The discourse on loving kindness was taught by the Buddha to a group of forest monks, who were disturbed by tree spirits. He urged them to practise loving kindness towards all beings. Eventually, those spirits tolerated their presence happily.

The discourse is grouped into six verses:-

**1) Verse One: Able, Honest and Humble**

**He who is skilled in his welfare -** *One who is skilled in welfare (attha) knows what should be done (karaņíyaṃ), and what should not be done (akaraņíyaṃ). The commentary explains that, for lay people they should observe the eight precepts with right livelihood as the eighth. Unlike the eight precepts observed on Uposatha days, the following morality can be observed throughout life. They are:-*

*1) I will abstain from taking life*

*2) I will abstain from stealing*

*3) I will abstain from indulging in sexual misconduct*

*4) I will abstain from telling lies*

*5) I will abstain from setting one person against another*

*6) I will abstain from using rude and rough words*

*7) I will abstain from frivolously talks*

*8) I will abstain from earning a living by taking life, stealing, sexual misconduct, telling lies, selling animals, weapons, flesh poisons and intoxicants*

**Who wishes to attain that state of peace (nibbāna) -** *The purpose of the dhamma taught by the Buddha is to find mental peace and to realise nibbāna, that is, to end craving and suffering.*

**Should act thus:**

**He should be able (sakko) –** O*ne should have confidence and energy to practise morality, concentration and wisdom. Pious hopes and wishful prayers are useless.*

**Upright, perfectly upright (ujū ca, suhujū ca) –** *Upright means one should be completely honest and upright in one’s actions and speech. Perfectly upright means one should be honest even in thought, that is, one should expel lust, ill-will, delusion and wrong views whenever they arise.*

**Obedient (suvaco) –** *Generally translated as pleasant or gentle speech. The commentary explained as one who receives admonishment meekly and invites one’s critic open-heartedly.*

**Gentle (mudu) –** *Able to win others respect by one polite and gentle manner.*

**Humble (anatimāní) –** *One should not be puffed up with pride on account of one’s lineage, learning or other virtues.*

**2) Verse Two: Content, Wise, Serene and Impartial**

**Contented (santussako)** – One should be contented with whatever is available, whatever is within one’s means, or whatever is suitable considering one’s status. The Buddha said “contentment is the greatest wealth”.

**Easily supported (subharo)** – One should be frugal and able to make do with little.

**With few duties (appakicco)** – One should not burden himself with any unnecessary responsibilities.

**Of light livelihood (sallahukavutti)** – Have basic requisites.

**Controlled in senses (santindriyo)** – One must control the six-senses. On seeing a sight with the eye, one should not take notice of any details, but should merely be aware that one sees it. If one can stop the mind at the point of seeing, there will not be any chance for mental defilements to arise and develop.

**Discreet/Prudent (nipako)** – One should know what is suitable to develop concentration. There are seven kinds of suitable things (sappāya) that one should know about – residence, alms-resort, speech, teachers and companions, food, weather and posture. One should know when to do exercise, what to eat, how much in order not to indulge in sleeping.

**Not impudent (appagabbho)** – One should be polite and not rude, free from pride, arrogance and contempt. The best thing is to act and speak with awareness.

**Not greedily attached to families (kulesvananu-giddho)** – One should be detached, unbiased, unprejudiced and not act with discrimination.

**3) Verse Three: Blameless and Kind**

**He should not commit any slightest wrong blameable by the wise (na ca khuddamā-care kiñci, yena viññū pare upavadeyyuṃ)** – One should be completely blameless.

**May all beings be happy and be secured. May they be happy-hearted (sukhino va khemino hontu, sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhitattā)** – One should cultivate sincere thoughts of loving kindness.

**4) Verse Four: Send Love to All Beings**

**Whatever living beings there may be (ye keci pāņabhūtatthi)** – Breathing things (pāņa) or those have come into existence (bhūta) without exception (ye keci), whatever beings that exist anywhere in the universal.

**Feeble or strong (tasa vā thāvarā vā)** – Those beings who have many defilements are feeble (in mind), those who have few or no defilements are strong.

**Without exception (anavasesa)** – It shows the nature of genuine loving kindness does not have discrimination at all.

**Long or stout (díghā vā ye va mahantā); medium, short, small or large (majjhimā rassakā aņukathūlā)** – Loving kindness must be practised towards all living beings whatever their size or nature.

**5) Verse Five: Seen or Unseen**

**Seen or unseen (diţţhā vā ye va adiţţhā)** – Some beings may be invisible due to their small size, or living under the ground, inside plants or in non-human realms. Nevertheless, one should be aware of them and extend loving kindness towards them.

**Those who are dwelling far or near (ye va dūre vasanti avidūre)** – Loving kindness can be effective at any distance.

**Those who are born and to be born (bhūtā va sambhavesí va)** – Life begins at conception, not just at birth. Beings in the womb, larvae or fertile eggs have life and should not be destroyed.

**May they be happy hearted (sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhitattā)** – May all beings be happy in body and mind.

**6) Verse Six: Don’t Deceive or Harm Others**

**Let none deceive another (na paro paraṃ nikubbetha)** – One who deceives others does not have loving kindness for them. They are devoid of compassion and goodwill for others.

**Nor despise any person in any place in any way (nātimaññetha katthaci na kañci)** – To despise another person for any reason is mental rudeness.

**Let him not wish any harm to another out of anger or ill will (byārosanā paţighasaññā, nāññamaññassa dukkhamiccheyya)** – Let one not have any perception (saññā) of ill will or aversion (paţigha) to another (aññamaññassa), let one not (na) wish (iccheyya) that suffering (dukkhaṃ) should happen to anyone.

**7) Verse Seven: As a Mother Loves Her Child**

**Like a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life (mātā yathā niyaṃ puttam āyusā ekaputtamanurakkhe)** - Loving kindness should be boundless by comparing others with oneself.

**Even so, let him cultivate a boundless love to all living beings (evampi sabbabhūtesu, mānasam bjāvaye aparimāņam)** – It emphasises the limitless and unrestricted nature of loving kindness. Thoughts and feelings of goodwill should occur in a continuous stream, thus no trace of ill will or anger can penetrate the mind.

**8) Verse Eight: Send Love in All Directions**

**Let his thought of boundless love pervade the whole world (mettañca sabbalokasmi mānasaṃ bhāvaye aparimāņam)** – Let one cultivate a boundless heart of loving kindness for the whole world.

**Above, below and across without any obstruction, free from hatred and enmity (uddhaṃ adho ca tiriyañca, asambādhaṃ averamasapattaṃ)** – One should extend loving kindness above, below and across not oppressing, free from enmity and void of hostility.

**9) Verse Nine: Meditate Constantly**

**Whether he stands, walks, sits or lies down, as long as he is awake (tiţţhaṃ caraṃ nisinno va, sayāno yāvatāssa vitamiddho)** – One should develop loving kindness at all times and in all postures, not to have any lapse in concentration. Meditation must be continuous to be effective, otherwise the mind wanders; defilements enter the mind, concentration and energy decline.

**10) Verse Ten: Free from Wrong View and Rebirth**

**He should develop this mindfulness (etaṃ satiṃ adhiţţheyya, brahmametaṃ vihāramidhamāhu)** – Loving kindness must be firmly established. One should continue with the practise until absorption (jhāna) is attained, expelling all mental hindrances.

**Not following wrong views, being moral and endowed with vision (diţţhiñca anupaggamma, sílava dassanena sampanno)** – Having developed jhāna or some degree of concentration on metta, one should contemplate thoughts of metta with bare attention. Then one will dispel the illusion of a self (attadiţţhi), and will not grasp (anupaggamma) wrong views (diţţhim). When this insight matures one will attain stream-winning, whereby one is endowed with (sampanno) supramundane virtue (sílavā) through insight (dassanena).

**By discarding attachment to sensual pleasures he does not come again to be born in a womb (kāmesu vineyya gedhaṃ, na hi jātuggabbhaseyyam punaretí ti)** – As one develops insight to the higher stages of the path, desire (gedhaṃ) for sensual pleasures (kāmesu) is conquered (vineyya) and one becomes a non-returner. So one is not born (jāti) into a womb (gabbhaseyyaṃ) again (punaṃ).

**Benefits of practising loving kindness:-**

1) Comfortable sleep

2) Waking up comfortably

3) Freedom from dreadful dreams

4) Being loved by humans

5) Being loved by non-humans

6) Protected by deities

7) Not being subjected to fire, poison or weapon

8) Mental poise

9) Brightness in facial complexion

10) Ability to face death without fear

11) The birth in the Brahma world after death, if not attained arahantship in this world

Loving kindness should start from oneself first then extend to the guardian deities, next to one’s parents, teachers, relatives and associates, f0llow by all kinds of living beings and finally to all directions.

Loving kindness is very beneficial to calm and concentrate the mind. When coupled with bare awareness, it will quickly give rise to insight and liberation from defilements, which means freedom from suffering.

**How to curb resentment towards others?**

1) One is to think ‘Just as I want to be happy and dread pain; just as I want to live and not to die, so do other beings too.’

2) If anger persists, remind yourself you are not following the Buddha’s teachings.

Buddhaghosa explains “By repaying an angry man in kind, you will be worse than the angry man and not win the battle hard to win; you will do to yourself the things that help your enemy, and you will be like a pyre log.”

3) Try to recall the good sides of that person. If nothing good about that person in term of speech, action and thought, try to arouse compassion for that person – with his ignorance acts, he will be reborn in hell realm.

4) Think of the advantages of loving kindness.

5) Try resolution into elements, how?

When you are angry, what is it you are angry with? Is it his hairs, body hairs, nails, fresh, etc?

**Reference:**

**1) An Exposition of Metta Sutta by Bhikkhu Pesala**