

THE PERFECTION OF LOVING-KINDNESS

mettā-parami

The perfection of loving-kindness is the wish to provide for the welfare and happiness of the world, accompanied by compassion and skilful means; literally it means benevolence....

Loving-kindness is mentioned immediately after the perfection of resolve a) because loving-kindness perfects the determination to undertake activity for the welfare of others; b) in order to list the work of actually providing for the welfare of others right after stating the determination to do so, for “one determined upon the requisites of enlightenment abides in loving-kindness”; and c) because the undertaking (of the activity for the welfare of others) proceeds imperturbably only when resolve is unshakeable. ...

The noble qualities of loving-kindness should be reflected upon as follows:

“One resolved only upon his or her own welfare cannot achieve success in this world or a happy rebirth in the life to come – there must be some concern for the welfare of others; how then can someone wishing to establish all beings in the attainment of Nirvana succeed without loving-kindness? And if you wish to ultimately lead all beings to the supramundane achievement of Nirvana, you should begin by wishing for their mundane success here and now.”

And:

“I cannot provide for the welfare and happiness of others merely by wishing for it. Let me put forth effort to accomplish it.”

And:

“Now I support them by promoting their welfare and happiness; afterwards they will be my requisites of Awakening. Since they are the cause for the manifestation and perfecting of all the Buddha-qualities, these beings are for me a supreme field of merit, the incomparable basis for planting wholesome roots, the ultimate object of reverence.”

A Treatise on the Paramis by Dhammapala

CLASSIC DEFINITION OF METTA

Metta is called loving-kindness because it is loving (*mejjati*). It refers to tender or lubricating love. It is also known as *metta* because it arises in one’s relationship to a friend (*mitta*).

The characteristic of loving-kindness is to promote wellbeing. Its function is to prefer wellbeing. Its manifestation is the removal of annoyance. Its proximate cause is seeing the loveliness of beings. It succeeds when it makes ill will subside, and it fails when it produces selfish affection.

Visuddhimagga IX by Buddhaghosa

And how does one abide with one's hearts imbued with loving-kindness extending outward in one direction? Just as one would feel friendliness on seeing a dearly beloved friend, so does one extend loving-kindness to all creatures.

The Buddha
Appamannavibhanga of The Abhidharma Pitaka

In the *Haliddavasana Sutta* The Buddha said, "the liberation of mind through loving-kindness has beauty as the highest [perception]." This is because no one appears repulsive to someone who abides in loving-kindness.

Vissudhimagga IX. 119-120

THE ENEMIES OF LOVING-KINDNESS PRACTICE

The divine abiding of loving-kindness has sensual passion as its near enemy since both involve seeing virtue. Sensual passion operates like an enemy who stays close by and easily finds an opportunity. Loving-kindness should be well protected from it.

Ill-will, being the opposite of craving, is the far enemy of loving-kindness. It is like an enemy laying in wait in the wilds. Loving-kindness must be practiced free from ill-will. It is not possible to practice loving-kindness and feel anger at the same time.

Vissudhimagga IX

THE BENEFITS OF LOVING-KINDNESS

Monks, when the liberation of mind through loving-kindness is practiced, developed, resorted to, used as one's vehicle, made one's foundation, steadied, consolidated, and perfected, eleven benefits can be expected. Which eleven?

1. One sleeps happily.
2. One wakes happily.
3. One has no bad dreams.
4. One is loved by others.
5. One is loved by non-humans.
6. One is guarded by devas.
7. Fire, poison, or sword won't touch one.
8. One's mind becomes concentrated quickly.
9. One's complexion becomes clear.
10. One dies with a mind free from confusion.
11. If no higher attainment is reached, one is reborn in the Brahma realms.

The Buddha
Anguttara Nikaya XI.16

A monastic dwelling in loving-kindness
And pleased with the Buddha's teachings
Attains happiness, the stilling of formations,
The state of peace.

Dhammapada 368