

King Shibi and the Dove *A story from Hinduism*

Key words: Values & Issues, compassion, king-ship, self-sacrifice

Key Learning:

- to consider the consequences of helping others (**Values & Issues**)
- to consider the action choices of King Shibi as a **Key Figure** in Hinduism
- to consider the Hindu virtue of Ahimsa (*in Buddhism & Jainism also*) (**Beliefs**)

Suggested Lesson Script

Ahimsa

Hindus have a duty to care for and respect animals in the same way that they care for and respect humans. They must obey the law of **Ahimsa**, which is the law of 'non-injury' and 'non-harming', according to the holy writings in the Vedic scripture.

This quote from one of the Vedas (holy books) shows the Hindu commitment to caring for and respecting animal life:

"You must not use your God-given body for killing God's creatures, whether they are human, animal or whatever."

(Yajur Veda, 12.32)

Narrative to read aloud (Pause for discussion or activity opposite each section.)	Questions for discussion & suggested activities
	<p>Tuning-in activity: Ask learners to draw a king, a dove and a hawk. Draw your own version for display. Ask learners to share what they know about these creatures from stories and in real life. Record their suggestions as labels around your drawing. (You might ask your learners to replicate or add their own labels to their illustration.)</p>
<p>There was once a very kind and generous king called Shibi. One day he was sitting on the terrace outside his palace when a dove flew straight into his lap, and lay trembling there. "Please keep me safe here with you!" pleaded the dove to the king. "Do not be scared, little dove, I will protect you," said the king.</p>	<p>Questions to consider: Do you think King Shibi is being a good king here? How is King Shibi being helpful? Do you think King Shibi feels responsible for the dove?</p>
<p>Then a hawk arrived. He had been chasing the dove for quite a distance. "Give me my dinner," said the hawk to the king.</p>	<p>Junction questions: What would you do if you were the king? What should the king do? Counter/Colour vote: Give each learner one counter/bead etc. to use to cast their vote: The king should a) hand the dove over OR b) continue to protect it OR c) something else?</p>

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<p>“I cannot allow you to eat this dove,” said King Shibi, “for I have promised to keep him safe.”</p> <p>“Then what am I supposed to eat?” asked the hawk.</p>	<p>Questions to consider: What should the hawk do? What answer might the king give?</p>
<p>“I am starving and will surely die if I don’t get a meal soon. And my family will starve too, if I cannot bring this dove to them to eat,” explained the hawk.</p>	<p>Junction questions: What would you do if you were the king? What should the king do?</p> <p>Counter/ Colour vote: Give each learner one counter/bead etc. to use to cast their vote: The king should a) hand the dove over OR b) continue to protect it OR c) something else?</p> <p>Discussion: Give learners the opportunity to explain their choice and the reasons why they might have changed their mind (or not) from the previous vote.</p>
<p>The king offered the hawk all kinds of alternative foods, but the hawk refused, saying, “I only eat fresh meat.”</p>	<p>Junction questions: What would you do if you were the king? What could the king do? What do you think King Shibi will do next?</p>
<p>“Then have some of my flesh,” said the king. His people cried out in alarm! Astonished, they watched as...</p>	<p>For younger children, omit the next section of narrative in the shaded boxes and continue on the next page.</p>
<p>...the king commanded, “Bring some scales!” and they brought out a huge set of scales (<i>pan-balance</i>) and placed them on the ground in the centre of the terrace. On one side of the scales, the king placed the dove, who was still trembling with fear. Then King Shibi took his sword and began slicing pieces of flesh off his own thigh and placing them on the other side of the scales; trying to equal the weight of the dove. But however much flesh he added to the scales, he could not equal the bird’s weight. It was very strange. Eventually, unable to equal the dove’s weight...</p>	

<p>...the king climbed up onto the scales, shouting to the hawk: “Eat me! Spare the dove!”</p>	<p>Questions to consider: (for all learners) What do you think of the king’s actions? Is he a good king for doing this? Why do you think Hindus think Shibi is a good king? Which attributes of being a king is he showing here? At the beginning of the story, King Shibi was trying to help the dove. Was he right to help the dove? What problems did this cause?</p> <p><u>2nd Level Questions / Extension</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Do you think he would do the same if he had known what the consequences would be? (2nd)</i> • <i>Should we put limits on how much help we give people? (2nd)</i> • <i>How do you think this story ends/resolves? (2nd)</i>
<p>At that moment, both birds transformed. The dove revealed himself as the god Agni, god of the fire. The hawk revealed himself as the king of the gods, Indra. “We came to test your goodness,” explained Indra, “and we are more than satisfied!”</p>	<p>Questions to consider: Why do you think the gods were satisfied (very pleased) with King Shibi? Why do you think kindness to animals is important to Hindus?</p> <p>Direct Teaching: Explain the virtue of Ahimsa (see text box on page 1) Facilitate a discussion about this key belief and encourage learners to reflect on how it links with their own beliefs or opinions about the treatment of animals.</p>
<p>Indra healed the king’s wounds, and then...</p>	<p>Include this resolution if narrative in grey box was shared earlier with older learners.</p>
<p>The two gods disappeared, leaving all the humans astonished by what they’d seen and heard.</p>	<p>Direct learners back to their first illustration of the story characters. Encourage them to add information to each character by way of text or further illustration. Make links with other stories from world religions which highlight the relationship between humans and animals e.g. <i>Siddhartha and the Swan</i> from Buddhism or <i>Muhammad’s Cat</i> from Islam.</p>