "**non-arising.**" **Payutto** explains:

> Generally speaking, the word 'cease" [or 'end'] means to do away with something which has already arisen, or the stopping of something which has already begun. However, ***nirodha*** in the teaching of Dependent Origination (as also in *dukkhanirodha,* the third of the noble truths) means **non-arising**, or non-existence, of something because the cause of its arising is done away with. For example, the phrase 'when *avijjā* is *nirodha, saṅkhārā* are also *nirodha,*' which is usually taken to mean, "with the cessation of ignorance, volitional impulse cease," in fact means that 'when there is no ignorance, or no arising of ignorance, or when there is no longer any problem with ignorance, there is no volitional impulses, volitional impulses do not arise, or there is no longer any problem from volitional impulses.' It does not mean that ignorance already arisen

[41] Pm 1:27; Vism 13.12/410. See also Gethin 2001:162-168.
[42] See Gethin 2001:49.
[43] See **Dhamma,cakka-p,pavattana S** (S 56.11.11/5:422) = SD 1.1. Cf MA 2:337.
[44] M 118.21/3:83 = SD 7.13.
[45] Vism 7.113-121/694 f. These 18 principal insights are a commentary summary of the various ways that wrong view is overcome *temporarily* through its opposite quality or antidote (*tad-aṅga pahāna*). See SD 15.1(10.2).
[46] See BDict sv Virāga.

must be done away with before the volitional impulses which have already arisen will also be done away. (Payutto 1994:106-108)

Since *nirodha* refers to the ending of craving (as the third noble truth), it has the same meaning as *virāga* ("dispassion"). Their difference in the *viveka,nissita* formula is that of function: an understanding of true reality arouses *nibbidā* ("revulsion"),[47] that abandons all craving, that is, dispassion (*virāga*). When we have reviewed this state, the we know fully well that the craving has been abandoned: this is called cessation (*nirodha*).

5 *Vossagga*

Here, the term ***vossagga*** has two senses, that is, "giving up [abandoning]" (*pariccāga*) and "entering into [leaping forward]" (*pakkhandana*). The Saṁyutta Commentary explains "letting go [release]" (***vossagga***) as follows:

> Here, in general, "**letting go**" (*vossagga*) is twofold: letting go as giving up (*pariccāga*) and letting go as entering into (*pakkhandhana*). "Letting go as giving up" is the abandoning (*pahāna*) of defilements, by way of displacement (*tad-aṅga,vasena*) at the moment of insight, by cutting off (*samuccheda,vasena*) at the moment of the path. "Letting go as entering into" is the entering into nirvana, by way of inclination towards that (*tan,ninna,bhāvena*) at the moment of insight, and by making it the object (*ārammaṇa,karaṇena*) at the moment of the path. Both methods are suitable in this exposition, which combines the mundane (insight) and the supramundane (the path).
>
> The path "**ripens [matures] in letting go**" (*vossagga,pariṇāmi*) because it is maturing towards or has matured in release, meaning that it is ripening towards or has ripened (in release). (SA 1:159; cf DA 3:1019)

Bhikkhu Bodhi reminds us that his translation of *vossagga* as "release" "should be understood as the act of releasing, or the state of having released rather than as the experience of being release" (S:B 1892 n7). It is for this reason that I have rendered *vossagga* as "letting go," which expresses the meaning better, that is, as the *act of letting go or the state of having let go of (defilements).*

The terms *vossagga* and *paṭinissagga* are etymologically and semantically closely related (that is, they have similar word origin and meaning). While ***vossagga*** = *ossagga,* is derived from *ava* ("down") + √**sṛj** (to send forth), meaning "relinquishing, handing over, donation, giving," ***paṭinissagga*** comes from *paṭi* ("opposite") + *ni* ("without, down") + √**sṛj** (to send forth), meaning "giving up, forsaking, rejecting, renouncing." In the Nikāyas, however, notes Bodhi, the two terms are used in subtly different ways.

> *Paṭinissagga,* here translated as "relinquishment," pertains primarily to the phase of insight and thus might be understood as the active elimination of defilements through insight into the impermanence of all conditioned things. *Vossagga*, as that in which the path matures, probably signifies the final state in which all attachment is utterly given up, and thus comes close in to meaning to Nibbāna as the goal of the path. *Paṭinissagga* occurs as a distinct contemplation, the last, in the sixteen steps in the development of mindfulness of breathing (see S 54.1). Though [SA] glosses it in the same way as it does *vossagga* [see S:B 1950 n293], in the suttas themselves the two terms are used with different nuances. (Bodhi, S:B 1892 n7)

This following passage—the fourth tetrad of the 16-part breath meditation—is found both in **the Ānâpāna,sati Sutta** (M 118) and **the Eka,dhamma Sutta** (S 54.1),[48] thus,

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[47] See SD 20.1.

[48] Also the foll: **(Ānâpāna,sati) Ānanda S 1** (S 54.13/5:328-333), **(Ānâpāna,sati) Ānanda S 2** (S 54.13/5:333-335), **(Ānâpāna,sati) Bhikkhu S 1** (S 54.13/5:335 f), **(Ānâpāna,sati) Bhikkhu S 2** (S 54.13/5:336-340), all of which differ only in setting. See SD 7.13 Intro (1.2).

THE 4TH TETRAD: OBSERVING DHARMAS

(13) He trains himself thus: "I will breathe in, observing impermanence";
He trains himself thus: "I will breathe out, observing impermanence";
(14) He trains himself thus: "I will breathe in, observing the fading away (of lust)";
He trains himself thus: "I will breathe out, observing the fading away (of lust)";
(15) He trains himself thus: "I will breathe in, observing the cessation (of suffering)";
He trains himself thus: "I will breathe out, observing the cessation (of suffering)";
(16) He trains himself thus: "I will breathe in, observing the relinquishment (of defilements)";
He trains himself thus: "I will breathe out, observing the relinquishment (of defilements)."
(M 118.21/3:83) = SD 7.13; (S 54.1/5:313)

The Cūḷa Taṇhā,saṅkhaya Sutta (M 37)[49] has the same s the key words in the above passage as follows:

> Here, "**impermanence**" (*anicca*) is the impermanence on account of the rise, fall, and change of the five aggregates. "**Observing of impermanence**" (*aniccânupassanā*) is the knowledge and vision on account of (contemplating) the destruction and passing away of the five aggregates….
>
> Here, in the sentence, "**observing the fading away (of lust)**" (*virāgânupassī*), *virāga* has two senses: dispassion as ending (*khaya,virāga*) and dispassion as totality [the absolute] (*accanta,-virāga*). Therein, there is contemplation on account of the destruction and passing away of formations, or there is nirvana as total dispassion, the vision of the path on account of dispassion…
>
> As for "**observing the cessation (of suffering)**" (*nirodhânupassī*), cessation (*nirodha*) is also understood in the same way as for "observing the fading away (of lust)."
>
> As for "**observing letting go [relinquishment]**" (*paṭinissaggânupassī*), "letting go" (*paṭinissagga*) is the giving up (*pariccāga*) or abandoning (*pahāna*) of defilements through insight and the entering into (*pakkhandana*) nirvana by attainment of the path. (MA 2:298 f, abridged)

This observation or contemplation of impermanence is most effectively done after a very good meditation, especially on emerging from dhyana. What we regard as the "self" appears to be so constant that we do not even notice it. In dhyana, however, it disappears. If we experience this deeply as "not-self," it is very likely to give rise to "the experience of Stream Winning" (Brahmavaṁso 1999; 2002:82).

During meditation or mindfulness practice, if reflections on impermanence does not work, then we should go on to reflect on the "fading away" (*virāga*) of mental states or phenomena. "This is when things just disappear…things which were so close to you, that you thought were an essential part of you…" (Brahmavaṁso, "Beautiful Breath," 1999).

In meditation, "cessation" (nirodha) refers to something that was once there had now disappeared. "So much of the universe that you knew has ceased, and you're in a completely different space…what you thought was important has gone… Cessation is also the Third Noble Truth [the cessation of suffering]. The cause of that cessation is letting go…And what's left?...the opposite of *dukkha*…it is *sukha* (happiness). The ending of suffering is happiness." (Brahmavaṁso, "Beautiful Breath," 1999; 2002:82 f).

"Letting go" (*paṭinissagga*), or "abandoning," here "is not giving away what's 'out there,' but giving away what's 'in here'…the letting go of the 'doer,'…even of the 'knower'…especially letting go of… the 'will,' the 'controller.' This is the path to the end of suffering." (Brahmavaṁso, "Beautiful Breath," 1999; 2002:82 f).

We can therefore say, in closing, that the *viveka,nissita* formula is closely related to meditation or mental cultivation, leading to the realization of the truth and liberation. During the early Mahāyāna period, **Asaṅga** (4th century CE), who with Vasubandhu, founded the Yogācāra school, neatly correlated the four parts of the *viveka,niśrita* formula to the four noble truths, thus:

[49] M 37.3/1:251.

(1) the noble truth that is suffering	*viveka.niśrita*
(2) the noble truth that is the arising of suffering	*virāga,niśrita*
(3) the noble truth that is the ending of suffering	*nirodha,niśrita*
(4) the noble truth that is the path leading to the end of suffering	*vossagga,niśrita*

However, when dealing with the seven sets, he relates the *viveka,niśrita* formula to the seven *bodhy-aṅga* alone.[50]

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