

Metta (Loving-kindness) Meditation

(From Bhante Gunaratana, *Loving-Kindness in Plain English*)

Discourse on Loving-Kindness | *Karaniya Metta Sutta, Suttanipāta 1:8*

Thus have I heard. At one time when the Blessed One was living near Savatthi at Jetavana at Anathapindika's monastery, he addressed the monks saying, "Monks."

"Venerable sir," the monks replied.

The Blessed One then spoke as follows:

"This is what should be done
By one who is skilled in goodness,
And who knows the path of peace:
Let them be able and upright,
Straightforward and gentle in speech.
Humble and not conceited,
Contented and easily satisfied.
Unburdened with duties and frugal in their ways.
Peaceful and calm, and wise and skillful,
Not proud and demanding in nature.
Let them not do the slightest thing
That the wise would later reprove.
Wishing: In gladness and in safety,
May all beings be at ease.
Whatever living beings there may be;
Whether they are weak or strong, omitting none,
The great or the mighty, medium, short or small,
The seen and the unseen,

Those living near and far away,
Those born and to-be-born,
May all beings be at ease!
Let none deceive another,
Or despise any being in any state.
Let none through anger or ill will
Wish harm upon another.
Even as a mother protects with her life
Her child, her only child,
So with a boundless heart
Should one cherish all beings:
Radiating kindness over the entire world
Spreading upwards to the skies,
And downwards to the depths;
Outwards and unbounded,
Freed from hatred and ill will.
Whether standing or walking, seated or lying down,
Free from drowsiness,
One should sustain this recollection.
This is said to be the sublime abiding.
By not holding to fixed views,
The pure-hearted one, having clarity of vision,
Being freed from all sense desires,
Is not born again into this world."

Discourse on the Benefits from Loving-Kindness | *Metta Nisamsa Sutta, Anguttara Nikaya 11:15*

Thus have I heard. At one time, when the Blessed One was living near Savatthi at Jetavana at Anathapindika's monastery, he addressed the monks saying, "O Monks."

"Yes, venerable sir," the monks replied.

The Blessed One then spoke as follows: "O Monks, there are eleven benefits from loving-friendliness that arise from the emancipation of the heart; if repeated, developed, made much of, made a habit of, made a basis of, experienced, practiced, well started, these eleven benefits are expected.

"What are the eleven?

1. One sleeps well.
2. One gets up well.
3. One does not have nightmares.
4. One becomes affectionate to human beings.

5. One becomes affectionate to non-human beings.
6. The deities protect one.
7. Neither fire nor poison nor weapon affect one.
8. One's mind becomes calm immediately.
9. One's complexion brightens.
10. One dies without confusion.
11. Beyond that, if one does not comprehend the highest, one goes to the world of the brahmas.

“O Monks, there are eleven benefits from loving-friendliness that arise from the emancipation of the heart; if repeated, developed, made much of, made a habit of, made a basis of, experienced, practiced, well started, these eleven benefits are expected.”

Thus spoke the Exalted One. Delighted, the monks rejoiced in what the Exalted One had said.

Loving-Friendliness Meditations

There are several varieties of meditation. Among all, repetition is key. Whether you are repeating words from a sutta, consistently setting aside time for meditation, or simply mentally returning to feelings of warm-heartedness during your day, making loving-friendliness a habit will help you cultivate it over time. Though the change may be imperceptible from one session to the next, with regular practice meditation on loving-friendliness may have a significant effect on your life and your relationships with others.

General Instructions

As a beginner, find a quiet place to sit and spend ample time with one of these meditations. Slowly read it over and allow yourself to feel loving-friendliness radiate out from your heart as described. In this meditation, we start with the words and ideas. These words are a suggestion — you may choose some variant of one of these or add to it in a way that is meaningful for you.

Start with yourself as the focal point of the meditation, and extend your peace and good wishes outward until it includes all beings in the universe. You may find it helpful to imagine specific people or animals at each stage. Hold them in your mind and sincerely feel loving-friendliness for all beings. If some category of being is challenging for you, be patient and earnest in your meditation until it feels fluid.

Focus on the physical feelings that arise until they become a pure distillation of all your thoughts and physical sensations. It is a feeling beyond sensation, almost an emotional coloring in the mind. It is often accompanied by sensations of warmth and swelling in the area of the heart.

As you gradually become more comfortable with this meditation, drop the words and images, the beings, and stages. Move deeply into metta as an intangible thing — beyond thought, emotion, and physical feeling.

MEDITATION 1

May I be well, happy, and peaceful. May no harm come to me. May I always meet with spiritual success. May I also have patience, courage, understanding, and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems, and failures in life. May I always rise above them with morality, integrity, forgiveness, compassion, mindfulness, and wisdom.

May my parents be well, happy, and peaceful. May no harm come to them. May they always meet with spiritual success. May they also have patience, courage, understanding, and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems, and failures in life. May they always rise above them with morality, integrity, forgiveness, compassion, mindfulness, and wisdom.

May my teachers be well, happy, and peaceful. May no harm come to them. May they always meet with spiritual success. May they also have patience, courage, understanding, and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems, and failures in life. May they always rise above them with morality, integrity, forgiveness, compassion, mindfulness, and wisdom.

May my relatives be well, happy, and peaceful. May no harm come to them. May they always meet with spiritual success. May they also have patience, courage, understanding, and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems, and failures in life. May they always rise above them with morality, integrity, forgiveness, compassion, mindfulness, and wisdom.

May my friends be well, happy, and peaceful. May no harm come to them. May they always meet with spiritual success. May they also have patience, courage, understanding, and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems, and failures in life. May they always rise above them with morality, integrity, forgiveness, compassion, mindfulness, and wisdom.

May all indifferent persons be well, happy, and peaceful. May no harm come to them. May they always meet with spiritual success. May they also have patience, courage, understanding, and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems, and failures in life. May they always rise above them with morality, integrity, forgiveness, compassion, mindfulness, and wisdom.

May all unfriendly persons be well, happy, and peaceful. May no harm come to them. May they always meet with spiritual success. May they also have patience, courage, understanding, and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems, and failures in life. May they always rise above them with morality, integrity, forgiveness, compassion, mindfulness, and wisdom.

May all living beings be well, happy, and peaceful. May no harm come to them. May they always meet with spiritual success. May they also have patience, courage, understanding, and determination to meet and overcome inevitable difficulties, problems, and failures in life. May they always rise above them with morality, integrity, forgiveness, compassion, mindfulness, and wisdom.

MEDITATION 2

Having seen that all beings, like myself, have a desire for happiness, I should methodically develop loving-friendliness toward all beings.

May I be happy and free from suffering.

And always, like myself, may my friends, neutral persons, and the hostile be happy too.

May all beings in this village, in this state, in other countries, and in all world systems be ever happy.

So too may all women, men, noble ones, non-noble ones, gods, humans, and beings in the lower worlds be happy.

May all beings in the ten directions be happy.

May I be free from hatred. May I be free from affliction. May I be free from worry. May I live happily. As I am, so also may my parents, teachers, preceptors, and friendly, indifferent, and hostile beings be free from hatred. May they be free from affliction. May they be free from worry. May they live happily. May they be released from suffering. May they not be deprived of their fortune, duly acquired.

May all beings...

May all living things...

May all creatures...

May all persons...

May all noble ones...

May all non-noble ones...

May all gods...

May all humans...

May all non-humans...

May all those who are in the hell realms...

May all those who are in this home...

May all those who are in this town...

May all those who are in this country...

May all those who are in this world...

May all those who are in this galaxy...

May all of them, without any exception, be free from worry. May they live happily. May they be released from suffering. May they not be deprived of their fortune, duly acquired.

May those with no feet receive my love. May those with two feet receive my love. May those with four feet receive my love. May those with many feet receive my love.

May those with no feet not hurt me. May those with two feet not hurt me. May those with four feet not hurt me. May those with many feet not hurt me.

May all beings, all those with life, all who have become, all in their entirety — may all see what is good. May suffering not come to anyone.

May those who suffer be free from suffering. May the fear-struck be free from fear. May those who grieve be free from grief, so too may all beings be.

From the highest realm of existence to the lowest, may all beings arisen in these realms, with form and without form, with perception and without perception, be released from all suffering and attain perfect peace.