Mettābhāvanā Sutta

Iti 1.27 Discourse on the Development of Loving-Kindness
Translated from the Pāḷi by Bhante Ānanda
English Revised Dec. 2019

This was said by the Exalted One,

This was spoken by the Arahant,
As I have heard:

"Bhikkhus,
Whatever vehicle or ground there is
For producing merit,
And generating a new birth,
All of these are not worth one sixteenth
Of the liberation of the mind through Loving-Kindness.

> Radiant, blazing and shining forth,
> The liberation of the mind,
> Through Loving-Kindness,
> Surpasses them.

Bhikkhus, just like whatever radiance there is from the stars,
All of it is not worth one sixteenth of the moon's radiance,

> Radiant, blazing and shining forth,
> The moon's radiance surpasses them.

In the same way bhikkhus,
Whatever vehicle or ground there is for producing merit,
And generating a new birth,
All of these are not worth one sixteenth
Of the liberation of the mind through Loving-Kindness.

> Radiant, blazing and shining forth,
> The liberation of the mind,
> Through Loving-Kindness,

Surpasses them.

Bhikkhus, just like in the last month of the monsoon season, in autumn,
When the sky is clear and the rain clouds have passed,
The sun rises above the dark mass,

Radiant, blazing and shining forth.
Winning over all of space,
Winning over darkness,
And driving it away,

In the same way bhikkhus,
Whatever vehicle or ground there is for producing merit,
And generating a new birth,
All of these are not worth one sixteenth
Of the liberation of the mind through Loving-Kindness.

Radiant, blazing and shining forth.
The liberation of the mind,
Through Loving-Kindness,
Surpasses them.

Bhikkhus, just like at the end of the night,
The morning star
Radiates, blazes and shines forth.

In the same way bhikkhus,
Whatever vehicle or ground there is for producing merit,
And generating a new birth,
All of these are not worth one sixteenth
Of the liberation of the mind through Loving-Kindness.

Radiant, blazing and shining forth.
The liberation of the mind,
Through Loving-Kindness,
Surpasses them."

This is the meaning of what the Exalted One said.
Further in this regard, he spoke thus:

"For one who develops Loving-Kindness,
With boundless presence;
The fetters wear away,
Seen is the ending of acquisitions.

Having an unspoiled mind towards one being,
Lovingly, there is merit therein.
But having a compassionate mind towards all beings,
The Ariyan generates an abundance of merit.

Even when, having conquered this earth, filled with the living,
The virtuous king[1] sets out performing offerings;

Horse offerings, men offerings,
Food offerings, money offerings,
Unobstructedly;

He does not partake in one sixteenth,
Of a mind well-developed in Loving-Kindness.
Like the moon's radiance is to the stars.

One who does not kill nor causes to kill,
Who does not conquer nor causes to conquer.
With a heart of Love towards all living beings,
He holds hatred for none."

This is also what was spoken by the Exalted One, as I have heard.

Twenty-Seventh

[1] The virtuous king, in buddhism, rules the land without stick or sword, without violence. He rules by the Dhamma, by virtue and generosity.