

Servana

A Hindu story

Key ideas: families, obligations, consequences of actions.

Servana's parents were poor and blind and old and he looked after them with great care. He even carried them to the temple in a bangi, a kind of basket hanging from a yoke on his shoulder, whenever there was a special festival.

One day, as he was carrying them in the country, his parents felt thirsty so he put down his heavy load and went with his little brass water pot to the river. As he was filling it with water King Dashrath, who was hunting nearby, heard the noise. Thinking it was an animal drinking water, shot an arrow in that direction.

The arrow struck Servana who called out in grief 'He Ram' as he was dying. Hearing this and realising it was a human voice, the king hurried to the river. Finding out what he had done was very grieved and asked the dying boy if there was anything he could do for him. Servana told him that his parents were thirsty and asked the king to take them some water and to look after them.

The king humbly took water to the parents but was too overcome with grief to speak. The parents asked why Servana had not returned. At last the king told them what had happened and said he would care for them. The parents were heartbroken and asked the king if he had any sons. If he did, then he would understand how they felt and that they now no longer wished to live.