

The Dove And Hunter



Once, a hunter was roaming in the forest. It was a nice afternoon and the whole atmosphere was calm and poised. The hunter was very happy and was searching for a nice target for his arrows. Much to his surprise he saw beautiful dove flying here and there. He somehow caught hold of the dove and kept it inside his cage. Merrily he was returning to his place. Suddenly black clouds gathered. Slowly it became dense and started raining. The drizzling changed to a heavy rain. Thunder and lightning also joined. It became unbearable for him to proceed to his residing place. It was not possible for him to stay there itself as the whole place was full of water. He was drenched and was shivering with cold. Unable to bear the pouring rain and cold, he took shelter under a big tree. But it was the same tree on the branch of which the partner of the bird he had caught was sitting and expecting its mate to return. The bird was really in a soup as it was raining heavily and it was worried how the loved one will return! At that time, as the hunter came under the tree with his cage, the bird caught in the cage exclaimed to its love bird 'Oh my dear! Don't worry about me. I am here down in the cage. Now we have an important deed to be done. A stranger 'atithi' has come to our place. He is now an orphan. He has nobody to look after him as he is in the midst of the forest and it is raining cats and dogs. Though he had caught me and caged me, we should not swerve from our duties considering him as our enemy. Duty is important and one has to observe one's duty without fail. So you entertain him forgetting all the cruel deeds he has done to our race.'

Hearing this, the lady dove bird understood the significance of the partner's words, collected some twigs and made a nice fire. The hunter sat near the fire and really enjoyed the heat; he warmed himself as he was feeling unbearably cold. When he was feeling a little comfortable, he felt hungry and was hankering to eat something. The bird realizing the hunter's intention, without any hesitation, immediately fell into that fire and prepared itself as his delicious food. The hunter happily praising his own good fortune ate the bird and appeased his hunger. The bird in the cage became very happy that his partner has performed its duty without fail.

This is a story from Ramayana. Rama the hero, explained this story to his companions when they all refused to accept Vibhisana as their kith and kin. Vibhisana by birth was a demon but he was endowed with all good qualities. But the monkeys on Rama's side were not aware of this. They all thought that Vibhisana, being a brother of their wicked enemy, will do harm to their beloved

Rama. At that time, Rama narrated this story and told that even a bird was fulfilling its duties by helping those even born as its enemies. Being a human being it is really important to help others. This brought the importance of helping others in need. This thought is expounded in the Vedas and Upanisads as 'atithi devo bhava'.

Moral: One should entertain the guests with utmost care and love.

Source: Valmiki Ramayanam
Dr. Rajlaxmi Shrinivasan