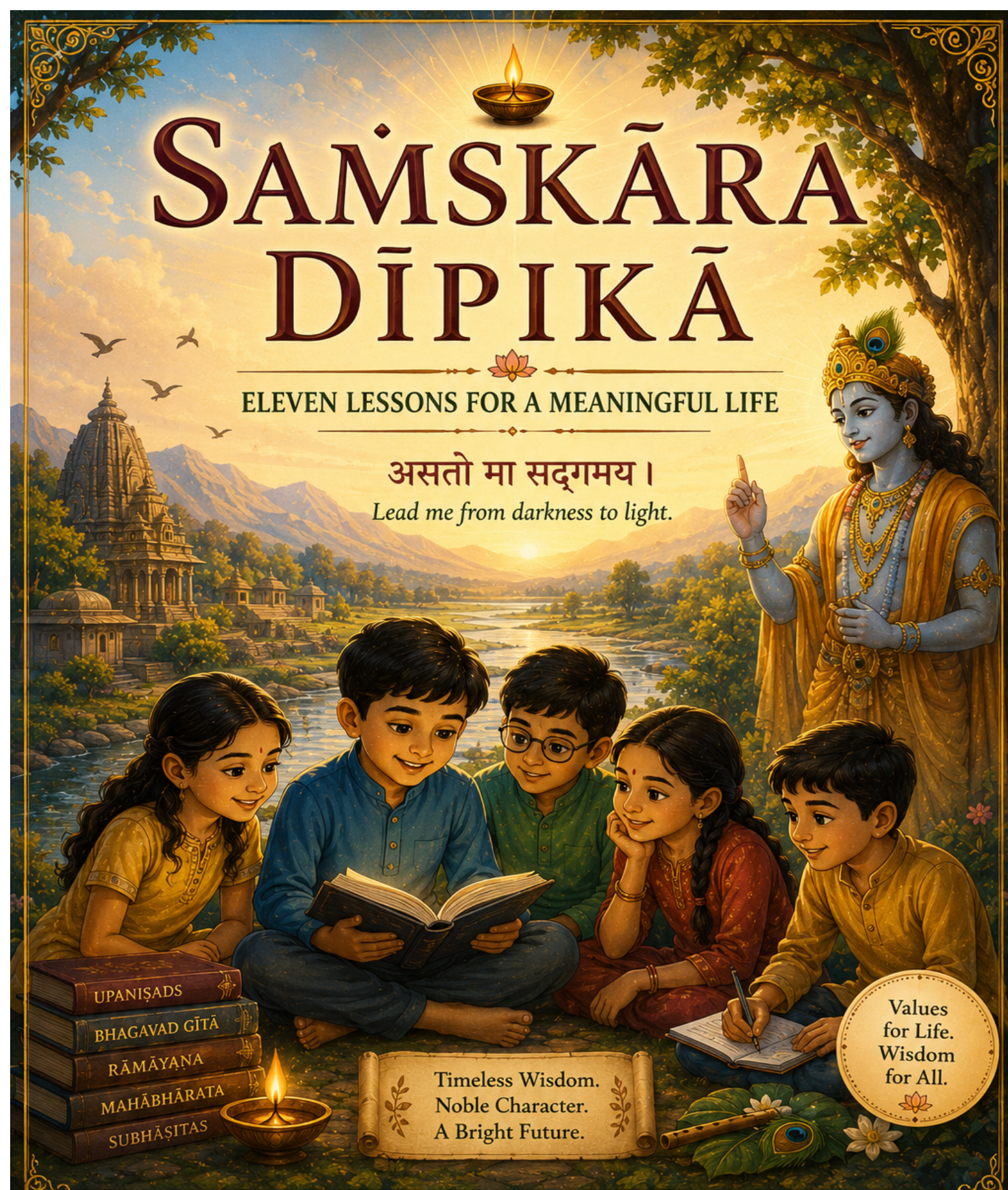
SAṂSKĀRA DĪPIKĀ

ELEVEN LESSONS FOR A MEANINGFUL LIFE

असतो मा सद्गमय ।

Lead me from darkness to light.



TRUTHFUL | SELF-CONTROL | RESPECTFUL | COMPASSIONATE | COURAGEOUS | RESPONSIBLE | SERVICE-MINDED

By V V Subramanian

संस्कार दीपिका

Saṃskāra Dīpikā

(A lamp for character)

Eleven Timeless Lessons for
Character, Courage and Compassion

❧

A compilation by

V V Subramanian

Kuwait · May 2026

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to the children of today,

whose character will shape the world of tomorrow.

May knowledge become character.

May character become conduct.

May conduct become a life guided by wisdom, compassion, and dharma.

Author's Note

This booklet began with a simple question:

How can we help children grow into people of strong character?

Many parents today worry about the world their children are growing up in. We see dishonesty rewarded, anger celebrated, cruelty normalised, and selfishness mistaken for success. Yet every generation has faced its own challenges.

India's wisdom traditions offer timeless guidance. The verses gathered in this book come from the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gītā, the Rāmāyaṇa, the Mahābhārata, Subhāṣitas, and other revered sources. Though ancient, their teachings remain deeply relevant.

The purpose of this book is not merely to teach Sanskrit verses. It is to help children reflect on how they live, how they treat others, and what kind of people they wish to become.

The eleven lessons presented here are simple enough for a child to understand, yet profound enough to guide a lifetime.

If these pages help even one child become more truthful, more compassionate, more respectful, more courageous, or more willing to serve others, then this effort will have achieved its purpose.

May these teachings inspire thoughtful conversations between parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren, teachers and students.

Most importantly, may they be lived.

One last thought. The wisdom in these pages is not mine. It belongs to no one. The sages who first spoke these words gave them freely to the world, and the world has carried them forward across millennia without a signature or a price. I have only gathered them, as one might gather flowers from a forest — the forest belongs to all of us. The illustrations and design of this book were brought to life with the assistance of artificial intelligence. Old light, new lamp.

V. V. Subramanian

Kuwait · May, 2026

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Introduction

Every parent wishes for the same things for their child — to be honest, to be kind, to be respectful, to be courageous enough to stand up for what is right, and to be strong enough to resist what is wrong.

In today's world, children learn many subjects in school, but opportunities to learn character, self-discipline, respect, and moral courage are often limited. Yet these qualities determine not only success in life, but also the kind of human being a child becomes.

India's ancient wisdom traditions contain countless teachings on these subjects. Hidden within the Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, Subhashitas, and other sacred texts are simple lessons that have guided generations for thousands of years.

This booklet brings together eleven carefully chosen verses that every child can learn and reflect upon.

EACH LESSON CONTAINS

- A Sanskrit verse
- Simple transliteration
- Literal meaning
- Source and context
- A story from Hindu tradition
- Practical guidance for parents and children
- Reflection questions and daily practice

THE ELEVEN LESSONS NURTURE

- Respect for women and all people
- Self-control and mastery over anger
- Truthfulness and integrity
- Courage to oppose wrongdoing
- Compassion for the vulnerable
- Responsibility for one's actions
- Humility and gratitude
- Commitment to dharma

If even one child learns to treat others with greater dignity, to control harmful impulses, to defend someone who is being mistreated, or to choose what is right over what is easy, then these ancient words will continue to fulfil their purpose.

May these verses become not merely words that are recited, but values that are lived.

May every child who reads these pages learn to think clearly, speak truthfully, act courageously, and treat all beings with respect.

May the light of dharma shine through their words, their choices, and their lives.

Invocation

Before we begin our journey through these eleven lessons, let us pause for a moment and recite an ancient prayer from the Upanishads.

For thousands of years, students, teachers, seekers, and families have recited these words before beginning a study, undertaking a noble task, or reflecting upon life's deeper truths.

As children grow, they will discover that the "darkness" mentioned in this prayer is not merely the absence of light. It also represents ignorance, selfishness, anger, prejudice, and poor choices. The "light" represents wisdom, compassion, self-control, truthfulness, and dharma.

✦ ✦ ✦

असतो मा सद्गमय ।
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।
मृत्योर्माऽमृतं गमय ॥

Asato mā sad gamaya. Tamaso mā jyotir gamaya. Mṛtyor mā amṛtaṃ gamaya.

Lead me from falsehood to truth. Lead me from darkness to light. Lead me from mortality to immortality.

Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (1.3.28)

REFLECTION

Every day presents us with choices. Will we speak the truth or hide behind a lie? Will we act with kindness or selfishness? Will we control our anger or allow it to control us? Will we stand up for what is right or remain silent when we see wrongdoing?

This prayer reminds us that the purpose of life is to move steadily toward truth, wisdom, and goodness.

May these eleven lessons help illuminate that path.

✦

॥ ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om. Peace within us. Peace around us. Peace among all beings.

Lesson 1

Speak the Truth. Walk the Path of Dharma.

सत्यं वद । धर्मं चर ॥

Satyaṃ vada. Dharmaṃ cara.

Speak the truth. Practice righteousness.

Full Original Verse

सत्यं वद । धर्मं चर । स्वाध्यायान्मा प्रमदः ।
आचार्याय प्रियं धनमाहृत्य प्रजातन्तुं मा व्यवच्छेत्सीः ॥

Satyaṃ vada. Dharmaṃ cara. Svādhyāyān mā pramadaḥ.

Ācāryāya priyaṃ dhanam āhṛtya prajātantuṃ mā vyavacchetsīḥ.

Speak the truth. Practice righteousness. Never neglect self-study and learning. Having offered due gratitude to your teacher, continue the noble traditions of society and family.

Taittiriya Upanishad (1.11.1)

CONTEXT

This verse forms part of one of the world's oldest recorded graduation addresses. Thousands of years ago, when students completed their education in a gurukula and prepared to enter society, their teacher would offer final guidance before they left.

Remarkably, the teacher did not begin by speaking about wealth, success, power, or fame. Instead, the very first instructions were: "Speak the truth." "Walk the path of dharma."

The sages understood that knowledge without character can be dangerous, while character guided by truth and righteousness benefits both the individual and society. These words have inspired generations for more than two thousand years and remain just as relevant today.

MEANING FOR CHILDREN

Most people think telling the truth simply means not telling lies. But truthfulness is much more than that. It means being honest in our words, honest in our actions, and honest with ourselves.

Sometimes telling the truth is easy. At other times it can be difficult. A child may accidentally break something and feel afraid to admit it. A student may forget homework and be tempted to invent an excuse. In such situations, speaking the truth requires courage.

The second instruction, "Practice dharma," teaches us to do what is right even when nobody is watching. Truth gives us inner strength. Dharma gives us direction. Together they form the foundation of good character.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Children learn honesty far more from observation than from instruction. When children see parents admitting mistakes, keeping promises, speaking honestly, and accepting responsibility, they learn that truthfulness is a strength rather than a weakness.

While discussing this lesson, consider asking:

- Was there a moment today when telling the truth was difficult?
- Did you admit a mistake today?
- Did you do the right thing even when nobody was watching?
- How did telling the truth make you feel afterward?

STORY

King Harishchandra – The King Who Never Abandoned Truth

Long ago there lived a king named Harishchandra, admired throughout the land for his unwavering commitment to truth. One day, through divine tests, he lost his kingdom, his wealth, and eventually even his family. He was reduced to working in a cremation ground and endured hardships that would have broken most people.

Many times he had opportunities to escape his suffering by abandoning the truth. Yet he refused. Even when telling a lie would have brought comfort, he chose honesty.

The gods finally revealed that his hardships had been a test of his character. Because he had remained faithful to truth under every circumstance, his kingdom was restored and his family reunited.

Today, King Harishchandra is remembered not for his power or wealth, but for his integrity. His story teaches us that while truth may sometimes be difficult, it ultimately strengthens us and earns lasting respect.



REFLECTION

Suppose you accidentally broke something at home and nobody saw you do it. Would you tell the truth? Why or why not?

A lie may solve a problem for a moment.

The truth builds good character for a lifetime.

DAILY PRACTICE

Before going to sleep tonight, think about your day and ask yourself:

"Was I truthful today?"

If the answer is yes, be grateful. If the answer is no, resolve to do better tomorrow.

Every great character is built one truthful choice at a time.

Lesson 2

Master Your Anger Before It Masters You

क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः ॥

Krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ.

From anger comes delusion.

Full Original Verse

क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात् स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात् प्रणश्यति ॥

Krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ sammohāt smṛtivibhramaḥ ।

Smṛtibhraṃśād buddhināśo buddhināśāt praṇaśyati ॥

From anger comes delusion. From delusion comes confusion of memory. From confusion of memory comes the loss of sound judgment. From the loss of judgment comes destruction.

Bhagavad Gita (2.63)

CONTEXT

These words were spoken by Lord Krishna to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Krishna explained how the human mind works and how negative emotions can gradually take control of our thoughts and actions.

Krishna describes how uncontrolled desires lead to frustration, frustration becomes anger, and anger clouds a person's thinking. The result is that a person begins acting in ways they later regret. This teaching remains remarkably relevant today.

MEANING FOR CHILDREN

Have you ever said something hurtful when you were angry? When we become angry, it can feel as though a storm has entered our minds. We stop listening. We stop thinking clearly. We forget what is right and wrong.

Krishna teaches us that anger itself is not the problem — everyone feels angry sometimes. The problem begins when anger takes control of us. A wise person notices anger, pauses, takes a breath, and chooses how to respond.

True strength is not defeating another person. True strength is defeating the anger within ourselves.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Children are often told "Don't be angry." However, anger is a natural human emotion. Instead of suppressing anger, children should learn to recognise it and manage it.

When discussing this lesson, parents may ask:

- What makes you angry?
- What happens to your body when you become angry?
- What can you do before anger takes control?
- Have you ever regretted something you said while angry?

STORY

Lakshmana's Anger and Rama's Calm Wisdom

During their exile in the forest, Lakshmana became deeply angry at the injustices suffered by Rama and Sita. Lakshmana was brave, loyal, and devoted. Yet his quick temper sometimes led him to react emotionally.

Rama, however, remained calm. Even when faced with hardship and unfair treatment, Rama carefully considered what was right before acting. Again and again, he reminded Lakshmana that decisions made in anger often lead to regret.

Lakshmana's courage was admirable. Rama's self-control was even greater. Together they teach us that bravery and self-control must go hand in hand.



REFLECTION

Think about the last time you became angry. Did your anger help solve the problem? Or did it make the problem bigger? What could you do differently next time?

Anyone can become angry.

The wise learn when to stop, think, and choose the right response.

DAILY PRACTICE

The next time you feel angry, try this:

Pause. Take three slow breaths. Count to ten. Then ask yourself:

"What would happen if I act right now?"

Sometimes the strongest action is waiting a moment before speaking. That moment can change everything.

Lesson 3

Become Your Own Best Friend

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः ॥

Bandhur ātmātmanas tasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ.

The self is the friend of the one who has conquered oneself.

Full Original Verse

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः ।
अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥

Bandhur ātmātmanas tasya yenātmaivātmanā jitaḥ ।

Anātmanas tu śatrutve vartetātmaiva śatruvat ॥

The self is the friend of one who has mastered oneself. But for one who has not mastered oneself, the self behaves like an enemy.

Bhagavad Gītā 6.6

CONTEXT

Lord Krishna is teaching Arjuna about self-discipline and inner growth. Most people believe that their greatest challenges come from outside — difficult teachers, unfair friends, or enemies. Krishna teaches something surprising.

Sometimes the greatest obstacle is not outside us. It is inside us — our laziness, our anger, our jealousy, our selfishness, our impatience. If we learn to manage these tendencies, our mind becomes our greatest ally. If we do not, the same mind can lead us into trouble.

MEANING FOR CHILDREN

Imagine you have two voices inside you. One says "Do your homework." The other says "Do it later." One says "Tell the truth." The other says "No one will know." One says "Be kind." The other says "Make fun of him." Every day we choose which voice to follow.

When we repeatedly choose the better voice, our mind becomes our friend. When we repeatedly choose the worse voice, our mind becomes our enemy.

The strongest person is often the one who can control himself.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Children often understand self-mastery better through small daily examples than through philosophy. Examples include finishing homework before playing, waiting patiently, admitting mistakes, and being kind even when upset.

Help children understand that discipline is not punishment. Discipline is training. Just as athletes train their bodies, good people train their minds.

- What was one temptation you resisted today?
- What was one good choice you made even though it was difficult?
- What habit would you like to improve?

STORY

Hanuman Discovers His Strength

As a child, Hanuman was energetic, playful, and mischievous. Because of his extraordinary powers, he sometimes created trouble without realising the consequences. The sages eventually blessed him so that he would forget his powers until the right time came.

Years later, when Rama needed help finding Sita, Jambavan reminded Hanuman of the strength already within him. Once Hanuman remembered who he truly was, he crossed the ocean, found Sita, and became one of the greatest heroes in the Ramayana.

The lesson is not about physical strength. It is about inner strength. The greatest victories come when we learn to master ourselves.



REFLECTION

What is one thing that is difficult for you to control — your temper, your impatience, your screen time? What small step can you take tomorrow to improve?

> ***The person who controls himself is stronger than the person who controls others.***

DAILY PRACTICE

Before going to bed tonight, ask yourself:

"Did I control my choices today, or did my impulses control me?"

Every small victory over ourselves makes us stronger.

Lesson 4

See the Same Worth in Everyone

पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥

Paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinaḥ.

The wise see all with equal vision.

Full Original Verse

विद्याविनयसम्पन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।
शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥

Vidyā-vinaya-sampanne brāhmaṇe gavi hastini ।

Śuni caiva śvapāke ca paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinaḥ ॥

The wise see with equal vision a learned scholar, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and even a person whom society may look down upon.

Bhagavad Gītā 5.18

CONTEXT

Lord Krishna teaches that true wisdom changes the way we look at others. Many people judge others by wealth, appearance, education, social status, religion, or nationality.

A truly wise person looks beyond these differences. He sees the same divine spark present in every living being. This does not mean that everyone has the same abilities or responsibilities. It means that everyone deserves dignity and respect.

MEANING FOR CHILDREN

Have you ever seen a child being left out because he looked different? It is easy to be kind to people who are popular. It is harder to be kind to those whom others ignore.

Krishna teaches us to treat everyone with respect — the school cleaner, the bus driver, the new student, the elderly neighbour, the child who sits alone.

A person's value does not come from how rich, famous, strong, or clever they are. Every person deserves kindness. Every person deserves respect.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Children quickly absorb social attitudes from adults. They notice how adults speak to domestic workers, drivers, service staff, and strangers. Parents can teach this lesson most effectively through example — greet people respectfully and thank those who help.

- Did you show respect to everyone today?
- Did you include someone who was left out?
- Have you ever judged someone before getting to know them?
- How would you like others to treat you?

STORY

Rama and Shabari

During his search for Sita, Rama visited the humble forest dwelling of Shabari. Shabari was elderly and poor — not a queen, scholar, or warrior. For years she had waited with devotion for Rama's arrival.

When Rama came, she welcomed him with fruits she had carefully gathered, tasting each one first to make sure it was sweet before offering it.

Others might have seen only an old tribal woman. Rama saw her devotion, purity of heart, and love. He accepted her offering with gratitude. Greatness lies not in status, but in character.



REFLECTION

Think about the people you met today. Did you treat everyone with the same respect? Was there anyone you ignored, excluded, or judged unfairly?

Every person you meet deserves dignity.

Kindness should never depend on status.

DAILY PRACTICE

Tomorrow, make a special effort to greet and thank at least one person whom others often overlook.

Lesson 5

Kindness Is Strength

अहिंसा परमो धर्मः ॥

Ahiṃsā paramo dharmaḥ.

Non-harming is the highest dharma.

Full Original Verse

अहिंसा परमो धर्मः ।
धर्महिंसा तथैव च ॥

Ahiṃsā paramo dharmaḥ ।

Dharma-hiṃsā tathaiva ca ॥

Non-harming is the highest dharma. Yet protecting dharma may sometimes require firm action.

Mahābhārata 13.117.37

CONTEXT

The Mahabharata repeatedly teaches the importance of compassion and non-violence. The complete statement reminds us that non-violence does not mean weakness or cowardice. We should never hurt others through cruelty, selfishness, or anger.

At the same time, we should be willing to protect the innocent and stand against wrongdoing. For children, the primary lesson is simple: Choose kindness whenever possible. Do not cause unnecessary harm.

MEANING FOR CHILDREN

When people hear the word "violence," they often think of hitting or fighting. But people can also hurt others through cruel words, teasing, bullying, exclusion, mockery, or ignoring someone who needs help. A person may never throw a punch and still cause great pain.

Ahiṃsā teaches us to think before we act. Will my words hurt someone? Will my actions make another person sad? Will I feel proud of this choice tomorrow?

Kindness is not weakness. Kindness requires awareness, empathy, and self-control.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Children often learn compassion through observation and experience. Encourage them to notice a classmate sitting alone, an elderly person needing assistance, or a friend having a difficult day.

Help them understand that compassion begins by noticing.

- Did you help anyone today?
- Did your words make someone feel better or worse?
- Have you ever been hurt by someone's words?
- How would you like others to treat you when you are struggling?

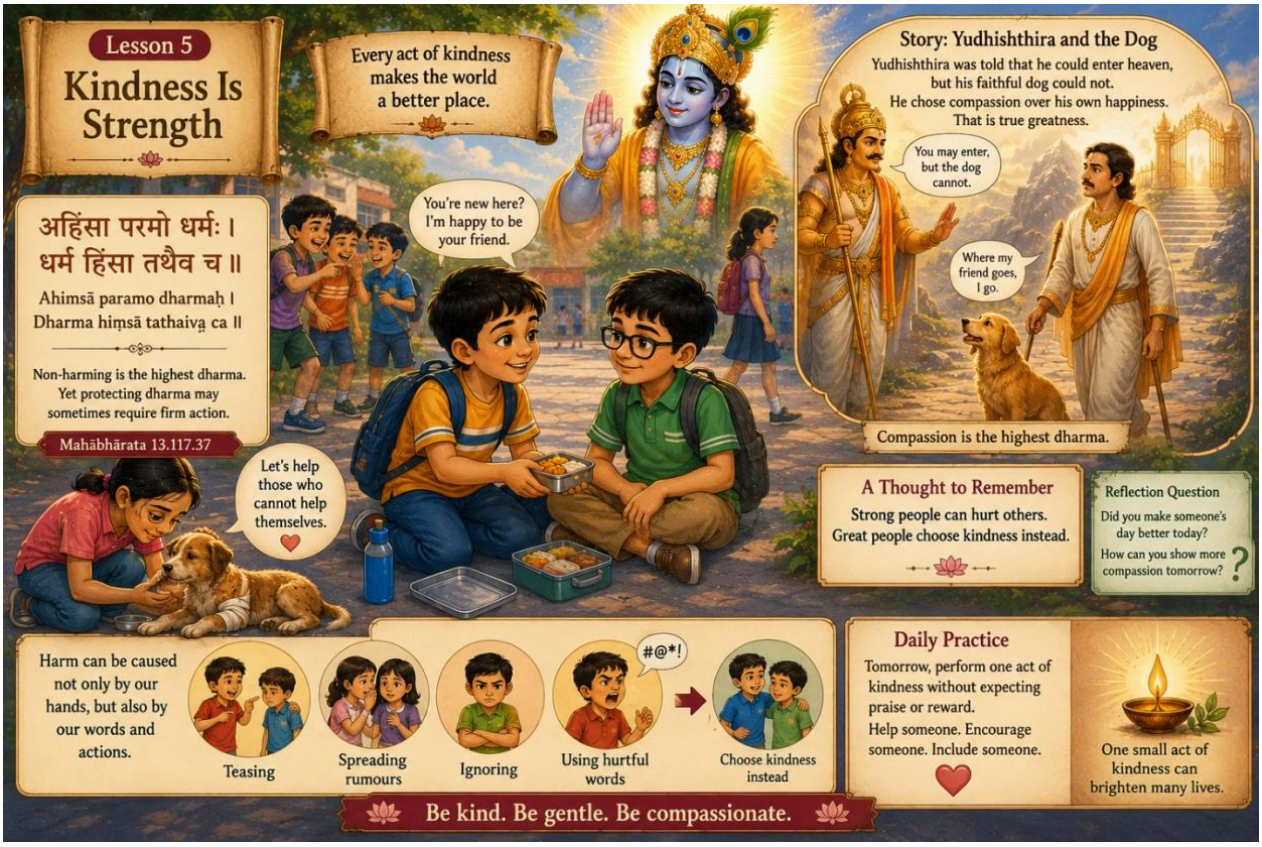
STORY

Yudhishthira and the Dog

At the end of the Mahabharata, Yudhishthira undertook his final journey toward heaven. One by one, his companions fell away until only a faithful dog remained by his side.

When Yudhishthira reached the gates of heaven, he was told he could enter — but the dog could not. Yudhishthira refused. He would not abandon a loyal companion who had trusted him.

The dog was eventually revealed to be Dharma himself, testing Yudhishthira's character. Because he chose compassion over personal gain, he passed the test.



REFLECTION

Imagine that a new student arrives at school and nobody wants to sit with him. What could you do? How would you feel if you were in his place?

Strong people can hurt others.

Great people choose kindness instead.

DAILY PRACTICE

Tomorrow, perform one act of kindness without expecting praise or reward.

Help someone. Encourage someone. Include someone.

Then notice how that small action changes both their day and yours.

Lesson 6

Regard Every Woman with Respect

मातृवत् परदारेषु ॥

Mātṛvat paradāreṣu.

Regard other women as you would regard your mother.

Full Original Verse

मातृवत् परदारेषु ।
परद्रव्येषु लोष्टवत् ।
आत्मवत् सर्वभूतेषु ।
यः पश्यति स पण्डितः ॥

Mātṛvat paradāreṣu ।

Paradravyeṣu loṣṭavat ।

Ātmavat sarvabhūteṣu ।

Yaḥ paśyati sa paṇḍitaḥ ॥

One who regards every woman as a mother, another's wealth as no more valuable than a clod of earth, and all living beings as oneself, is truly wise.

Chanakya Nīti 1.11

CONTEXT

Chanakya was one of India's greatest teachers, statesmen, and philosophers. He believed that a person's character is revealed by how they treat others, especially when no one is watching.

In this verse, he gives three simple tests of wisdom: Respect women. Do not covet what belongs to others. Treat others as you would wish to be treated.

MEANING FOR CHILDREN

Every child has a mother. Most children naturally feel love, gratitude, and respect toward her. Chanakya teaches us to extend that same respect to every woman.

This does not mean that every woman is literally your mother. It means that every woman deserves dignity, safety, courtesy, and respect. A wise person never mocks, uses hurtful language, or takes advantage of someone weaker.

Strength is shown through respect.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Children begin forming attitudes toward the opposite gender at a surprisingly young age. Parents should help boys understand that girls deserve the same respect as boys, and that teasing that causes hurt is not harmless.

Fathers play a particularly important role. Children observe how fathers speak to mothers, sisters, grandmothers, and strangers. Those observations often teach more than words.

- What does respect look like?
- How would you want others to treat your mother or sister?
- Have you ever seen someone being teased unfairly?
- What could you do if you witnessed such behaviour?

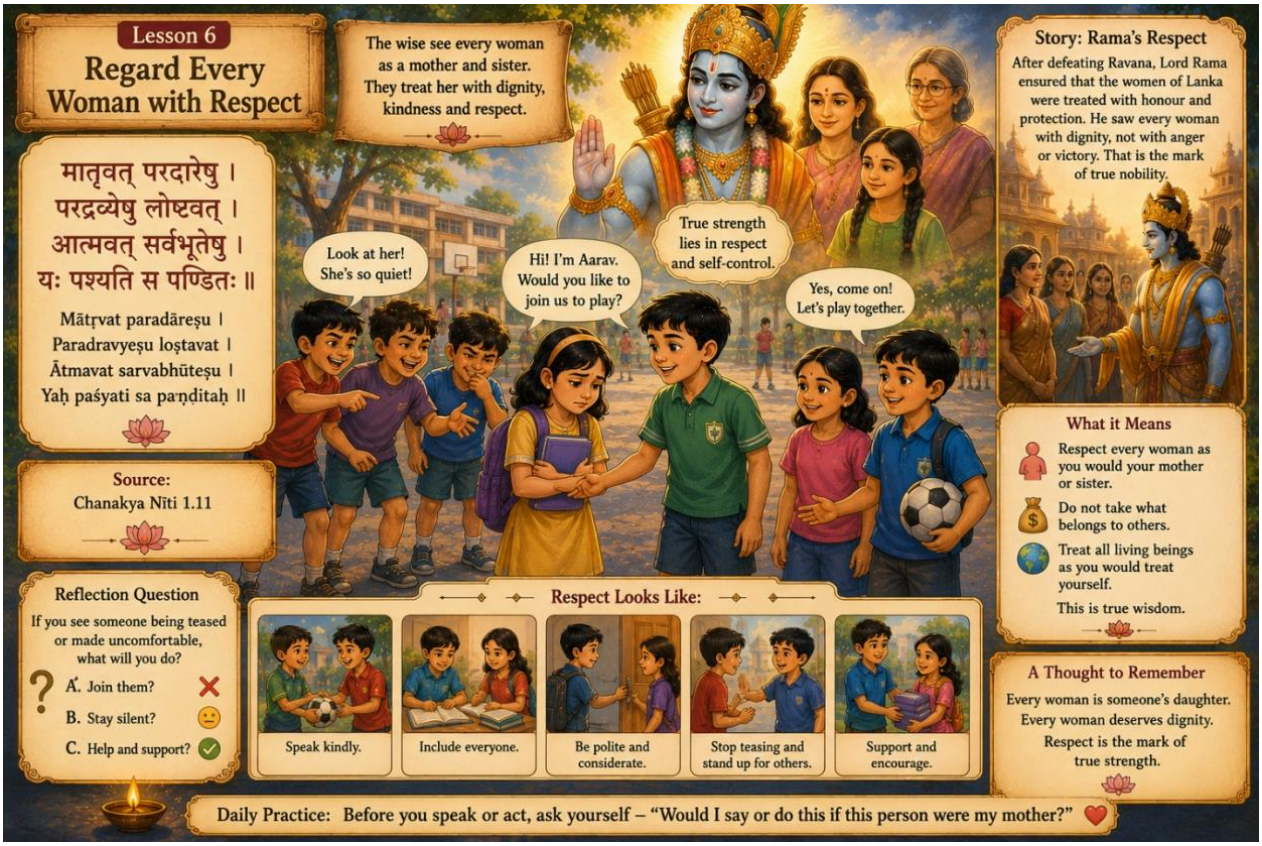
STORY

Rama's Respect for Every Woman

Throughout the Ramayana, Rama is portrayed as treating women with dignity and respect. After the defeat of Ravana, Rama instructed that the women of Lanka should be treated honourably and protected.

He did not allow anger or victory to become an excuse for disrespect. For Rama, a person's character was measured by how they treated others, especially in moments when they held power.

His conduct reminds us that true nobility lies in self-control and respect.



REFLECTION

Imagine that a girl in your class is being teased by a group of children. What would be the right thing to do? Would you join them? Remain silent? Or help her? Why?

Every woman is someone's daughter.

Every woman deserves dignity.

Respect is the mark of true strength.

DAILY PRACTICE

Tomorrow, make a conscious effort to show respect through your words and actions.

Ask yourself: "Would I say or do this if this person were my mother?"

That one question can guide many good decisions.

Lesson 7

Stand Up for What Is Right

धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः ॥

Dharmo rakṣati rakṣitaḥ.

Dharma protects those who protect dharma.

Full Original Verse

धर्म एव हतो हन्ति धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः ।
तस्माद्धर्मो न हन्तव्यो मा नो धर्मो हतोऽवधीत् ॥

Dharma eva hato hanti dharmo rakṣati rakṣitaḥ ।

Tasmād dharmo na hantavyo mā no dharmo hato'vadhīt ॥

Dharma, when destroyed, destroys. Dharma, when protected, protects. Therefore, never abandon dharma, lest abandoned dharma destroy us.

Manusmṛti 8.15

CONTEXT

This famous verse teaches that right conduct is not merely a personal choice. A society remains healthy when people defend what is right.

If good people remain silent while wrongdoing spreads, everyone eventually suffers. The verse reminds us that dharma survives only when ordinary people are willing to stand up for it.

MEANING FOR CHILDREN

Imagine that a stronger child is bullying a smaller child. You may not be causing the problem. But if you pretend not to notice, the problem continues.

Standing up for what is right does not always mean fighting. Often it means speaking up, getting help from an adult, supporting someone who feels alone, or refusing to join in when others are doing wrong.

Real courage is not showing how strong you are. Real courage is doing what is right even when it is difficult.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Many children fear becoming unpopular if they oppose wrongdoing. Help children understand the difference between tattling and protecting, and between popularity and integrity.

Children should learn that seeking adult help is often an act of courage, not weakness.

- What would you do?
- Who could you ask for help?
- Why might people stay silent?
- How would you feel if nobody helped you?

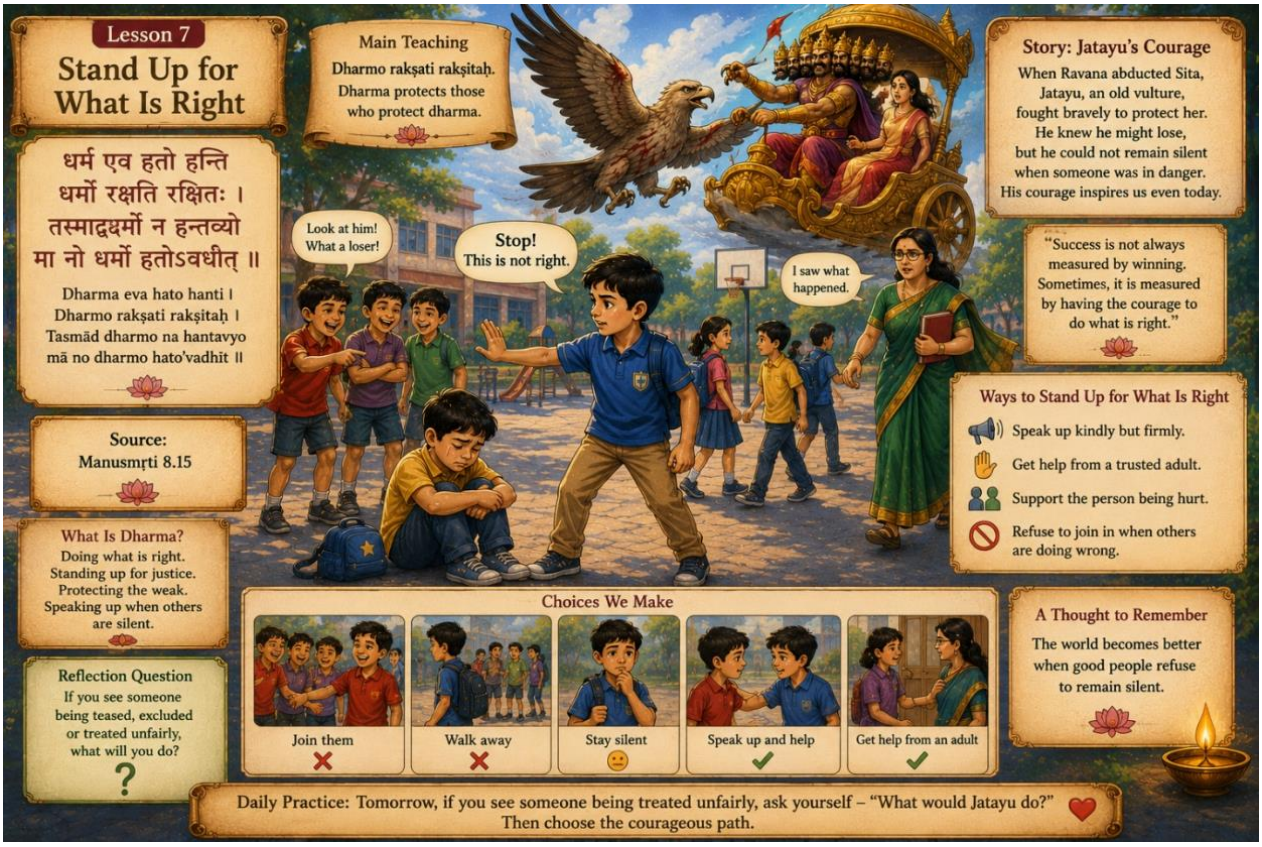
STORY

Jatayu Defends Sita

When Ravana abducted Sita, many creatures witnessed what happened. Most were powerless or afraid. But one elderly vulture, Jatayu, decided to act.

Jatayu knew Ravana was far stronger than he was. He knew he might lose. Yet he could not stand by and watch an innocent woman being taken away. He attacked Ravana bravely and fought to protect Sita.

Although he was defeated, his courage delayed Ravana and helped provide important information to Rama later. Rama honoured Jatayu as a hero. Jatayu teaches us that success is sometimes measured by having the courage to do what is right.



REFLECTION

Imagine you see a group of children teasing another child. Nobody else is helping. What could you do? Would you join them? Walk away? Or help the child? Why?

The world becomes better when good people refuse to remain silent.

DAILY PRACTICE

Tomorrow, if you see someone being excluded, teased, or treated unfairly, ask yourself:

"What would Jatayu do?"

Then choose the courageous path.

Lesson 8

Become the Friend of Good People

त्यज दुर्जनसंसर्गम् ।

Tyaja durjana-saṃsargam.

Avoid the company of wicked people.

Full Original Verse

त्यज दुर्जनसंसर्गं भज साधुसमागमम् ।
कुरु पुण्यमहोरात्रं स्मर नित्यमनित्यताम् ॥

Tyaja durjana-saṃsargaṃ Bhaja sādhu-samāgamam ।

Kuru puṇyam ahorātraṃ Smara nityam anityatām ॥

Avoid the company of wicked people. Seek the company of good and noble people. Perform good deeds day and night. Remember that life is temporary.

Bhaja Govindam, Verse 27 — Adi Shankaracharya

CONTEXT

Adi Shankaracharya observed that people are greatly influenced by those around them. A child who spends time with honest, kind, hardworking friends often develops similar qualities.

A child who spends time with dishonest, cruel, or irresponsible friends may slowly adopt those habits. Character is shaped not only by our choices, but also by the company we keep.

MEANING FOR CHILDREN

Imagine two gardens. One is filled with healthy plants and flowers. The other is filled with weeds. If a healthy plant is moved into a garden full of weeds, the weeds will soon begin to affect it. The same is true of friendship.

Friends influence how we speak, how we behave, what we think is acceptable, and what kind of people we become. A good friend encourages you to do the right thing.

Choose friends who help you become better. And strive to become that kind of friend yourself.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Children often believe friendship should be based solely on fun. While fun is important, true friendship also involves honesty, kindness, loyalty, encouragement, and good influence.

The goal is not to teach children to judge others harshly, but to understand the influence that friendships have on character.

- What makes someone a good friend?
- Have you ever felt pressured to do something wrong?
- Which friends help you become your best self?
- How can you be a good friend to others?

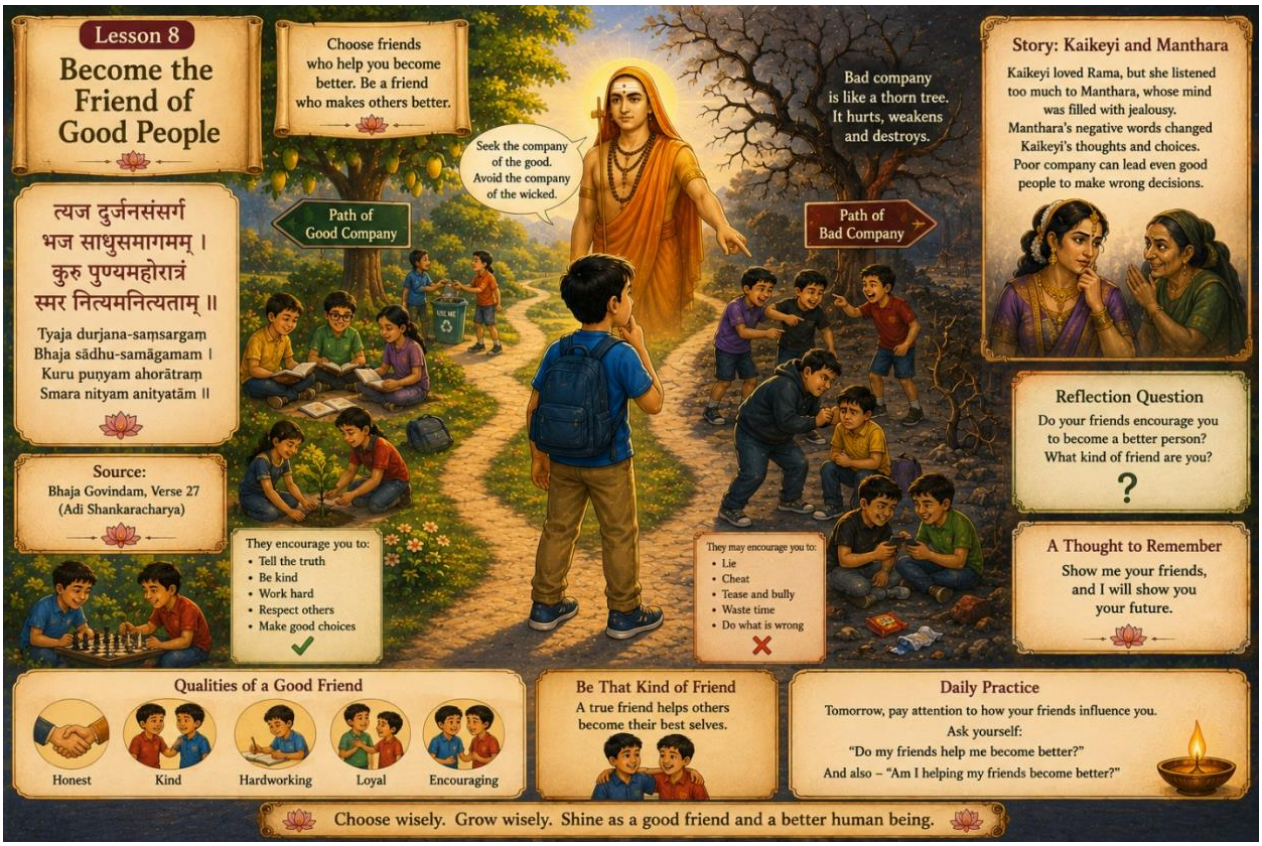
STORY

Kaikeyi and Manthara

Queen Kaikeyi loved Rama deeply for many years. However, she spent too much time listening to Manthara, whose mind was filled with jealousy and fear. Manthara repeatedly planted negative thoughts in Kaikeyi's mind. Gradually, Kaikeyi began to believe them.

Eventually she demanded Rama's exile and caused great sorrow to herself and many others. Kaikeyi was not naturally cruel. But she allowed herself to be influenced by poor advice and unhealthy company.

The story teaches us that even good people can make bad choices if they listen to the wrong voices for too long.



REFLECTION

Think about your closest friends. Do they encourage you to tell the truth, be kind, work hard, and make good choices? Or do they encourage the opposite? What kind of friend are you?

Show me your friends, and I will show you your future.

DAILY PRACTICE

Tomorrow, pay attention to how your friends influence you.

Ask yourself: "Do my friends help me become better?"

And equally important: "Am I helping my friends become better?"

Lesson 9

Do Your Duty, Even When It Is Difficult

स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः ॥

Svadharme nidhanaṃ śreyaḥ.

It is better to die performing one's own duty.

Full Original Verse

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥

Śreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ paradharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt ।

Svadharme nidhanaṃ śreyaḥ paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ ॥

Better is one's own duty, even if performed imperfectly, than another's duty performed perfectly. It is better to remain faithful to one's own duty, for abandoning it brings danger.

Bhagavad Gītā 3.35

CONTEXT

Arjuna stood on the battlefield of Kurukshetra filled with fear and doubt. He wanted to avoid a difficult responsibility. Krishna reminded him that every person has duties in life.

Sometimes those duties are uncomfortable. Sometimes they require sacrifice. Sometimes they require courage. But abandoning what is right simply because it is difficult rarely leads to peace.

MEANING FOR CHILDREN

A duty is something that we ought to do, even when we do not feel like doing it. For a child, duties may include telling the truth, respecting parents, studying sincerely, helping at home, keeping promises, and standing up for others.

Sometimes it is easier to avoid responsibility — to leave a mess for someone else to clean, to blame another person, or to ignore a friend who needs help.

But doing our duty helps us grow into dependable and trustworthy people. A person's character is built through small responsibilities carried out faithfully every day.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Modern children often hear a great deal about rights and very little about responsibilities. Both are important. Help children understand that every privilege carries a responsibility.

- The right to learn comes with the responsibility to study.
- The right to be respected comes with the responsibility to respect others.
- The right to receive help comes with the responsibility to help others when possible.

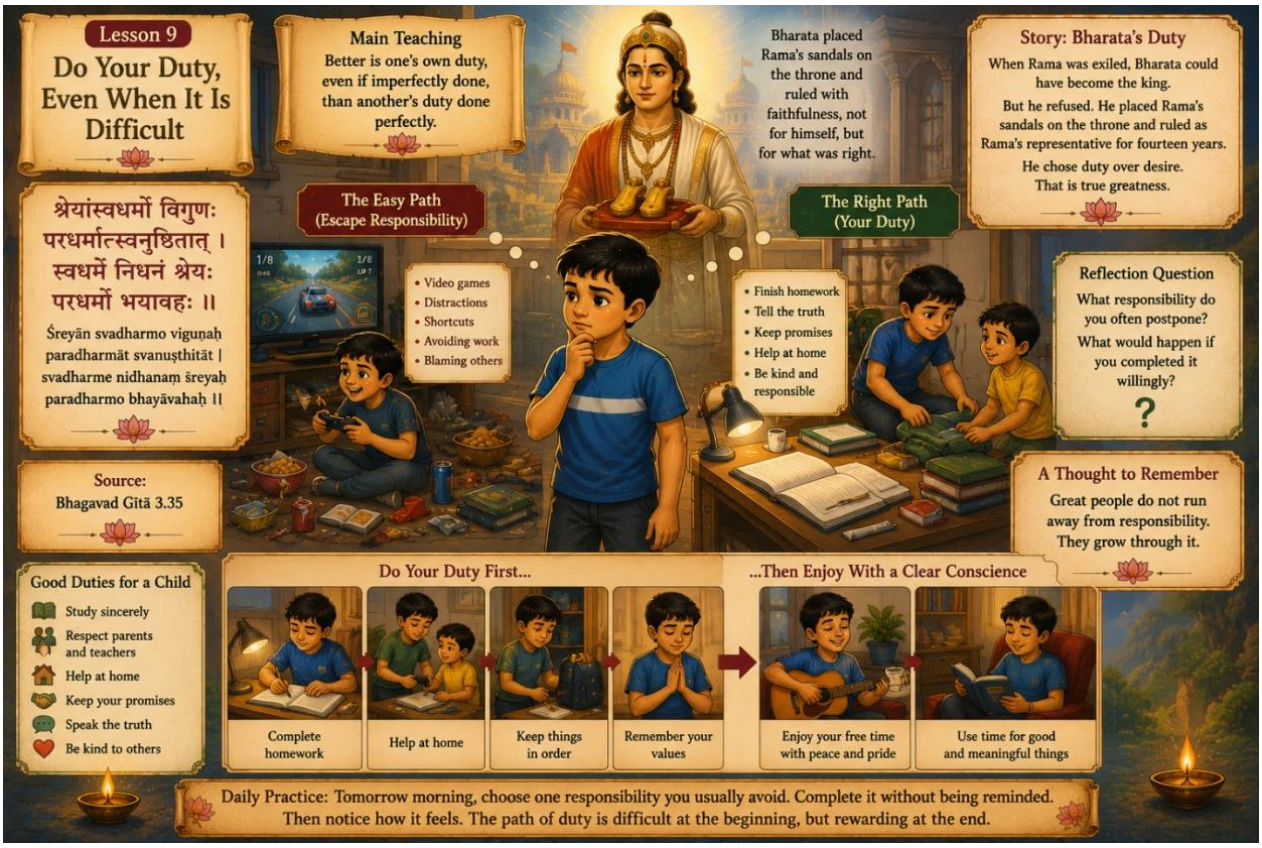
STORY

Bharata and the Sandals of Rama

When Rama was sent into exile, Bharata had an opportunity to become king. No one would have blamed him for accepting the throne. Yet Bharata knew that the kingdom rightfully belonged to Rama.

He therefore refused to take what was not his. Instead, he placed Rama's sandals upon the throne and governed as Rama's representative for fourteen years.

He chose responsibility over personal ambition. Because of this, he is remembered as one of the noblest characters in the Ramayana.



REFLECTION

What is one responsibility that you often postpone — homework, helping at home, keeping your room tidy, being kind to a sibling? What would happen if you completed it willingly?

Great people do not run away from responsibility.

They grow through it.

DAILY PRACTICE

Tomorrow morning, choose one responsibility you usually avoid. Complete it without being reminded.

Then notice how it feels.

The path of duty is often difficult at the beginning, but rewarding at the end.

Lesson 10

Live to Help Others

परोपकाराय फलन्ति वृक्षाः ॥

Paropakārāya phalanti vṛkṣāḥ.

Trees bear fruit for the benefit of others.

Full Original Verse

परोपकाराय फलन्ति वृक्षाः ।
परोपकाराय वहन्ति नद्यः ।
परोपकाराय दुहन्ति गावः ।
परोपकारार्थम् इदं शरीरम् ॥

Paropakārāya phalanti vṛkṣāḥ ।

Paropakārāya vahanti nadyaḥ ।

Paropakārāya duhanti gāvaḥ ।

Paropakārārtham idaṃ śarīram ॥

Trees bear fruit for others. Rivers flow for others. Cows give milk for others. Likewise, this body is meant to serve others.

Subhāṣita Ratna Bhāṇḍāgāra (Traditional Subhashita)

CONTEXT

Ancient Indian teachers often taught values through observations from nature. A tree does not eat its own fruit. A river does not drink its own water. A cow does not consume the milk it produces. Nature constantly gives.

This verse encourages human beings to do the same. A meaningful life is not measured only by what we accumulate. It is also measured by how much good we bring to others.

MEANING FOR CHILDREN

Every day, many people help us — parents, teachers, farmers, doctors, drivers, shopkeepers, neighbours. Most of us receive help from others long before we learn how to help ourselves.

This verse teaches gratitude and service. Helping others does not require wealth. A child can help by sharing, encouraging, listening, helping at home, comforting a friend, or protecting someone who is lonely.

Even small acts of kindness can change someone's day.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

Children naturally ask "What do I get?" This lesson gently introduces a different question: "What can I give?" Parents can help children develop a habit of service.

The objective is not sacrifice for its own sake. The objective is learning that joy often comes through serving others.

- Who helped you today?
- Whom did you help today?
- What is one thing you can do tomorrow to make someone else's day easier?

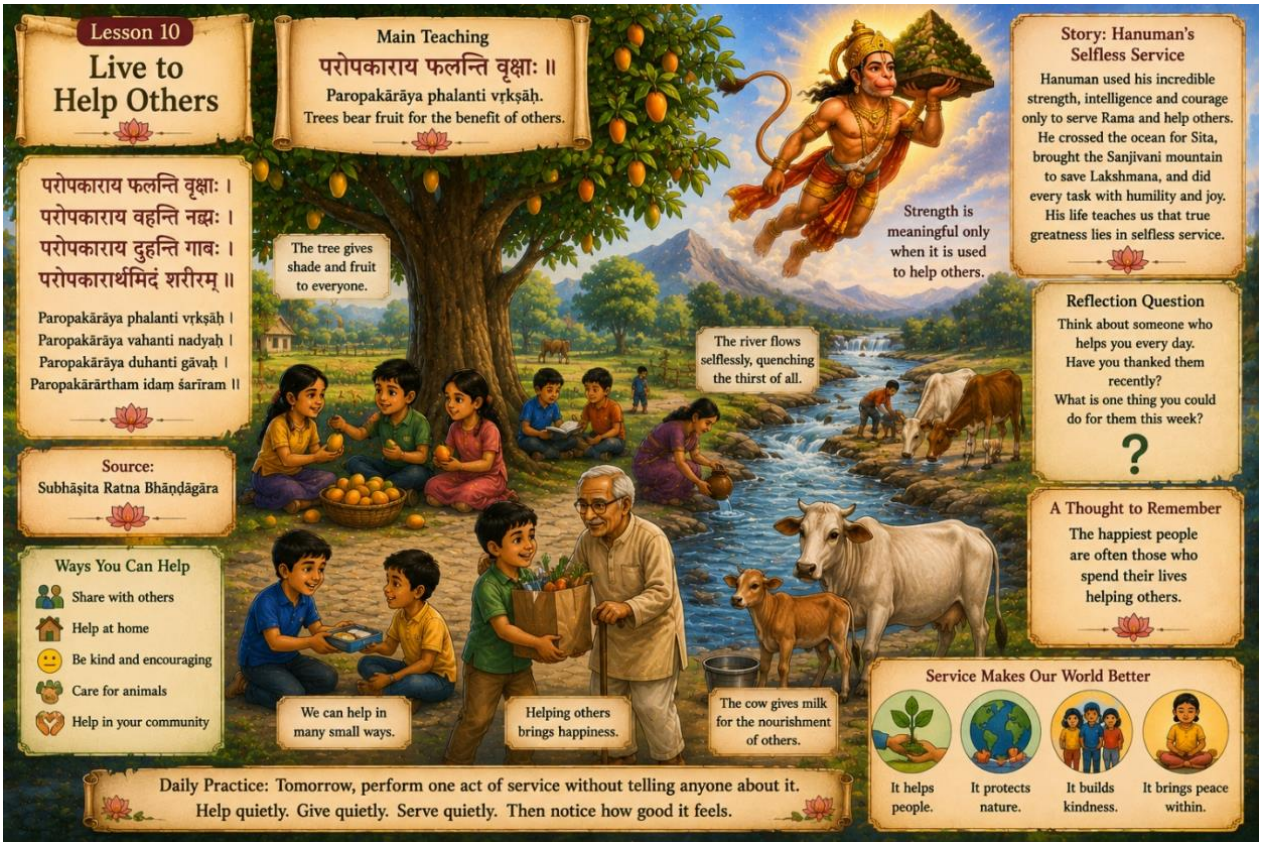
STORY

Hanuman's Selfless Service to Rama

Hanuman possessed extraordinary strength, intelligence, and courage. Yet he never used these gifts to seek fame or power for himself. Everything he did was in service of Rama and the welfare of others.

He crossed the ocean to find Sita. He carried the Sanjivani mountain to save Lakshmana. He undertook difficult tasks without expecting reward. When praised, Hanuman remained humble.

For this reason, Hanuman is remembered not merely as a hero, but as the ideal servant of dharma.



REFLECTION

Think about someone who helps you every day. Have you thanked them recently? What is one thing you could do for them this week?

> ***The happiest people are often those who spend their lives helping others.***

DAILY PRACTICE

Tomorrow, perform one act of service without telling anyone about it.

Help quietly. Give quietly. Serve quietly.

Then notice how good it feels.

Lesson 11

The Person Everyone Loves

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ॥

Adveṣṭā sarvabhūtānāṃ maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca.

One who hates none, who is friendly and compassionate toward all.

Full Original Verse

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥

Adveṣṭā sarvabhūtānāṃ maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca ।

Nirmamo nirahaṅkāraḥ samaduḥkha-sukhaḥ kṣamī ॥

One who hates no living being, who is friendly and compassionate, free from selfishness and arrogance, balanced in happiness and sadness, and forgiving — such a person is truly noble.

Bhagavad Gītā 12.13

CONTEXT

In Chapter 12, Arjuna asks Krishna about the qualities of a truly spiritual person. Krishna's answer is remarkable. He does not speak about wealth, status, or intelligence. Instead, he describes character.

The truly great person is one who is kind, compassionate, humble, forgiving, and free from hatred. This verse beautifully summarises many of the lessons in this book.

MEANING FOR CHILDREN

Think about the kindest person you know. What makes them special? Perhaps they do not bully others, help when someone is sad, forgive mistakes, share willingly, treat everyone fairly, and stay humble when praised.

Krishna teaches that these qualities are signs of true greatness. Many people want to be powerful or famous. But a truly good person is remembered because of how they make others feel.

A kind heart leaves a lasting impression.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

As children grow older, they often compare themselves with others — marks, possessions, popularity, appearance. This verse reminds us that character matters more than comparison.

This lesson provides an opportunity to shift the child's definition of success from achievement alone to character.

- What does it mean to be compassionate?
- Why is forgiveness difficult?
- Can someone be strong and kind at the same time?
- What qualities make a person truly admirable?

STORY

Yudhishthira's Greatest Victory

Yudhishthira was not the strongest warrior among the Pandavas, nor the most skilled archer, nor the most physically powerful. Yet he was respected by kings, sages, and ordinary people alike.

Because he consistently displayed truthfulness, compassion, patience, humility, and forgiveness. Even after the great war, he did not celebrate the suffering of his enemies.

His greatest victory was not on the battlefield. It was over his own ego. For this reason, he became known as Dharmaraja — the king who lived by dharma.



REFLECTION

When people think about you many years from now, what do you hope they will remember? Your toys? Your marks? Your achievements? Or your kindness?

The best measure of a person is not what they have.

It is who they become.

DAILY PRACTICE

Before going to sleep each night, ask yourself:

"Was I truthful today? Was I kind today? Did I help someone today? Did I stand up for what is right today?"

If the answer is "yes" more often than "no," you are already walking the path of dharma.

End Note

Over the course of these eleven lessons, we have explored teachings drawn from the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and other timeless sources of wisdom.

These lessons are not meant merely to be memorised. They are meant to be lived.

Every truthful word strengthens character.

Every act of self-control builds inner strength.

Every act of kindness brightens the world.

Every courageous choice strengthens dharma.

No one becomes noble in a single day. Character is built one thought, one word, and one action at a time.

May these teachings guide children toward lives filled with wisdom, compassion, courage, humility, and service.

May they grow into men and women who bring dignity to their families, kindness to their communities, and goodness to the world.

✦ ✦ ✦

मंगलम्

सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः ।
सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु ।
मा कश्चिद् दुःखभाग् भवेत् ॥

May all beings be happy. May all beings be healthy.
May all beings experience goodness and well-being.
May no one suffer.

॥ ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om. Peace within us. Peace around us. Peace among all beings.

❧

With love and prayers,

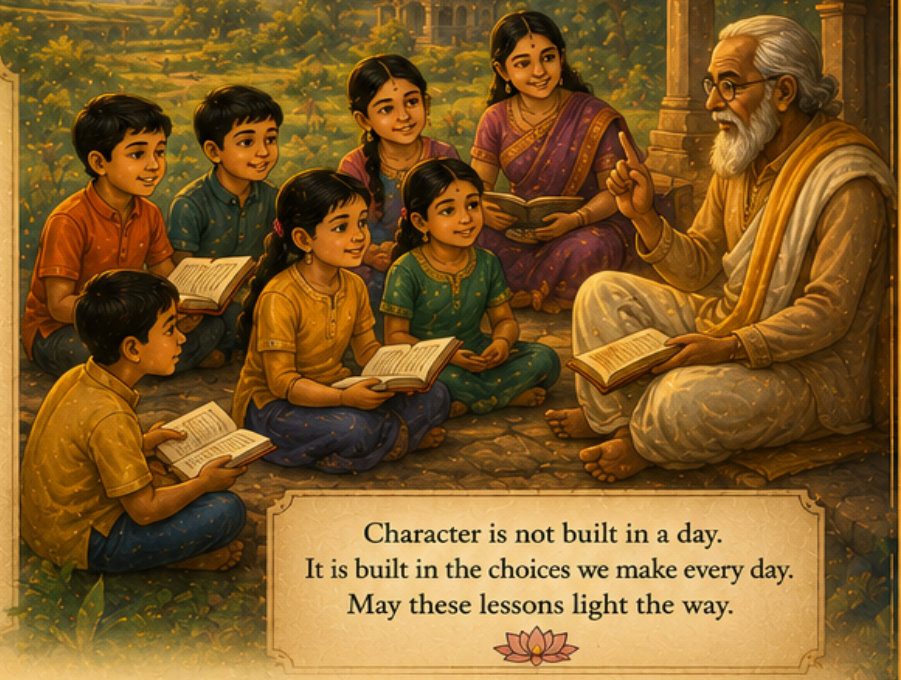
V V Subramanian
Kuwait, May 2026

Eleven lessons.
Timeless wisdom.
A lifetime of values.

Saṃskāra Dīpikā is a collection of eleven essential life lessons for young minds and kind hearts. Rooted in the wisdom of the Upaniṣads, Bhagavad Gītā, Rāmāyaṇa, Mahābhārata and other timeless sources, these lessons illuminate the path to becoming an ideal human being.

WHAT THIS BOOK OFFERS

- Eleven foundational values that build character and guide life.
- Teachings from India's timeless wisdom traditions.
- Stories, reflections and practical guidance for everyday living.
- Questions and daily practices to help values take root.
- A path that nurtures wisdom, compassion and inner strength.



Character is not built in a day.
It is built in the choices we make every day.
May these lessons light the way.

THE VALUES WE NURTURE

Truthfulness	Self-Control	Self-Mastery	Respect for Everyone	Compassion	Respect for Women	Courage to Defend What Is Right	Choosing Good Friends	Fulfilling One's Duty	Live to Help Others	The Person Everyone Loves



May this book inspire young hearts to think nobly, speak kindly, act generously and live with purpose. May knowledge become character. May character become conduct. May conduct become a life guided by wisdom, compassion and dharma.



The best measure of a person is not what they have.
It is who they become.

With love and prayers,

V V Subramanian