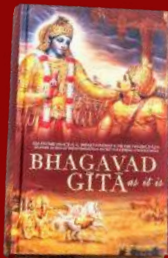




Dedicated to His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmi Prabhupāda
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness

All
Articles in
this issue
are by
Children
Authors,
our Young
Bhagavata
Students



Gita in My Life

Inside: Raising Children | Should Compassion be Applied Everywhere? | Analogy Arena |
Verse of the Month | Thematic: Young Devotees in Bhagavatam



FROM THE DESK OF
THE FOUNDER ĀCĀRYA

Raising Children

Having the RIGHT Mindset while Conception:

Brahmā's mind was not in correct order when he created the demons. It must have been full of passion because the entire creation was passionate; therefore such passionate sons were born. It follows that any father and mother should also be careful while begetting children. The mental condition of a child depends upon the mental status of his parents at the time he is conceived. According to the Vedic system, the garbhādhāna-saṁskāra, or the ceremony for giving birth to a child, is observed. Before begetting a child, one has to sanctify his perplexed mind. When the parents engage their minds in the lotus feet of the Lord and in such a state the child is born, naturally good devotee children come; when the society is full of such good population, there is no trouble from demoniac mentalities. SB 3.20.28

Two Kinds of Good Children:

One should beget a child who can perform the duties of Viṣṇu, otherwise there is no need to produce children. There are two kinds of children born of good fathers: one is educated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness so that he can be delivered from the clutches of māyā in that very life, and the other is a ray of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and teaches the world the ultimate goal of life. SB 3.22.19

Right Guidance:

No Wrong Thinking and No Wrong Action: Suniti said to Dhruva, "My dear son, don't wish for anything inauspicious for others. Anyone who inflicts pains upon others suffers himself from that pain."

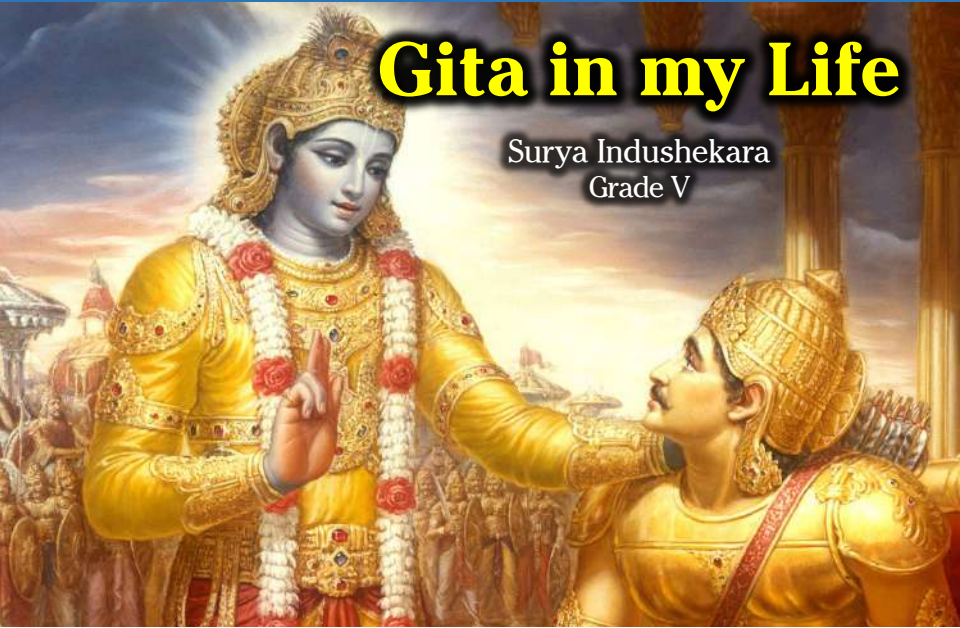
Protection from Negative Elements: The whole system of education is geared to sense gratification, and if a learned man thinks it over, he sees that the children of this age are being intentionally sent to the slaughterhouses of so-called education. SB 1.1.22 P

Children can Lead one to the Perfect Destination:

When Dhruva was going back to Godhead, Suniti also went. "Although Suniti was an instructor to Dhruva Mahārāja, she could not go to the forest because she was a woman, nor could she execute austerities and penances as Dhruva Mahārāja did. Still, Dhruva Mahārāja was able to take his mother with him. The conclusion is that a disciple or an offspring who is a very strong devotee can carry with him to Vaikuṅṭhaloka either his father, mother or śikṣā- or diṁṣā-guru." SB 4.12.33

Gita in my Life

Surya Indushekara
Grade V



My parents are my foremost gurus in religion, culture, and character. I have been taught to read Vedic scriptures. I have been going to Vedic classes since I was 4 years old. I was taught to read Bhagavad Gita, Bhagavatam Purana, Mahabharata and Ramayana epics.

Our scripture, Bhagavad Gita is a map and a guidebook to our life. It not only teaches us the knowledge of God but also teaches us dharma.

The following things I have learnt from different verses of Bhagavad-Gita:

B.G. 2.47

The first thing I learned was to do your duty and not worry about results. This has helped me stay calm, positive, confident, fearless and to be more responsible.

One example is if I don't study, and I don't do my duty I will be worried about results but if I do my duty of studying, I will be more confident about the results.

B.G. 2.62, 2.70, 6.6

These slokas taught me to control my mind and to reduce my desires and not to get too attached to people and objects. These slokas taught me how to control my anger. For example, taking help from God. Praying and meditating on god's names, and by reading scriptures help me to understand dharma.

B. G. 16.24: This verse has taught me what is right and wrong. Right knowledge had helped me to reduce desire and anger.

B.G. 6.17

This sloka has helped me to learn and follow discipline and to overcome laziness by balancing right time in eating, sleeping, working, praying, resting.

B.G 16.21: Three gates to hell - Lust, Anger, and greed.

I am trying to practice controlling my desires and anger by remembering this sloka.

Anger, lust, greed, violence, arrogance, envy, pride, cheating, finding faults in other being, untruthful and egotistic, and having lack of purity are all qualities of ignorant and demoniac people. We should avoid these characteristics.

B.G.16.1, 16.2, 16.3: In these slokas it says the characteristics of divine, heavenly, godly qualities. Loving, caring, kindness, gentleness, forgiveness, responsible, honesty/truthfulness, non-violence, patience/tolerance/self-control, selflessness, sharing, charity, having satisfaction, compassion, cleanliness, purity, humility, and loyalty. These are the qualities we should have and follow in day-to-day life.

B.G. 17.8, 4.24, 15.14: These slokas teach us what food is good for health and mind.

B.G. 3.13: Food should be offered to God and be taken as prasadam.

B.G. 9.26: Whatever is offered to Kirshna with love and devotion, Kirshna will accept it.

B.G. 17.11: This sloka teaches us how to pray to God to get his love and relationship and not for material benefits.

B.G. 17.14: This sloka teaches us to respect God, devatas, Gurus, parents, and elders. How to keep our body clean and not to do violence.

B.G. 17.15: This sloka teaches us to speak the truth, be polite and to read scriptures.

B.G. 17.16: This sloka teaches us to keep our mind always calm and happy.

B.G. 8.8: This sloka helps me to practice remembering, praying, glorifying the Lord's holy names, and doing devotional service.

B.G. 9.22: This sloka has helped me to develop complete faith in God and trust him without any fear.

B.G. 2.14, 2.15:

This sloka has helped me to tolerate happiness and sadness equally.

B.G. 2.13, 2.20, 2.22, 2.23, 2.27:

These slokas have taught me that the soul is permanent and cannot be destroyed. The body is like a garment to the soul which is temporary. So, we should not lament on deaths.

So, we should do good and remember God always and thank him for giving everything in this life. We should make a goal in life to do good and please God to reach God which is our permanent home. So, we should not get attached to this material world which is temporary and full of illusion.

B.G. 15.15: God is in everyone's heart.

B.G. 5.18: The truly learned treat all beings equally.

These slokas have taught me that God is in everyone's heart. So, we should love and respect everyone. So, we should do selfless service to humanity and to our environment without any expectations and attachments. We should try to help in need, feed people in hunger and not kill animals. We should feed animals with food and water. We should not pollute water and earth and not cut trees.

Lord Rama's 16 Gunas and Shri Kṛṣṇa's Pastimes stories teach us how to live in this material world and maintain relationships.

The great personalities like Hanuman, Dhruva, Prahalad, Gajendra, King Ambarisha, Vibhishana, Sabari, Kunti and the Pandavas. They give us guidelines on how a devotee should be.

These are lessons I learnt from the scriptures with Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy and with the help of my parents and Guru [B.G. 4.34]. I can learn and follow spirituality in this life bit by bit. I hope with Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy I will be able to follow more and more.

Sweet Contradictions in Dāmodara Lila

Yashoda
Grade VIII



Kṛṣṇa steals despite being the supreme proprietor:

This highlights the playful and mischievous nature of Kṛṣṇa, emphasizing that even though he owns everything, he engages in activities like stealing for the sake of divine play.

Kṛṣṇa is controlled by his devotees despite being the supreme controller:

It emphasizes the power of devotion and love, illustrating that Kṛṣṇa willingly allows himself to be controlled by the genuine affection of his devotees.

Kṛṣṇa is dissatisfied in Dāmodara Līlā despite being Atmarama:

In the context of Dāmodara Līlā (Kṛṣṇa being bound by Mother Yaśodā), it portrays Kṛṣṇa's divine discontent, adding depth to his divine play.

Kṛṣṇa speaks lies despite being the absolute truth:

This paradoxical statement reflects the mystical and playful nature of Kṛṣṇa, where he may engage in actions contrary to conventional expectations.

Mother Yaśodā caught Kṛṣṇa, who cannot be caught by anyone:

This highlights the special relationship between Kṛṣṇa and his devotees, illustrating the extraordinary love and intimacy between Mother Yaśodā and Kṛṣṇa.

Ropes are always two fingers short of binding Kṛṣṇa's expanding belly:

This symbolizes the infinite and incomprehensible nature of Kṛṣṇa. No matter how many efforts are made to bind him, Kṛṣṇa remains beyond complete understanding and capture.

Kṛṣṇa gets bound by love despite being all-pervading:

This paradox underscores the supremacy of love in the spiritual realm, portraying how the all-encompassing nature of love binds even the divine.

Kṛṣṇa releases Nalakuvera and Maṇigrivā despite being bound:

This demonstrates Kṛṣṇa's compassion and ability to liberate even those who are materially bound when approached with devotion.

Kṛṣṇa's desires are fulfilled, but his desire not to be bound remains unfulfilled:

This points to the divine paradox where Kṛṣṇa, while fulfilling the desires of his devotees, maintains an eternal desire to be bound by the love of his devotees.

Kṛṣṇa, a judge, awaits judgment:

This paradox signifies the impartiality of the divine in administering justice and the idea that everyone is subject to cosmic order, including the Supreme Lord.

Kṛṣṇa, the object of prayers, is scolded by Vrajavāsīs:

This reflects the intimate and informal relationship between Kṛṣṇa and the residents of Vrindavan, emphasizing the closeness and familiarity in their interactions.

These sweet contradictions in Dāmodara Līlā serve to deepen the understanding of Kṛṣṇa's divine pastimes and convey profound spiritual truths in a playful and relatable manner. Only by the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda and guru-paramparā is one able to enter into the inner meanings of such pastimes.

VERSE OF THE MONTH



Effects of Hearing Kṛṣṇa Kāthā

SB 11.6.44

*tava vikrīḍitaṁ kṛṣṇa
nṛnām parama-maṅgalam
karṇa-pīyūṣam āsvādya
tyajanty anya-sprhām janāḥ*

O my dear Kṛṣṇa, Your pastimes are supremely auspicious for mankind and are an intoxicating beverage for the ears. Tasting such pastimes, people forget their desires for other things. (Uddhava to Kṛṣṇa)

Should we Practice the Virtues of Compassion & Tolerance Blindly?



BLINDLY SHOWING COMPASSION AND GENEROSITY TO THOSE WHO DON'T DESERVE IS NOT ADVISABLE!

- SNIGDHA NAIR, Grade VII

Some people in this world always give money and material happiness to the homeless, or non-devotees, who don't know how to spend money wisely. We should know if we are going to make the right decision before giving money or something which makes someone else happy. If they are going to spend the money on bad things, don't give them the money. Instead give them prasadam, or something related to Krishna Consciousness which will purify their heart. We should always make sure what they are going to spend the money on, because if they buy something bad, it will affect us, and the person who bought it. For example, if you give some money to the homeless and they buy drugs, their karma is going to affect us too because we gave them money to buy it and encouraged them. That's why we shouldn't blindly apply the qualities like humility, compassion, tolerance, gratitude, forgiveness etc without knowing how the person is going to use it.

SPIRITUAL TRAITS: STEPS TOWARDS KRISHNA

TULASI PRIYA, Grade X

Being kind and compassionate should become a daily standard of life. These behavioural qualities are only going to help you become closer to Krishna if they are used in His service, or to help elevate others in some way. In that way, you should also be mindful when being compassionate. You should not be allowing others to take advantage of you, nor should you give in when someone asks for something that you know you are not capable of giving.

Let's take the example of tolerance. Tolerance is indeed a virtue, but tolerating injustice or harmful behaviour is not good. If someone is being consistently disrespectful or harmful, blindly tolerating their actions will lead to a negative outcome. In such cases, it is important to find a balance between tolerance and standing up for what is right. Being smart about how we handle tolerance helps create a place where you understand and respect yourself and others, and it keeps us from ignoring negativity in our lives.

Similarly, forgiveness is a quality that is looked up at, but forgiving without addressing the root cause of a problem will not lead to lasting resolution. If we keep forgiving someone who keeps hurting us without them trying to change, it sets up a cycle of mistreatment. In the end, we might find ourselves going through unnecessary suffering, even though we could have avoided it.

Here are some reasons why and examples for how we get closer to Krishna using these qualities. Humility helps us recognize our limitations and surrender our ego. By acknowledging our dependence on a higher power, we open ourselves to Krishna. Forgiveness reflects Krishna's merciful nature among all of us. By forgiving others and ourselves, we also practice compassion, which helps purify our consciousness. We should be able to tolerate material urges before giving up our present body. Our understanding of how these qualities contribute to a closer connection with Krishna adds depth to the spiritual journey.

BG. 12.13-14

A dear devotee of the lord is one who is free from happiness and distress, tolerant, satisfied, self controlled, and engaged in devotional service. A true devotee is kind to everyone, including enemies. It is important to gain these qualities in order for Krishna to accept you. If you want Krishna in your heart, you have to give up everything else. Krishna doesn't like to share! Here we can look at the characteristics of some pure devotees. They don't overly look at bodily pains, because they know they are not the material body. They don't strive excessively, finding joy in simplicity. Such a devotee, guided by a siksha/diksha guru, has controlled their senses and unwavering determination. Unaffected by false arguments, they are fully aware of Kṛṣṇa as the eternal Lord. This rare level of devotion is achieved by the purest of souls, and the Lord holds such devotees dear, pleased by their Kṛṣṇa-conscious actions.

BG. 13.8-12

Humility means not seeking recognition or honor from others, realizing that our material identity is not the true self. Nonviolence is not just causing death, but is also to avoid causing distress to others. By elevating yourself to spiritual knowledge, you stop practicing violence. Tolerance involves bearing insults, as spiritual progress may bring criticism. Looking at Prahlada, we see his father trying to disrupt his spiritual progress. Simplicity is being straightforward, even with enemies, and accepting a genuine spiritual master's guidance with humility. Cleanliness, both external (bathing) and internal (constant remembrance of Krishna), is crucial for spiritual growth. This process cleans the accumulated dust of past karma from the mind. This spiritual journey is like climbing a staircase, with different levels of understanding up to the topmost floor, ending in the realization of Krishna as the Supreme Truth.

BLINDLY APPLYING QUALITIES: COMPASSION & TOLERANCE

SAMYUKTA KRISHNA, Grade X

1) WHEN NOT BE COMPASSIONATE?

Reference verse: BG 1.36

Translation: Sin will overcome us if we slay such aggressors. Therefore it is not proper for us to kill the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and our friends. What should we gain, O Kṛṣṇa, husband of the goddess of fortune, and how could we be happy by killing our own kinsmen?

In the purport, Srila Prabhupada explains the six types of aggressors, namely: a poison giver, one who sets fire to the house, one who attacks with deadly weapons, one who plunders riches, one who occupies another's land, and one who kidnaps a wife. Here, Arjuna is in a dilemma about fighting in the battle of Kurukshetra against the Kauravas. He explains that sins will overcome them for killing their own relatives and friends, however, it states in the purport that these six kinds of aggressors must be killed immediately, and no sins are incurred by killing such people. Arjuna felt very compassionate toward his relatives who were fighting on the opposing side, and was hesitant to fight them. In this situation, compassion is not advisable to show, as the Kauravas had done many terrible things to the Pandavas. They forcibly took away the Pandavas' land, took away everything they owned, tried to kill them through the burning of the wax palace, and even attempted to disrobe/humiliate their wife-Draupadi. In fact, by these events alone, the Kauravas have already committed almost all of the 6 aggressions toward the Pandavas! Therefore, contrary to what Arjuna thought, he would NOT be subjected to any sins by killing these aggressors.

2) WHEN NOT TO TOLERATE?

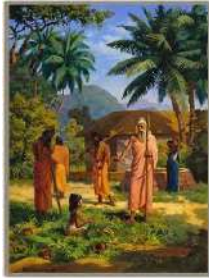
Reference verse: CC Ādi 7.50

Translation: How long can we tolerate the blasphemy by Your critics against Your conduct? We should give up our lives rather than hear such blasphemy.

The purport of this verse states that one of the most important instructions given by Caitanya Mahāprabhu, regarding the behaviour of a Vaiṣṇava, is that one must be tolerant like a tree, and humble like grass (tṛṇād api su-nīcena...). According to this instruction, if insulted, the Vaiṣṇava himself should remain tolerant and not become angry. HOWEVER, if anyone dares to blaspheme one's guru or another Vaiṣṇava, then one has the reason to become very angry at the offender. This was displayed by Śrī Mahāprabhu Himself, in the pastime of Jagai and Madai. Caitanya Mahāprabhu did NOT tolerate the behaviour of Jagai and Madai, because they injured Śrī Nityananda Prabhu. As a result of their actions, Mahāprabhu became extremely angry at Jagai and Madai, and desired to kill them. It was only by the mercy of Nityananda Prabhu that they were saved. One should NEVER tolerate blasphemy against another Vaiṣṇava, and instead follow one of three actions: If one blasphemes a Vaiṣṇava, one must stop them with arguments and higher thinking. If one is not able to do this, then they should give up their life on the spot, and if they cannot do this, then one must immediately go away from that place. In this situation, it is not right to simply sit there and tolerate the blasphemy of a Vaiṣṇava. Also, those people who speak ill of other Vaiṣṇavas do not deserve any compassion, and their actions must never be forgiven. In the event where a Vaiṣṇava encounters such a person, they must immediately either stop the person from doing so, or leave the area and keep their distance away from them in order to not let the blasphemy enter the ears.

Dhruva

This five year old boy, pained by the harsh words of his step-mother, set out to the forest to fulfil his ambition of attaining a position even greater than his great-grandfather Brahmāji. By strictly following the guidance of his guru Nārada Muni with great determination, he attained darshan of the Lord within six months. This five-year old's determination is a shining beacon for all aspirants to attain perfection in their journey.



Four Kumāras

Sanaka, Sanātana, Sananda and Sanat-kumāra were mental sons of Brahmā. They desired to remain children of just five years so as to keep their focus in spiritual life and not get distracted by the agitations of sex life. They were strict celibates. They were impersonalists initially, but were converted into devotional service of the Lord by smelling the fragrance of tulasi at the Lord's lotus feet. They were prohibited to enter Vaikuntha by the guard-keepers Jaya and Vijaya and thus they cursed Jaya and Vijaya to become demons on earth for three lives. Later, the four-kumaras instructed Prthu Maharaja in matters of devotional service.

THEMATIC STUDY Young Devotees in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

Prahlāda Mahārāja

Another five-year old, he did something which no one could do. Although born in demoniac family, he was a devotee of the highest order. He taught his own father the demoniac Hiranyakaśipu the values of spiritual life which angered his father. Though his father tried to torture and kill Prahlāda in so many ways, he was always protected by the Lord. Finally, the Lord appeared as Nrsimhadeva and killed Hiranyakaśipu. Prahlāda pacified the Lord by his beautiful prayers.

Nārada Boy

He was born a son of maid-servant. He was self-controlled, had no attachment for mundane sports, would speak only what was required and was not naughty. Once, in their village, four Bhaktivedantas stayed during the months of caturmasya. He affectionately served these great souls, heard their discussions, once took their remnants and this led to a progressive increase in his bhakti. After the Bhaktivedantas left, his mother died due to snake bite and he was left all alone. He travelled through different regions like cities, forests, towns, hills etc. In his meditation, he got the darshan of the Supreme Lord for a short time. He perfected his life and next life was born as Nārada Muni.

ANALOGY ARENA



When a person is fatigued, if he sees a lotus flower all his fatigue can be immediately reduced to nil. Similarly, when an aggrieved person sees the lotus face of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, immediately all his grief is reduced. SB 4.8.23 P

When an iron rod is made red-hot in a fire, it is no longer iron; it is fire. Similarly, when we make a form of the Lord—whether of wood or stone or metal or jewels or paint, or even a form within the mind—it is a bona fide, spiritual, transcendental form of the Lord. SB 4.8.54 P



If one gets an unripe mango, it is still a mango, and when it is ripe it remains the same mango, but it has become more tasteful and relishable. Similarly, there is devotional service performed according to the direction of the spiritual master and the injunctions and regulative principles of śāstra, and there is devotional service in the spiritual world, rendered directly in association with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But they are both the same. There is no change. SB 4.9.11 P

Bhagavatam Tales

4

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NOMENCLATURE

SB: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam

CC: Śrī Caitanya-
caritāmṛta

BG: Bhagavad-gītā

BS: Brahmā-saṁhitā

1.1.1: Canto 1, Chapter 1,
Verse 1

1.1.1 P: From Śrīla
Prabhupāda's purport to
SB 1.1.1

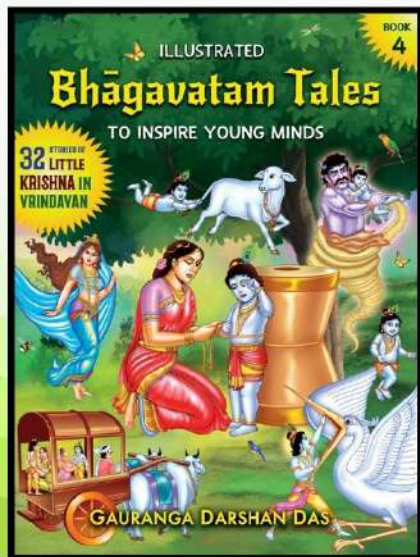
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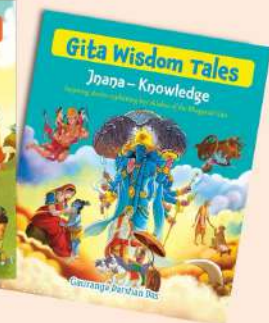
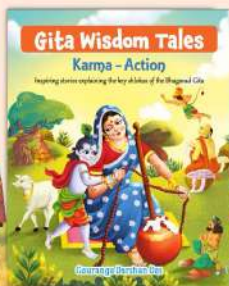
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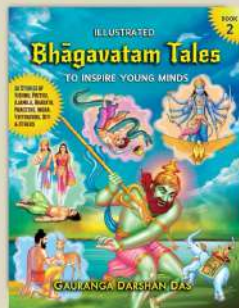
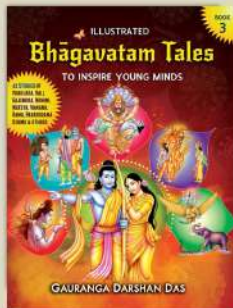
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