Metta Sutta – Karaniya Metta Sutta

Metta -- loving kindness -- is one of the "Four Immeasurables" or Four Divine States of Buddhism. These are mental states or qualities cultivated by Buddhist practise. The other three are compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. 

Radiate boundless love towards the entire world — above, below, and across — unhindered, without ill will, without enmity.

– The Buddha
The Origins of the Discourse On Loving-Kindness

- The Metta Sutta is sometimes called the Karaniya Metta Sutta.
- It is from a part of the Tripitaka called the Sutta Nipata, which is in the Sutra-Pitaka.
- Metta -- loving kindness -- is one of the "Four Immeasurables" or Four Divine States of Mind
- These are mental states or qualities cultivated by practice.
- The other three are compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.
- Metta is a benevolence toward all beings that is free of selfish attachment.
- By practicing metta, one overcomes anger, ill will, hatred and aversion.
The Historical Background Which Led the Buddha to Expound the Karaniya Metta Sutta

• It is told that 500 monks received instructions from the Buddha in the techniques of meditation.
• They then went to the foothills of the Himalaya to spend the rains retreat.
• The residents were overjoyed and built little huts and provided each with necessities.
• Each one selected a tree to meditate under.
• It is said that the great trees were inhabited by tree deities who had a celestial mansion built, using the trees as the base.
• Out of reverence to the monks the deities stood aside with their families thinking that the monks would remain a day or two and would return soon.
• These deities after realizing the situation decided to frighten the monks away showing them terrifying objects and making dreadful notices and creating a sickening stench.
• The monks soon grew pale and could no longer concentrate on their subjects of meditation and went to Savatthi and related the story to the Buddha.
Metta Sutta not only guides as a Meditation Technique but also used as a guide for the moral and spiritual progress and serves as a Protection Technique (Paritta)

• The Buddha saw in his supernormal powers that this was the best place for them to achieve spiritual liberation.

• The Buddha taught them the Metta sutta as a theme of meditation as well as a formula for protection (paritta).

• The monks learned by rote in the presence of the Buddha.

• The monks went back to the forest and when they neared the forest dwellings reciting the Metta Sutta, the minds of the deities changed with great piety.

• The monks after practicing the instructions conveyed, permeated the whole atmosphere with their radiant thoughts of metta or loving-kindness.
Such is the Power Intrinsic in the Metta Sutta

• The hearts of the deities became so charged with warm feelings of good will

• The deities so affected by this power of love, allowed them to meditate in peace.

• By the end of the rainy season all the monks attained to the pinnacle of spiritual perfection.

• Every one of the five hundred monks had become an Arahant.

The discourse gets divided into two parts.

1. The first detailing the standard of moral conduct required by one who wishes to attain Purity and Peace

2. And the second the method of practice of metta.
Metta Sutta

• This is to be done by one skilled in aims
• who wants to break through to the state of peace:
• Be capable, upright, & straightforward,
• easy to instruct, gentle, & humble,
• content & easy to support,
• with few duties, simple in livelihood,
• with peaceful faculties, masterful,
• modest, & no greedily attached to families
• Do not do the slightest wrong
• that the wise would later find fault.
• May all beings be happy and safe,
May All Beings be Happy at Heart

• may all beings be happy minded.
• Whatever beings there may be,
• feeble or strong, without exception,
• long, stout
• medium, short,
• small, large
• seen & unseen,
• near & far,
• born & seeking birth:
• May all beings be happy - minded.
• Let no one deceive another
• or despise anyone anywhere,
• or through anger or ill will
• will let not one wish harm to another.

“Our prime purpose in this life is to help others. And if you can’t help them, at least don’t hurt them.”
~ Dalai Lama
Just as a mother would risk her life to protect her only child, one should cultivate a limitless heart with regard to all beings.

- Just as a mother would risk her life to protect her child, her only child,
- even so should one cultivate a limitless heart
- with regard to all beings.
- Let thoughts of boundless love pervade the whole world;
- cultivate a limitless heart:
- Above, below, & all around,
- unobstructed, without enmity or hate.
- Whether standing, walking,
- sitting, or lying down,
- as long as one is awake,
Metta is Benevolence

• one should develop this mindfulness.
• This they say is the highest conduct here (is called the sublime abiding)
• Not taken with views (without falling into errors)
• but virtuous & endowed with insight
• having discarded attachments to sensual pleasures,
• one will never again to be conceived in a womb.
• Metta is a benevolence toward all beings that is free of selfish attachment. By practicing metta, one can overcomes anger, ill will, hatred and aversion.

• When the heart –deliverance of loving kindness is maintained in being, made much of, used as one’s vehicle, used as one’s foundation, established, consolidated, and properly managed, then eleven blessings can be expected. (The Buddha, Anguttara Nikaya)
When Heart Deliverance of Loving Kindness is Maintained, Eleven Blessings Can be Expected

What Eleven?

• “One sleeps in comfort:
• One wakes in comfort:
• One dreams no evil dreams:
• One is dear to human beings:
• One is dear to non-human beings;
• The Gods guard one:
• No fire or poison or weapon harms one:
• One’s mind can be quickly be concentrated;
• The expression on one’s face is serene;
• One dies without falling into confusion:
• And even one fails to penetrate any further, one will pass on to the world of High Divinity, to the Brahma world”
Metta has a powerful healing force

• Let one’s thoughts of boundless loving-kindness pervade the whole world, above, below, across, without obscuration, without hatred, without enmity. The Buddha (Samyutta Nikaya)

• Loving kindness or compassionate love purifies the mind and the mind becomes a very energetic force to radiate for the wellbeing for others.

• When practised together with wisdom and insight, metta will indeed become a powerful healing force which will transform us into a more compassionate and caring community, as well as transforming all negative energies and entities into light, love and harmony.

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