

MANGALA SUTTA

BACKGROUND STORY

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 deities (devas) in the heavenly planes. For twelve 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 Anāthapindika in Jeta's Grove near Sāvatti. He asked the Buddha for the true meaning of "blessing". In response, the Buddha delivered a discourse known as Mangala Sutta, in which thirty-eight highest blessings were enumerated.

Mangala Sutta is customarily chanted for blessings on auspicious occasions. Besides, these thirty-eight blessings are ethical and spiritual in nature, providing a 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

*Evam me sutam
Ekam samayam Bhagavā
Sāvattiyam viharati
Jetavane Anāthapindikassa ārāme
Atha kho aññatarā devatā
Abhikkantāya rattiyā abhikkanta vannā
Kevala kappam Jetavanam obhāsetvā
Yena Bhagavā tenupasamkami
Upasamkamitvā bhagavantam
Abhivādetvā ekamantam atthāsi
Ekamantam thitā kho sā devatā
Bhagavantam gāthāya ajjhabhāsi*

*Bahū devā manussā ca
Mangalāni acintayum
Ākankhamānā sotthānam
Brūhi mangala muttamam*

*Ārati virati pāpā
Majjapānā ca samyamo
Appamādo ca dhammesu
Etam mangala muttamam*

*Asevanā ca bālānam
Panditānañ ca sevanā
Pūjā ca pūjanīyānam
Etam mangala muttamam*

*Gāravo ca nivāto ca
Santutthī ca kataññutā
Kālena dhamma savanam
Etam mangala muttamam*

*Patirūpa-desā vāso ca
Pubbe ca katapuññatā
Atta sammā panidhi ca
Etam mangala muttamam*

*Khanti ca sovacassatā
Samanānañ ca dassanam
Kālena dhamma sākacchā
Etam mangala muttamam*

*Bāhu saccañ ca sippañ ca
Vinayo ca susikkhito
Subhāsītā ca yā vācā
Etam mangala muttamam*

*Tapo ca brahmacariyāñ ca
Ariyasaccāna dassanam
Nibbāna sacchikiriya ca
Etam mangala muttamam*

*Mātā pitu upatthānam
Puttadārassa sangaho
Anākulā ca kammantā
Etam mangala muttamam*

*Phutthassa loka dhammehi
Cittam yassa na kampati
Asokam virajam khemam
Etam mangala muttamam*

*Dānañ ca dhammacariyā ca
Ñātakānañ ca sangaho
Anavajjāni kammāni
Etam mangala muttamam*

*Etādisāni katvāna
Sabbattha maparājita
Sabbattha sotthim gacchanti
Tam tesam mangala-muttamam ti*

DISCOURSE ON BLESSINGS

Thus have I heard :

On one occasion, the Blessed One
was dwelling at the monastery of Anāthapindika
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.

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

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

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.

DISCOURSE ON BLESSINGS

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

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

Self-control, living a noble life,
realizing the Noble Truths
and the attainment of Nibbāna;
this is Blessing Supreme.

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.

Introduction

Evam me sutam
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 Abhikkantāya rattiyā abhikkanta vannā
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 Yena Bhagavā tenupasamkami
 Upasamkamitvā bhagavantam
 Abhivādetvā ekamantam atthāsi
 Ekamantam thitā kho sā devatā
 Bhagavantam gāthāya ajjhabhāsi

Thus have I heard :
 On one occasion, the Blessed One
 was dwelling at the monastery of
 Anāthapindika 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 :

	<u>Meaning</u>
Evam	Thus
me	I [instrumental case : "by me"]
sutam	heard
ekam	(On) one
samayam	occasion
Bhagavā	(the) Blessed One, i.e. the Buddha
Sāvattiyam	(in) Sāvattī, the capital of Kosala
viharati	(was) living
Jetavane	Jeta's Wood; Jeta's Grove
Anāthapindikassa	Anāthapindika's
ārāme	monastery
atha kho	then; [at the time]
aññatarā	a certain
devatā	deity [masculine : deva]
abhikkantāya	(at the) last watch
rattiyā	(of the) night
abhikkanta	extreme; outstanding; magnificent
vannā	brilliance; handsome
kevala	whole
kappa	surrounding
Jetavanam	Jeta's Wood
obhāsetvā	set aglow (in full radiance)
Yena ... tena	[locative case : "towards where"]

	<u>Meaning</u>
<i>upasamkami</i>	approach
<i>upasamkamitoā</i>	having approach
<i>bhagavantam</i>	(to the) Buddha; Blessed One
<i>abhivādetoā</i>	having paid respect
<i>ekam antam</i>	at one side
<i>atthāsi</i>	(the deity) stood
<i>ekamantam thitā kho</i>	and thus; standing at one side
<i>sā devatā</i>	that deity
<i>gāthāya</i>	in verses
<i>ajjhabhāsi</i>	addressed (the Buddha)

Verse 1

<i>Bahū devā manussā ca</i>	Many deities and men,
<i>Mangalāni acintayum</i>	yearning after good,
<i>Ākankhamānā sothānam</i>	have pondered on Blessings.
<i>Brūhi mangala muttamam</i>	Pray, tell me the Supreme Blessing.

Meaning

<i>Bahū</i>	Many
<i>devā</i>	gods; deities
<i>manussā</i>	men; human beings
<i>ca</i>	and
<i>mangalāni</i>	blessings; good omens
<i>acintayum</i>	speculating on
<i>akankhamānā</i>	(which they) hope for; aspire to
<i>sothānam</i>	safety; safe state
<i>brūhi</i>	tell; teach; clarify; reveal; explain (then)
<i>mangalam</i>	blessings
<i>uttamam</i>	supreme; highest; lofty; distinguished

Verse 2

*Asevanā ca bālānam
Panditānañ ca sevanā
Pūjā ca pūjanīyānam
Etam mangala muttamam*

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

Meaning

<i>Asevanā</i>	Not associating; not consorting
<i>bālānam</i>	(with the) foolish
<i>panditānam</i>	(with the) wise
<i>sevanā</i>	associating
<i>pūjā</i>	honouring
<i>Pūjanīyānam (neyyanam)</i>	those worthy of honour and respect
<i>etam</i>	this is
<i>mangalam uttamam</i>	the highest blessing

Verse 3

*Patirūpa-desa vāso ca
Pubbe ca katapuññatā
Atta sammā panidhi ca
Etam mangala muttamam*

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

Meaning

<i>Patirūpa</i>	Favourable, suitable
<i>desa</i>	place; locality
<i>vāso</i>	living (in)
<i>pubbe</i>	in the past
<i>kata</i>	done
<i>puññatā</i>	merits
<i>atta</i>	oneself
<i>sammāpanidhi</i>	rightly established; well-placed on course

Verse 4

*Bāhu saccañ ca sippañ ca
Vinayo ca susikkhito
Subhāsītā ca yā vācā
Etam mangala muttamam*

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

Meaning

<i>Bāhu</i>	Ample; much; vast
<i>saccañ</i>	learning (of the Dhamma)
<i>sippañ</i>	craft
<i>vinayo</i>	discipline
<i>susikkhito</i>	well-trained
<i>subhāsītā</i>	well-spoken
<i>vācā</i>	speech

Verse 5

*Mātā pitu upatthānam
Puttadārassa sangaho
Anākulā ca kammantā
Etam mangala muttamam*

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

Meaning

<i>Mātā</i>	Mother
<i>pitā</i>	father
<i>upatthānam</i>	aid; provide for
<i>putta</i>	children
<i>dārassa</i>	(and) wife
<i>sangaho</i>	support
<i>anākulā</i>	(which) brings no conflict
<i>kammantā</i>	work; occupation

Verse 6

<i>Dānañ ca dhammacariyā ca</i>	Liberal giving, righteous conduct,
<i>Ñātakānañ ca sangaho</i>	the helping of relatives
<i>Anavajjāni kammāni</i>	and blameless actions;
<i>Etam mangala muttamam</i>	this is Blessing Supreme.

Meaning

<i>Dānañ</i>	Giving (out of generosity)
<i>dhammacariyā</i>	righteous, wholesome conduct which conforms with dhamma
<i>ñātakā</i>	kin; relatives
<i>sangaho</i>	support; provide for
<i>anavajjāni</i>	blameless; beyond reproach
<i>kammāni</i>	actions

Verse 7

Ārati virati pāpā
Majjapānā ca samyamo
Appamādo ca dhammesu
Etam mangala muttamam

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

Meaning

<i>Ārati</i>	Not delighting; refraining
<i>virati</i>	abstaining (from)
<i>pāpā</i>	evil deeds
<i>majjapānā</i>	intoxicating drinks
<i>samyamo</i>	refraining; forbearing
<i>appamādo</i>	diligence; mindful; not heedless; not careless
<i>dhammesu</i>	(with) the Dhamma

Verse 8

*Gāraṇo ca nivāto ca
Santutthī ca kataññūtā
Kālena dhamma savanam
Etam mangala muttamam*

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

Meaning

<i>Gāraṇo</i>	Respectfulness; reverence
<i>nivāto</i>	humble manner
<i>santutthī</i>	being contented
<i>kataññūtā</i>	bearing gratitude
<i>kālena</i>	timely
<i>dhamma</i>	the Dhamma
<i>savanam</i>	hearing

Verse 9

*Khanti ca sovacassatā
Samanānañ ca dassanam
Kālena dhamma sākacchā
Etam mangala muttamam*

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

Meaning

<i>Khanti</i>	Patience; endurance
<i>sovacassatā</i>	easy to advise; (being) amenable to correction
<i>samanānañ</i>	monks; holy men
<i>dassanam</i>	seeing
<i>kālena</i>	timely
<i>dhamma</i>	(of the) Dhamma
<i>sākacchā</i>	discussion

Verse 10

<i>Tapo ca brahmacariyāñ ca Ariyasaccāna dassanam Nibbāna sacchikiriya ca Etam mangala muttamam</i>	Self-control, living a noble life, realizing the Noble Truths and the attainment of Nibbāna; this is Blessing Supreme.
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Meaning

<i>Tapo</i>	Self-discipline; ardour; self-control
<i>brahmacariyāñ</i>	noble way of life
<i>ariya</i>	noble
<i>saccā</i>	truths
<i>dassanam</i>	seeing; realizing
<i>Nibbāna</i>	extinction (of suffering)
<i>sacchikiriya</i>	realization

Verse 11

*Phutthassa loka dhammehi
Cittam yassa na kampati
Asokam virajam khemam
Etam mangala muttamam*

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

Meaning

<i>Phutthassa</i>	Contacted with
<i>loka</i>	worldly
<i>dhammehi</i>	conditions
<i>cittam</i>	(One's) mind
<i>na</i>	not
<i>kampati</i>	wavering
<i>asokam</i>	sorrowless
<i>virajam</i>	stainless; without defilements
<i>khemam</i>	secure; safe; fearlessness; unmenaced

Verse 12

<i>Etādisāni katvāna</i>	To them, fulfilling matters such as these,
<i>Sabbattha maparājitā</i>	everywhere invincible,
<i>Sabbattha sotthim gacchanti</i>	in every way secure;
<i>Tam tesam mangala muttamam ti</i>	these are the Supreme Blessings.

Meaning

<i>Etādisāni</i>	Such as these (actions)
<i>katvāna</i>	having fulfilled
<i>sabbattham</i>	everywhere
<i>aparājitā</i>	unvanquished; undefeated
<i>sabbattha</i>	everywhere
<i>sotthim</i>	safely; in safety
<i>gacchanti</i>	going
<i>Tam tesam</i>	that these [ie. the 38 blessings mentioned]