

Killing Aghasura

(Teachers copy)

**A. Story**

Every morning in the village of Vrindavan, Krishna blew His buffalo horn to gather all His friends together. There were thousands of cowherd boys who cared for thousands of calves.

Always happy, the boys played many games. Sometimes one boy would steal another's lunch and the boys would pass the lunch to each other so he couldn't get it back. Some of the boys caught the tails of the young monkeys hanging in the trees. Others climbed up the trees with them, making faces at them or jumping from branch to branch. Some of them played their flutes or blew their bugles made of buffalo horns. Some followed the swans, and some ran after the shadows of the birds. Some splashed in the water and imitated the frogs. Thus they spent their days in the forest of Vrindavan.

One day while Krishna and His friends were enjoying themselves in the forest, a mighty and terrible demon named Agha watched them. He hated to see them having so much fun. He decided to kill Krishna and all His friends. This demon was so terrible that even the residents of heaven were afraid of him. My demon sister, Putana, and my demon brother, Baka! Now I'll kill His friends and the calves, too. With the children dead, all the people of Vrindavan will die of grief!"

Then the terrible demon Agha grew longer and longer until he was eight miles long. He stretched his mouth wider and wider until it was as wide as a mountain, and his hot tongue appeared like a broad road. His eyes blazed fire. Agha decided to swallow Krishna and the boys all at once. So he sat on the path and waited.

When the boys first saw the demon, they thought he was a statue. They began to talk among themselves.

"What is this?" said one boy. It appears to be a huge animal. He looks like he wants to swallow us all!"

"Isn't it a big snake that has opened his mouth wide just to eat us?" said another.

A third boy said, "His breath is a fierce hot wind, and the fishy bad smell from his mouth is the smell of his intestines. But he can't swallow us all at once. Even if he did, Krishna would kill him."

And so, unafraid, they marched right into the mouth of the demon. Agha swallowed them up all at once. He still sat on the path waiting for Krishna.

For a moment, Krishna felt very sad. His friends were lying in the belly of a great serpent! "How will I save them?" He wondered. Then Krishna entered Agha's mouth. All the demigods were watching and became very worried.

Once inside the demon's throat, Krishna grew bigger and bigger. Agha choked. Thrashed about, and his big eyes moved violently. His life-air burst from a hole in the top of his head and waited in the sky. It was like a dazzling light that spread everywhere.

Inside Agha's belly, Krishna found His friends unconscious. With His mystic glance, He brought them all to life. Then they marched right out of the demon's mouth.

Suddenly, Agha's glittering spirit soul merged into the body of Krishna. The demigods became overwhelmed with joy. They showered flowers on Krishna. They danced and beat drums and sang songs. "Jaya! Jaya! All glories to Krishna!"

The gigantic, fierce mouth of the demon stayed open for many days. Slowly his body dried up and the cowherd boys used it for a playground.

### **B. what Agha represents**

The Aghasura demon represents cruelty to others, violence, and causing trouble for others.

### **C. Cruelty**

Cruelty means a deliberate attempt to hurt someone. We can hurt someone in different ways. We can hurt him with our bodies—physically hitting or kicking or somehow causing pain. We can hurt someone with our words - saying mean things, making fun or teasing in a cruel way. Actually, this can be more painful than being hit or dislike him. By thinking this way, we will disrespect him or dislike him and probably will not treat him nicely.

A devotee knows that everyone is a part of Krishna and Krishna is in everyone's heart. We should treat everyone with respect, remembering that they are a spirit soul - not just the body that we are seeing. Krishna created everyone and everyone is dear to Him. Even if we don't like someone, that person is still dear to Krishna. We don't have the right to be cruel to him. A devotee will treat friend or enemy equally.

Does that mean that we only have to treat human beings nicely? No. all living entities have souls. All living entities are part and parcel of Krishna and our souls is no greater or less than that of an animal or plant. Therefore, they should all be treated kindly. That is one reason meat-eating is bad.

One of the qualities of a devotee is compassion. Compassion means feeling very sorry upon seeing another's suffering. Being compassionate, a devotee would never want to be the cause of anyone's suffering.

Describe one time when someone was cruel to you. What did they do to you? How did you feel?

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#### **D. Duryodhana: A Picture of Cruelty**

The five Pandavas had an evil cousin named Duryodhana. He was the son of the blind king, Drtharastra. Duryodhana was very jealous of the Pandavas, especially Bhima, and he caused him to act in very cruel ways. His constant meditation was on killing Bhima and his brothers.

One time Duryodhana fed Bhima some poison cakes. When Bhima became unconscious due to the poison, Duryodhana tied his hands and feet and threw him in a lake to drown.

Another time Duryodhana constructed a house made of lac, a very flammable material. He made this house purposefully for the Pandavas, and when it was finished, he invited them to live there. His plan was to set the house on fire and burn them up.

Duryodhana also cheated the Pandavas out of land that was rightfully theirs. Because of his cruelty and cheating, the Pandavas were forced to fight with him and therefore the Battle of Kurukshetra took place.

#### **E. Ending All Suffering**

Do you remember the meaning of compassion? A compassionate person doesn't like to see others suffer. In the material world everyone is suffering somewhat. Due to our past karma, some people have to suffer more than others; but everyone suffers birth, death, old age and disease. The kindest act we can perform for someone is to tell them about Krishna. Krishna is always so kind to His devotees. He is helping them become free from the cruel net of Maya (illusion) so that they can go back home to the spiritual world. Only by learning about Krishna we get out of this material world and return to the spiritual world. There, the suffering will end forever.

If we have the knowledge that tells us how to end all suffering and we don't share that knowledge with others, then that is also a form of cruelty. Let's show our compassion by telling whoever we can about Krishna.