



CREATING SPACES
TO SHARE OUR STORIES
AND BUILD FRIENDSHIPS ACROSS DIVIDES

How can we care for our planet? – HINDUISM

Background:

In the Hindu tradition, all living things are created from the same energy by God and so nature has to be respected. Hindus often use nature in their prayers. India's rivers also feature in many stories and prayers and people are working hard to depollute them in India today. This is a story of a priest Narada and a hunter. The story originates from the Skanda Purāṇa. This is a text from roughly 8th Century. It has been widely edited and quoted by scholars throughout history and includes thousands of verses about lots of different topics. This story was set a long time ago when many people had practical jobs like farming, carpentry, hunting and weaving.



Narada and the Hunter - (Story can be found on back)

Follow up questions:

1. What reasons did the hunter give for hunting the animals? Were they good reasons?
2. Do you think it was hard for the hunter to change his ways? What would make it hard for him?
3. If you had to make a change to help the environment, what would it be?
4. What things might be difficult about making that change and how would you manage to stick to your decision?

Narada and the Hunter

One day, when Narada was passing through a forest on one of his walks he noticed something wasn't right. He could hear something rustling between the leaves around him. Holding his breath, he knelt down and lifted up the branches of a near-by bush. To his horror, he saw two wounded animals; a bird and a rabbit who were both crying out in pain. An arrow had pierced the bird's wing and the rabbit was no longer able to walk.

Feeling compassion for the suffering creatures, he cried out, "Who is the culprit who has struck these animals down, leaving them to suffer in this way?" Concerned, Narada went to see if he could discover the person who had hurt these creatures.

He looked behind a bush and saw a bow and arrow. It was a hunter! He called out. "Hey! What are you doing behind there?". As his voice echoed, a deer jumped past him. The hunter said, "You chased away my final kill of the day!" Narada explained how he had found two hurt animals. "Yes, but I am a hunter, that is what I do! I know no other way – my family were all hunters before me. What would we do without killing them?"

"You're right," said Narada, "humans have always killed animals when they needed to. But you seem like a practical person. Are there no other ways to survive?" The hunter paused to think. "And do you not see that you are causing the animals to suffer by wounding them with arrows?" continued Narada. Upon hearing this, the hunter defensively replied, "I wouldn't want to cause something pain - I am just a hunter!" Just as the words had left his mouth, he realised the error in his thinking. Surely, if he wanted to create the least pain, he should not be killing the creatures at all! But, if he were to change his life, how would he eat? How could he survive?

He asked this to Narada who replied, "Don't worry, the Lord will provide you with food. Chant Lord Krishna's name to all that will hear, and food will be donated to you." Feeling slightly nervous, the hunter did as Narada told him. Soon, people from all over the land came to hear him sing the Lord's name and donated rice, water, lentils, fruit and vegetables.

The hunter suddenly had more than when he was a hunter! He found through his non-violent life, he had so much that it was enough to share with those who were hungry or poor. He is now known as the man who was once a hunter but now treads carefully so that not even one ant is hurt.

(The story originates from the Skanda Purāṇa)