

## METTĀ SUTTA

Known as “Karaṇīya Mettā Sutta”<sup>1</sup>

*1. Karaṇīya-matthakusalena, Yaṃ ta santam padam abhisamecca,  
Sakko ujū ca suhujū ca, Suvaco cassa mudu anatimānī.*

Aspiring to **Serenity**<sup>2</sup> one who is skilled in his good should be:  
**Able**<sup>3</sup>, upright, very upright, **obedient**,<sup>4</sup> humble and not conceited;

*2. Santussako ca subharo ca, Appakicco ca sallahukavutti;  
Santindriyo ca nipako ca, Appagabbho kulesvananugiddho.*

Contented, easily satisfied, less occupied, and **lightly living**;<sup>5</sup>  
Composed, **mature**,<sup>6</sup> not arrogant, not attached to **families**;<sup>7</sup>

*3. Na ca khudda-mācare kiñci, Yena viññū pare upavadeyyum.  
Sukhino vā khemino hontu, Sabbasattā bhavantu sukhittā.*

One should not commit even a slightest wrong that the wise would reprove.  
(Wishing:) May all beings be comfortable, safe, and **happy**.<sup>8</sup>

*4. Ye keci pāṇabhūtatthi, Tasā vā thāvarā vanavasesā,  
Dīghā vā ye va mahantā, Majjhimā rassakā aṇukathulā.*

Whatever beings there may be, whether frightened or not frightened, omitting  
none,  
Big, small, or medium, short, subtle or gross,

*5. Diṭṭhā vā ye va adiṭṭhā, Ye va dūre vasanti avidūre,  
Bhūtā va sambhavesīva, Sabbasattā bhavantu sukhittā.*

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<sup>1</sup> Its original title is just “Mettā Sutta” documented in two Pāli texts: *Khuddaka-pāṭha* and *Sutta-nipāta*. Strangely enough, we have five more suttas by the same name: four in *Aṅguttara*, and one in *Saṃyutta*. That is, I think, the reason why some scholars call it, “Karaṇīya Metta Sutta” after its initial word because this sutta starts with “Karaṇīya” that literally means, “This is what should be done.” [According to the context, however, it actually means, “one should be” able, honest, and so on.]

<sup>2</sup> “**Serenity**” (*santam padam*) here refers to the ultimate peacefulness of *nibbāna*.

<sup>3</sup> “**Able**”: the Buddha said that one is “able” to accomplish one’s purpose, who has confidence, good health, good heart, energy, and knowledge, according to Bodhi Rāja-kumāra Sutta.

<sup>4</sup> The Pāli term for “obedient” is *su-vaco*, which literal means “easy to speak to or easy to admonish”

<sup>5</sup> “**Lightly living**” (*sallahuka-vutti*) means to live a carefree life with fewer belongs to be concerned about, like a bird who can fly anywhere without bothering about anything.

<sup>6</sup> “**Mature**” (*nipako*) does not refer to age, but to knowledge and experience.

<sup>7</sup> “**Not attached to families**” (*kulesva’nanugiddho*) implies that one should behave like the moon that simply makes people happy, but never gets affected by their success or failure.

<sup>8</sup> “**Comfortable, safe and happy**”: the literal meaning of its original Pāli is “May all beings have comfort, safety, and happy spirit” (*Sukhino vā khemino hontu sabbasattā bhavantu sukhittā*).

Seen or unseen; living near or far away,  
Born or to-be-born — May all beings be happy!

*6. Na paro param nikubbetha, Nātimaññetha katthaci na kañci,  
Byārosanā paṭighasañña, Nāñña-maññassa dukkha-miccheyya.*

Let none deceive another; Or despise any being in any place.  
Let none wish harm upon another through oppression or ill-will.

*7. Mātā yathā niyaṃ putta-, Māyusā ekaputta-manurakkhe,  
Evam pi sabbabhūtesu, Mānasam bhāvaye aparimāṇam.*

Just as a mother protects with her life her child, her only child,  
So also, with a boundless heart one should cherish all beings.

*8. Mettañ ca sabbalokasmi, Mānasam bhāvaye aparimāṇam,  
Uddham adho ca tiriyañ ca, Asambādham avera-masapattam.*

Radiate the mind of boundless love over the entire world;  
Above, below, and across, boundlessly, without hate and hostility.

*9. Tiṭṭham caram nisinno va, Sayāno yāvatāssa vitamiddho,  
Etaṃ satim adhiṭṭheyya, Brahma-metaṃ vihāra-midha māhu.*

Whether standing or walking, sitting or lying down; as long as awake,  
One should sustain this recollection. This is said to be the sublime abiding.

*10. Diṭṭhiñ ca anupaggamma, Sīlavā dassanena sampanno,  
Kāmesu vineyya gedham , Na hi jātuggabbhaseyya puna reti.*

Not adhering to [view](#),<sup>9</sup> being virtuous, endowed with [Vision](#),<sup>10</sup>  
Discarding all sense desires; he will not come to womb again.

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<sup>9</sup> “**Not adhering to view**” obviously means “not holding wrong view” referring to ego-illusion (*atta-diṭṭhi*). By this phrase the Buddha instructs us to see psychophysical phenomena as they really are without identifying them as “I” or “mine”. For elaboration, this Sutta is dealing with living beings, and most likely to lead us to the illusion that living beings exist representing eternal souls. As a matter of fact, we can be considered different persons at every moment because we are changing at every moment both physically and mentally. Yet, we can be considered the same individuals since we belong to the same psychophysical processes. So, there is no “I” in terms of eternal soul, but there is “I” in terms of psychophysical process.

<sup>10</sup> “**Vision**” here is literally described as “the first vision of nibbāna,” referring to the first stage of enlightenment called *sotāpatti-magga*.