# AN 3.78 — Sīlabbata Sutta (Rites & Observances of Religious Practice)

English translation by Bhikkhu Candana.

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## Text

78. Sīlabbata Sutta (Rites & Observances of Religious Practice) At one time, the Venerable Ānanda approached The Blessed One, and after paying homage to The Teacher, he sat down to one side. Then, The Blessed One said to him:

“Ānanda, when looking at the various responsibilities, especially the various rites, ceremonial behaviors, observances, and lifestyle that are practiced, would you say that these somehow do bring about some meaningfully tangible and fruitful results, as it relates to the actual Holy Life, for the person taking part in them?”

“Not necessarily, Bhante.”

“In that case, explain your answer, Ānanda.”

“Bhante, when someone practices the rites, observances, and lifestyle of the Holy Life by looking at these as the essential part of the spiritual life, meanwhile, evil and unwholesome traits increase in him. Given the fact that the beneficial and wholesome traits in the individual continue to decrease, then the mere practicing of the rites, ceremonial behaviors, observances, and lifestyle are truly fruitless and utterly empty, for they are of no real benefit, at all, for the person taking part in them, as it relates to the actual Holy Life.

“However, Bhante, when evil and unwholesome thoughts continue to decrease, while the beneficial and wholesome traits in that individual increase, then practicing the rites, ceremonial behaviors, observances, and lifestyle may come to support, bringing much fruit for the person’s development in the Holy Life.”

Having replied thus, the Venerable Ānanda received the approval of The Teacher, through His silence.

“Then, knowing that The Blessed One had approved of his response, the Venerable Ānanda arose from his seat, and after paying homage to The Blessed One and circumambulating Him, he went away.

Then, soon after the Venerable Ānanda had left, The Blessed One addressed the Bhikkhus thus:

“Bhikkhus, although Ānanda is still a disciple in higher training, it is difficult to find one equal to him in wisdom.”