

# **Mangala Sutta**

Discourse on Blessings

# Background

The word “Mangala” means “**blessing**”, “auspicious sign” or “good omen”. In ancient India, people wanted to know what constituted a real blessing that makes life happy for them. This issue was even raised among the deities (devas) in the heavenly planes. For 12 years the deities argued, debated and discussed about it. Some referred “blessing” as what is pleasurable to the senses – things that are pleasing to the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body. However, no satisfactory answer could be obtained.

Then devas of Tavatimsa heavenly realm approached **Sakka**, the leader of the devas, for his views. Sakka advised the devas to consult the Buddha. Thus in the middle of the night, a certain deity with his surpassing splendour, came to visit the Buddha at the monastery of **Anathapindika** in Jeta’s Grove near Savatthi. He asked the Buddha for the true meaning of “blessing”. In response, the Buddha delivered a discourse known as Mangala Sutta, in which 38 highest blessings were enumerated.

## ***blessing***

*Ordinary worldlings see blessings as gifts from God or devas, or something that comes by chance or good luck. Buddhists see blessings as the effects of kamma vipaka. Blessings that you have now are due to old kamma (vipaka). New kamma is how you make use of your blessings, or how you create new future blessings.*

## ***Sakka***

*King of the 33 in Tavatimsa heaven. His rebirth there was due to his own blessings, having lived up to the 7 vows as a human being – support parents, respect eldest, gentle speech, non-divisive speech, truthful speech, mind that is generous, free from anger*

## ***Anathapindika***

*“he who helps the orphans or poor”, real name is Sudatta, a rich cheti who is the foremost lay disciple of the Buddha in terms of generosity. Met Buddha at Rajagaha, became a sotapanna after listening to the Buddha, reborn in Tusita heaven*

**Mangala Sutta** is customarily chanted for blessings on auspicious occasions. Besides, these 38 blessings are ethical and spiritual in nature, providing **step-by-step** training on the journey of life. It contains Buddha's advice and guidance for the 'novice' of life, and ultimately leads one to liberation from suffering.

### ***Mangala Sutta***

*One of the most popular and well known Buddhist chantings. Found in the Khuddhaka Nikaya (Khuddhakapatha [Khp5] and Sutta Nipata[Sn2.4])*

*A summary of Buddhist ethics, that when properly practised, leads to harmony and progress for individual, society, nation and world.*

*It describes a gradual and progressive step-by-step training that begins with avoidance of bad company to achievement of final liberation.*

# Discourse on Blessings

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion, the Blessed One was dwelling at the monastery of Anathapindika in Jeta's Grove near Savatthi. When the night was far spent, a certain deity whose surpassing splendour illuminated the entire Jeta Grove, came to the presence of the Blessed One, and drawing near, respectfully saluted the Lord and stood to one side. Standing thus, he addressed the Blessed One in verse:

Many deities and men, yearning after good, have pondered on Blessings. Pray, tell me the Supreme Blessing.

Not to associate with **fools**, to associate with the **wise**, and honour those who are **worthy of honour**, this is Blessing Supreme.

## ***fools***

*do not believe in kamma,  
do not learn or practise the dhamma*

## ***wise***

*believe in kamma (take responsibility for actions of mind, speech and body),  
learn and practise the dhamma (lay & monks)*

## ***About kamma***

*You are owner of your kamma, heir of your kamma, born of your kamma, related to your kamma, and abide dependent on your kamma*

## ***worthy of honour***

*refers to the sangha,  
also anyone whose mind is pure and developed, noble men noble mind; **Sigalovada Sutta** – honour parents and teachers (worldly & spiritual teachers)*

# Discourse on Blessings

To live in a **suitable locality**, to have done meritorious actions in the past, and to have set oneself on the **right course**, this is Blessing Supreme.

**Vast-learning, perfect handicraft**, a highly **trained discipline** and **pleasant speech**; this is Blessing Supreme.

***suitable locality***

*a place where dhamma can be learned or practised*

***right course***

*path of emancipation*

***vast learning***

*learning the dhamma, not just worldly knowledge*

***perfect handicraft***

*skilled ability, ethical career, right livelihood*

***trained discipline***

*discipline and diligence - qualities for success, part of right effort, which leads to more blessings; abstaining from 10 evil deeds, moderation in eating*

***pleasant speech***

*Right speech, which is truthful, unifying, gentle, non-gossip (vs. false, divisive, harsh, idle gossip). A good speech should be true, beneficial and appropriate (time, place, person, method)*

# Discourse on Blessings

The support of **father and mother**, the cherishing of **wife and children** and **peaceful occupations**; this is Blessing Supreme.

**Liberal giving, righteous conduct**, the **helping of relatives** and **blameless actions**; this is Blessing Supreme.

To cease and **abstain from evil**, forbearance with respect to intoxicants and steadfastness in virtue; this is Blessing Supreme.

*Father and mother, wife and children, relatives & friends*

*Sigalovada Sutta*

*Peaceful occupations*

*5 occupations to avoid – dealing with flesh, meat, weapons, poisons, intoxicants*

*Liberal giving (dana)*

*generosity comes in different forms – material, fearlessness, dhamma; blessings from generosity is dependent on the giver, the recipient, the gift; state of mind of giver is very important*

*righteous conduct (moral conduct, sila)*

*pancasila (precepts) – avoid killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, intoxicant*

*basic minimum, to strive for the highest virtues*

*blameless actions*

*motivation that is free from greed, hatred, delusion*

*abstain from evil*

*Avoid evil, do good, purify the mind*

*10 evil deeds: killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, malicious, harsh, gossip, covetousness, ill will, wrong view*

# Dana and Sila

## ***Benefits of Dana***

- 1. likeable*
- 2. respected*
- 3. good reputation*
- 4. confident in assembly*
- 5. good rebirth*

## ***Benefits of Sila***

- 1. Success (wealth)*
- 2. good reputation*
- 3. confidence*
- 4. good death*
- 5. good rebirth*
  - little: lower human*
  - mod: higher human*
  - lots: deva realm*

# Benefits of Sila (AN 10.1)

1. *Free from remorse*
2. *Gladness of mind*
3. *Joy*
4. *Tranquility*
5. *Happiness*
6. *Concentration*
7. *Seeing things as they are*
8. *Revulsion*
9. *Dispassion*
10. *Liberation*

*Earlier sections on **dana** and **sila**. Now we move on to **samadhi** and **panna**, the cultivation of the mind. Note the state of mind and qualities of mind that are beneficial to us. These qualities, when we possessed them, are our blessings.*

*Science has also confirmed that these qualities of mind are beneficial to us physically, emotionally and mentally, and are conducive to our happiness.*

# Discourse on Blessings

**Reverence, humility, contentment, bearing gratitude and opportune hearing of the Dhamma; this is Blessing Supreme.**

*reverence, humility, contentment*

*[Dhp] Health is highest gift, contentment highest wealth, trusted friend best of relatives, nibbana highest bliss*

**Patience, being easy to advise, sight of the Samanas (holy men), and timely discussion of the Dhamma; this is Blessing Supreme.**

*gratitude*

*science – STAGE, state of mind of gratitude focuses on have, not have not; always enough; expect good from universe*

*patience, easy to advise*

*state of humility (less self), open to learning; Johari Window – open, blind, hidden, unknown; importance of kalyana mitta*

**Self controlled, living a noble life, realising the Noble Truths and the attainment of Nibbana; this is Blessing Supreme.**

*hearing and discussion of dhamma*

*vast learning (bahu sacca)*

*self controlled (discipline)*

*prerequisite for success (worldly and spiritual)  
vinaya*

*noble life*

*noble men – free from taints (greed, hatred, delusions); ariyas*

# Discourse on Blessings

He whose mind does not waver, by contact with **worldly contingencies, sorrowless, stainless and secure**; this is Blessing Supreme.

To them, fulfilling matters such as these, everywhere **invincible**, in every way secure; these are Blessings Supreme.

## ***worldly contingencies***

*loka dhamma (winds of change), gain and loss, fame and ill fame, praise and blame, happiness and pain*

## ***sorrowless, stainless, secure, invincible***

*description of the ariyas, esp the arahants;*

*fearless, gone beyond self;*

*“Fearlessness is not only possible. It is the highest bliss.”*

## Mangala Sutta

The discourse was preached at [Jetavana](#) Temple in answer to a question asked by a [deva](#) as to which things in this world could truly be considered [blessings](#) (*mangalāni*). The sutta describes thirty-eight blessings in ten sections,<sup>[3]</sup> as shown in the table below:

<b>Gp.1</b>	Not associating with fools	Associating with the wise	Expressing respect to those worthy of respect		
<b>Gp.2</b>	Living in an amenable location	Having meritorious deeds (Good Karma) in one's past	Setting oneself up properly in life		
<b>Gp.3</b>	Learnedness	Artfulness	<a href="#">Self-discipline</a>	Artful speech	
<b>Gp.4</b>	<a href="#">Filial piety</a>	Cherishing one's children	Cherishing one's spouse	Not leaving work undone	
<b>Gp.5</b>	<a href="#">Generosity</a>	Dhamma practice	Caring for extended family	Blameless work	
<b>Gp.6</b>	Avoiding unwholesomeness	Not <a href="#">drinking</a> intoxicants	Non-recklessness in the Dhamma		
<b>Gp.7</b>	<a href="#">Respect</a>	<a href="#">Humility</a>	<a href="#">Contentment</a>	<a href="#">Gratitude</a>	Listening regularly to Dhamma teachings
<b>Gp.8</b>	<a href="#">Patience</a>	Openness to <a href="#">Criticism</a>	Sight of a True Monk	Regular discussion of the Dhamma	
<b>Gp.9</b>	Practising Austerities	Practising the Brahma-faring	Seeing the <a href="#">Four Noble Truths</a>	Attainment of <a href="#">Nirvana</a>	
<b>Gp.10</b>	Mind free of Worldly Vicissitudes	Sorrowlessness	Free of Subtle Defilements	Blissful Mind	