

The Kalama Sutta

Charter of Free Inquiry

The Kalama Sutta is a discourse by Buddha in the 6th Century BCE and is commonly called the Charter of Free Inquiry – **a way to know yourself and live accordingly**

Do not accept anything by mere tradition. . . Do not accept anything just because it accords with your scriptures. . . Do not accept anything merely because it agrees with your pre-conceived notions. . . But when you know for yourselves — these things are moral, these things are blameless, these things are praised by the wise, these things, when performed and undertaken lead to well-being and happiness — then do you live acting accordingly.

1. *Do not accept anything by mere tradition*
2. *Do not accept anything just because it accords with your scriptures*
3. *Do not accept anything merely because it agrees with your pre-conceived notions.*

But when you know for yourselves

1. *these things are moral*
2. *these things are blameless,*
3. *these things praised by the wise*
4. *these things when performed and undertaken lead to well-being and happiness*

Then do you live acting accordingly

When you know for yourself these things, then do you live acting accordingly

In the Kalama Sutta, Buddha also named ten specific sources whose knowledge should not be immediately viewed as truthful without further investigation. Put in present language these would be:

Oral history

Traditions

News sources

Scriptures and other official texts

Hypothetical reasoning

Philosophical dogmatism

Common sense

One's own opinions and judgments

Experts and Pundits

Authorities and one's own teacher

By oneself alone is one purified

Purity and impurity depending on oneself

As no one can purify another

By oneself one must walk the path