

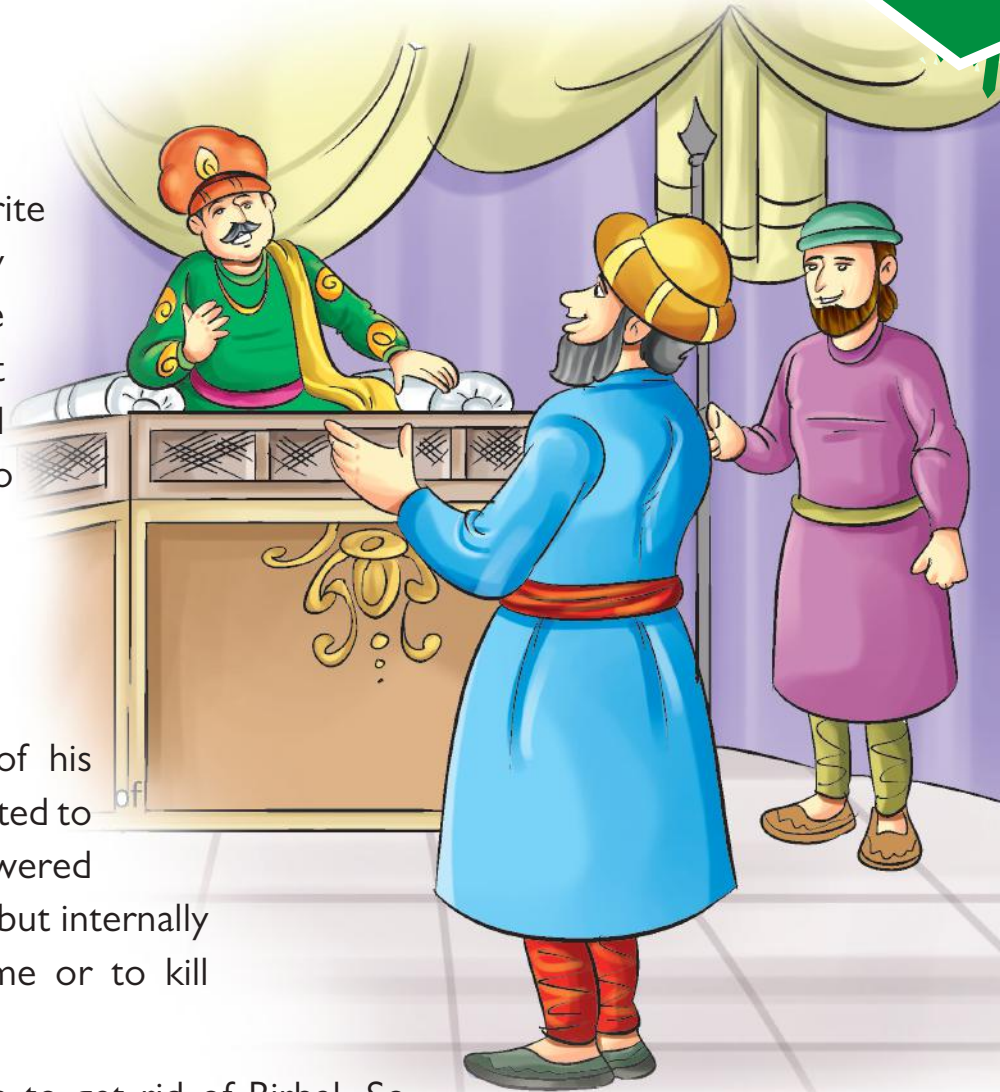
The Wicked Barber's Plight

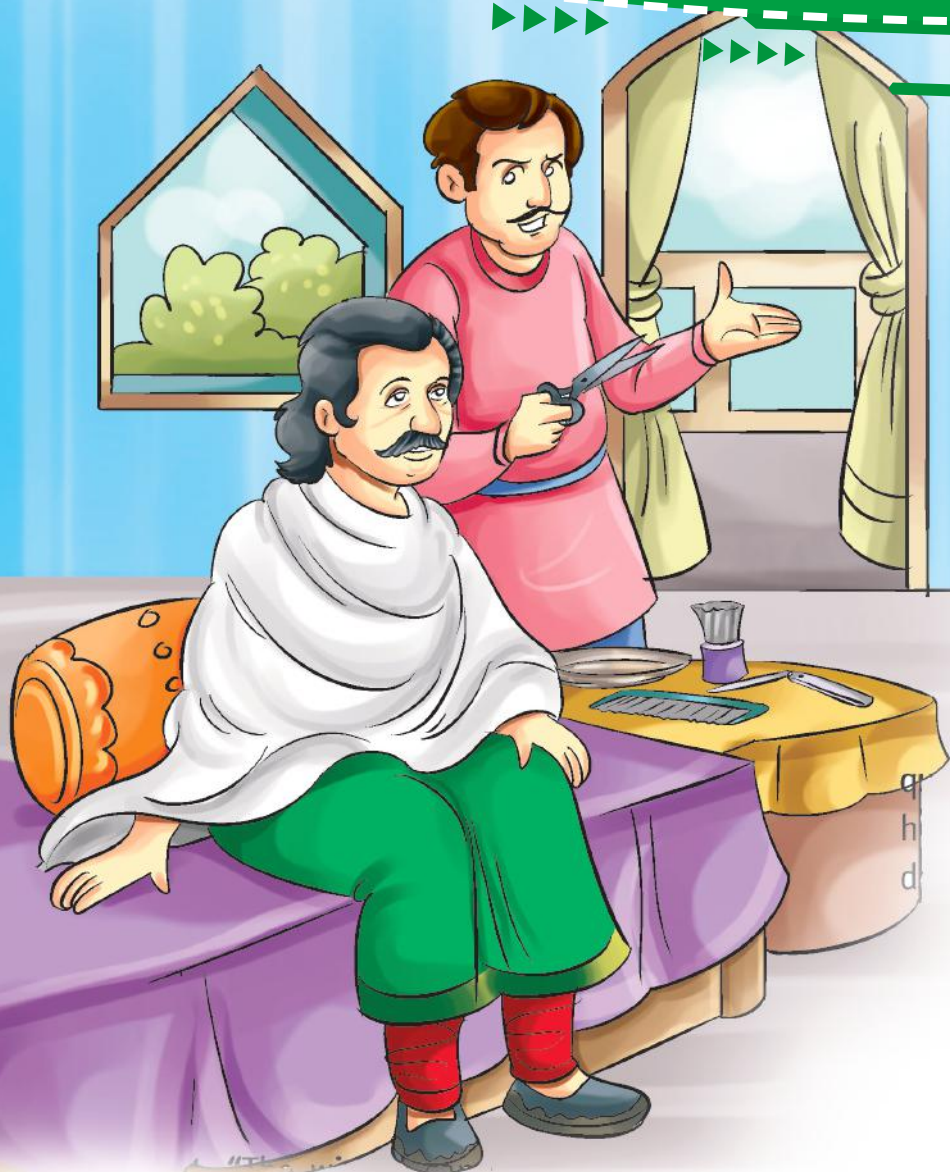
We all know that Birbal was famous for his *intelligence*. He was one of the nine jewels in emperor Akbar's court. He was not only emperor Akbar's favourite minister but also dearly loved by most of the *commoners*, because of his wisdom. He was eminent for his outstanding qualities and that's why the people used to come to him from far and wide for advice on personal matters too.

However, there was a group of ministers who were jealous of his growing popularity and always wanted to let him down. They *outwardly* showered him with praise and compliments, but internally they always made plans to defame or to kill him.

One day, they thought out a plan to get rid of Birbal. So they approached the emperor's barber with a plan. As the barber was extremely close to the emperor, they asked him to help them to get rid of Birbal permanently. And of course, they promised him a huge sum of money in return. The barber was also jealous of Birbal, and so he readily agreed.

The time came soon when the emperor required the barber's services. So the barber reached the palace. There he started a conversation with the emperor about the emperor's father whom he also used to serve. He sang praises of his fine, silky-





smooth hair. And then as a small communication, he asked the emperor as he was enjoying such great **prosperity**, had he made an attempt to do anything for the welfare of his **ancestors**?

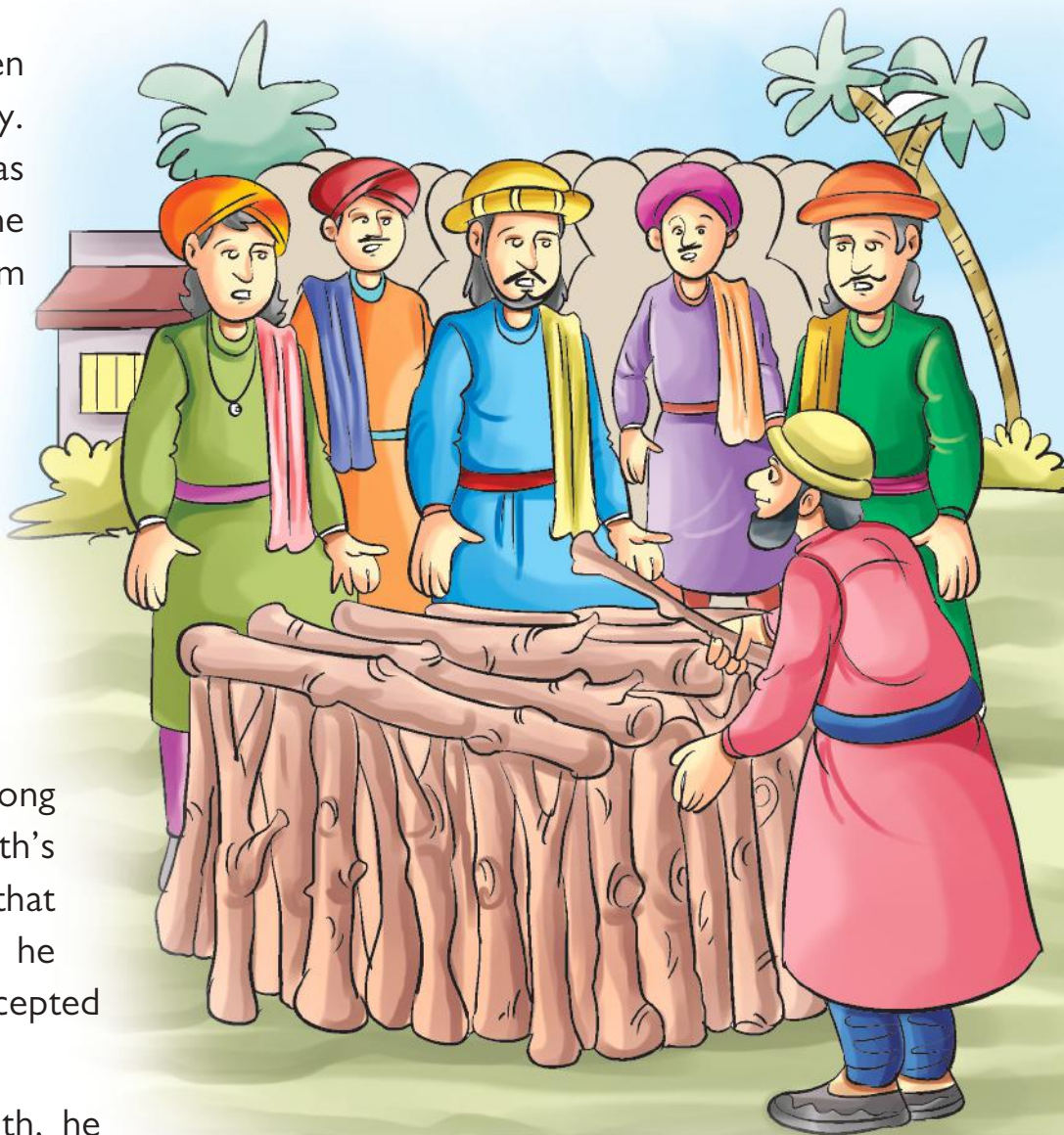
The emperor got very angry at the stupid question of the barber as he told him that it was not possible to do anything because they were already dead. The barber was ready for his cunning answer, so he revealed that he knew of a wizard who could do something in this matter. He said, "The wizard can send a person up to heaven to enquire about your father's welfare. The wizard possesses the powers to

fix the meeting of the dead in heaven with live people here. But the opportunity should be given to a person who is intelligent enough to follow the wizard's instructions as well as make on-the-spot decisions. He must be wise, intelligent and responsible." The emperor was lost in thoughts and the barber was looking for that chance. He knew very well that iron was hot and he would have to strike it. So, he suggested the best person for the job-the wisest of all ministers, Birbal.

The emperor was very excited about the welfare of his dead father and asked the barber to go ahead and make the arrangements immediately. He asked him what was needed to be done. The barber explained that they would take Birbal in a procession to the burial grounds and light a **pyre**. The wizard would then chant some **hymns** as Birbal would ascend to the heavens through the smoke. The hymns would help protect Birbal from the fire. And in this way, he would reach the heaven to meet the father of the emperor.

◀◀◀◀

The emperor ordered his men to call Birbal immediately. After a short time, Birbal was presented before him and the emperor happily informed him of this plan. Birbal asked the emperor as to who gave this brilliant idea and wanted to know his name. After he came to know that it was the barber's idea, he gave his consent to go to heaven on two conditions. He would be given a lot of money for the long journey as well as one month's time to settle his family so that they had no trouble while he was away. The emperor accepted his conditions in no time.



In the duration of this month, he got a few **trustworthy** men to build a tunnel from the **funeral** ground to his house. And on the day of the plan, after the pyre had been lit, instead of sitting on the pyre, Birbal secretly escaped through the hidden door of the tunnel which was already prepared by his men. He **departed** into his house where he hid for a month while his hair and beard grew long and rough.

In the meantime, his enemies were celebrating their triumph as they thought that their plan was successful.

Then one day after a month, Birbal arrived at the palace with news of the emperor's father. The emperor was extremely pleased to see him and ready with a stream of questions. Birbal told the emperor, "Your Majesty! Your father is enjoying every moment of his heavenly life as he has been provided with all luxurious **amenities** except one."

The emperor wanted to know what was missing because he wanted to give every possible comfort to his father as now he had found a way to send things and people to heaven. Birbal answered, "There were no barbers in heaven, and only for this reason, I was *strained* to grow my own beard. So your father had asked for a good barber."

On hearing this, the emperor turned to his own barber and decided to send him to serve his father in heaven. He ordered the barber and the wizard to make arrangements to send him to heaven. The barber could not say anything in his own defence as he was caught in his own *trap*. And once the pyre was lit he was forced to sit on it. As the barber saw his own death reaching, he became pale with fear. He cried loudly and revealed the truth to the emperor. Akbar became furious and ordered his men to punish him along with other conspirators with whom he had *hatched* the plan of killing Birbal. Akbar then turned towards Birbal, and Birbal revealed the whole plan of his escape from the fire. Afterwards, nobody dared to conspire against Birbal again.

Word Treasure

intelligence : cleverness

outwardly : externally, openly

ancestors : forefathers

hymns : mantras in praise of God

funeral : a religious ceremony to bury

strained : tense

commoners : common men

pyre : heap of woods to burn the dead

trustworthy : reliable

amenities : facilities

extended : expanded

hatched : came up with



EXERCISE TIME

Comprehension Skills

A. Tick (✓) the correct option :

1. Birbal was one of the nine _____ in Akbar's court.

a. diamonds

b. coins

c. jewels

2. The barber was also _____ of Birbal and so he readily agreed.

a. afraid

b. jealous

c. friend

3. The emperor became very angry at the _____ question of the barber.
 - a. wise
 - b. intelligent
 - c. stupid
4. The barber explained that they would take Birbal in a _____ to the burial grounds and light a _____.
 - a. procession, pyre
 - b. procession, candle
 - c. parade, pyre
5. Birbal got a few _____ men to build a tunnel from the _____ ground to his house.
 - a. foolish, burial
 - b. turstworthy, funeral
 - c. wise, funeral

B. Fill in the blanks with the correct option :

immediately, intelligence, arrangements, revealed, jealous, made

1. Birbal was famous for his _____.
2. The barber was also _____ of Birbal.
3. The emperor ordered his men to call Birbal _____.
4. He had _____ the plan of killing Birbal.
5. Birbal _____ the whole plan of his escape from the fire.
6. The emperor ordered the wizard to make _____.

C. Answer the following questions :

1. Who was famous for his intelligence in Akbar's court?
2. Who were jealous of Birbal's growing popularity?
3. Who started a conversation with the emperor about his father?
4. Who was the best person to be sent to heaven as suggested by barber?
5. Who was caught in his own trap?
6. Is it possible to send a person to heaven?

D. Describe the character of each of the following :



Emperor Akbar : _____

Birbal : _____



Barber : _____

Fun with Words

E. Apply suitable words for sound according to following :

Sing whisper roar shout scream

1. When lion makes a loud sound open mouth. _____
2. To say something to others in high voice. _____
3. To say a rhyme in sweet voice. _____
4. To say something in other's ear secretly. _____
5. To make sharp sound in horror. _____

Essential Grammar

F. Complete the following sentences with suitable prepositions :

1. There is a cow _____ (*about/in*) the field.
2. The cat jumped _____ (*off/of*) the table.
3. Here is the watch _____ (*when/that*) you asked for.
4. He is fond _____ (*of/off*) coffee.
5. _____ (*In/Into*) the street the piper stepped.
6. She is the girl I am looking _____ (*to/for*).
7. The river flows _____ (*under/over*) the bridge.
8. The village was destroyed _____ (*from/by*) fire.
9. This is a matter _____ (*with/of*) little importance.
10. It has been raining _____ (*since/from*) yesterday.

G. Rearrange the following groups of words to make meaningful sentences :

1. singer is or she a good dancer good a

2. keep where did my book Shweta

3. get when up did the morning you in

4. travelled you in train a have

5. help your friend needed did you she it when

6. got farmer the end the in the bag

7. garden fire they lighted the in

8. swimming the river your father was in

9. the ring will bell the peon

10. England American lives he is an in but in

Essential Writing

H. Continue the dialogues with the help of story. You can change. How of characters :

Barber : Do you know if your father is happy there?

King : How could I know this ! He is dead now.

Barber : (Cunningly) Hmm! I know a wizard who can provide you the way you can information about your father.

King : _____

Barber : _____

King : _____

Birbal : _____



King : _____

Birbal : _____

King : _____

Birbal : _____

Essential Speaking

I. Help this farmer solve his problem.

A farmer has to cross a river in a boat. He has to take a wolf, a goat and some cabbage to the other side. His boat can hold only himself and two other things. He must be sure that when he is out in the boat, the wolf does not eat the goat and the goat does not eat the cabbage. How can the farmer get everything to the other side ?

Fun to Do

J. Find five ing words from the grid :

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| F | M | A | S | L | C | K | L |
| W | S | W | I | N | G | F | B |
| S | P | Y | N | M | D | P | I |
| K | I | N | G | T | X | K | O |
| T | E | O | V | R | I | N | G |
| K | T | H | I | N | G | B | C |