

ADARSH

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No. 6

# BATTLE OF WITS



**'BATTLE OF WITS'** is based on the famous legends of Emperor Akbar and his courtier Birbal.

According to historical facts, Akbar ruled at Delhi in the latter half of the 16th century. He had collected some of the bravest and cleverest of men of his time around him. The most outstanding among them were nine ministers; and that is why his court was known as "Navratna Durbar" meaning Court of Nine Gates. Each of the nine ministers excelled in some quality or the other. The brightest among them was Birbal who was famous for his cleverness and his witticism. Most of the yarns spun around Birbal are about his wit and his presence of mind.

In this volume are given eight stories as a sampler which the young readers would enjoy and want more.

**Editor : D. KUMAR**

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**Our Next Title :**

**AHALYA**

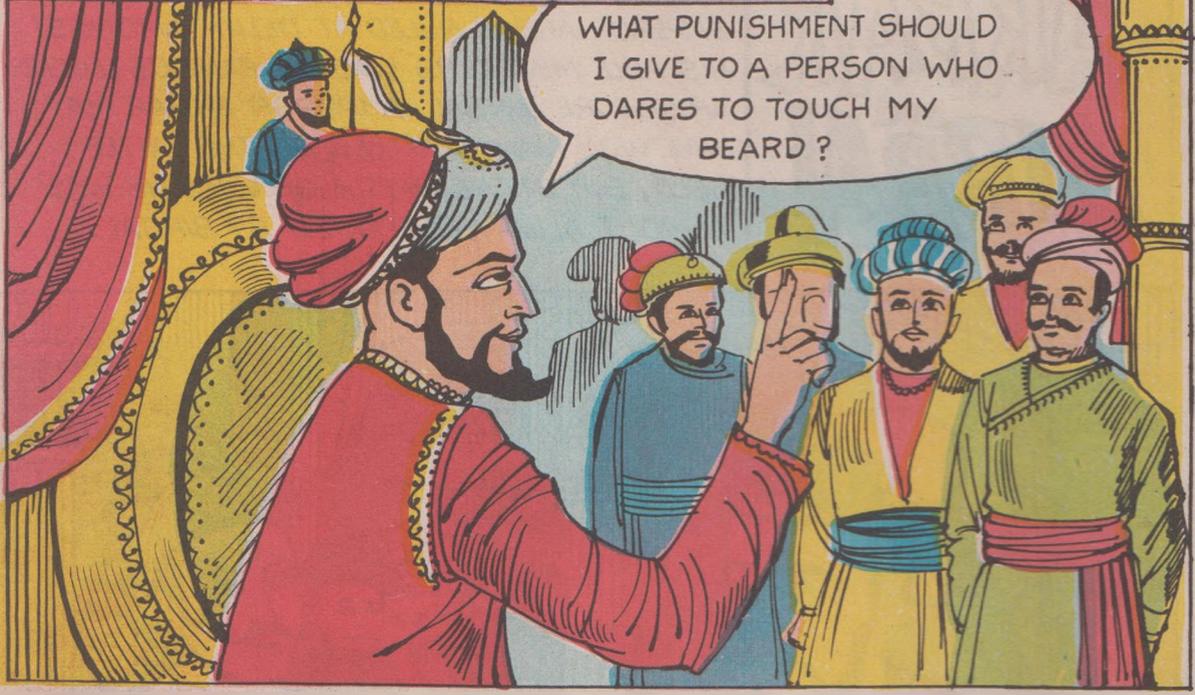
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# AKBAR and BIRBAL

IN THE LATTER HALF OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY EMPEROR AKBAR RULED AT DELHI. AMONGST HIS ABLE MINISTERS WAS THE FAMOUS LEGENDARY FIGURE BIRBAL. EMPEROR AKBAR MAY HAVE WON MANY BATTLES ON THE BATTLE-FIELD, BUT IN THE BATTLE OF WITS HE WAS ALMOST ALWAYS DEFEATED BY BIRBAL.



ONE DAY THE EMPEROR WANTED TO TEST THE INTELLECT OF HIS MINISTERS.



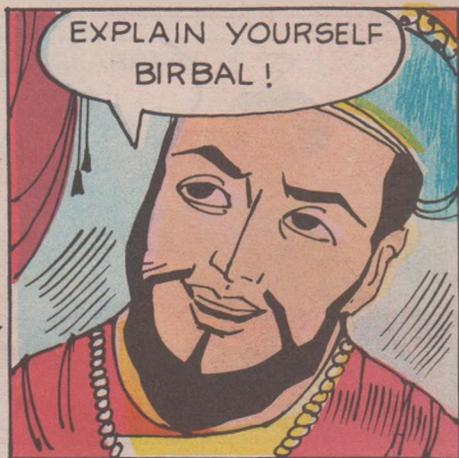
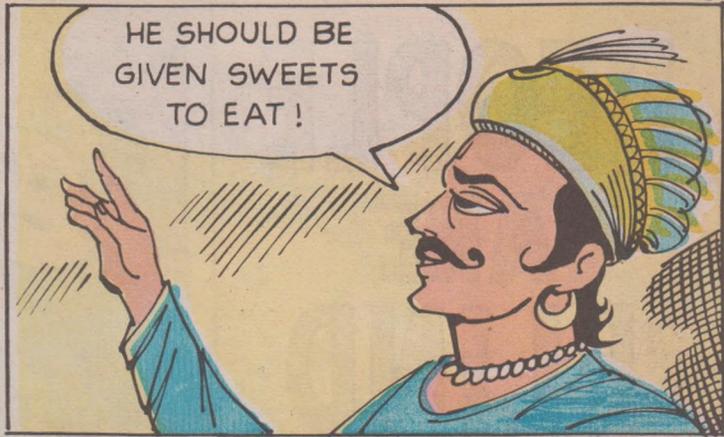
WHAT PUNISHMENT SHOULD I GIVE TO A PERSON WHO DARES TO TOUCH MY BEARD?



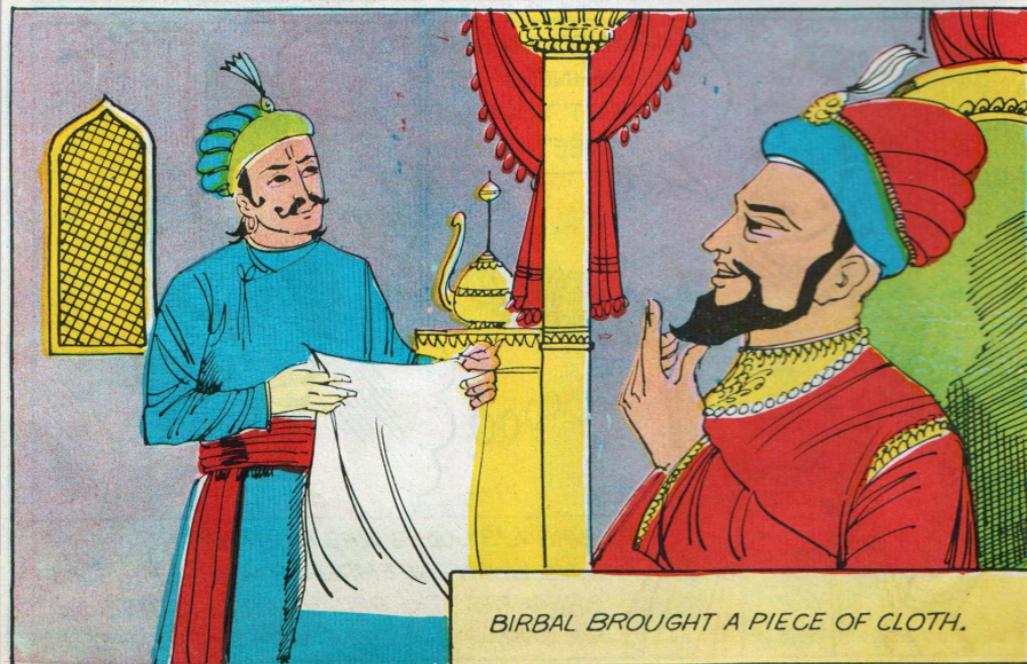
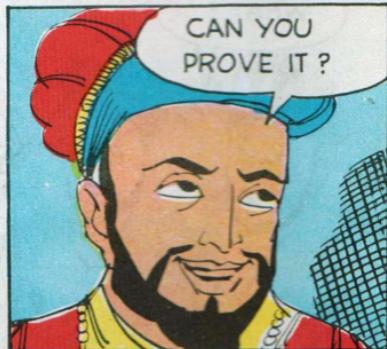
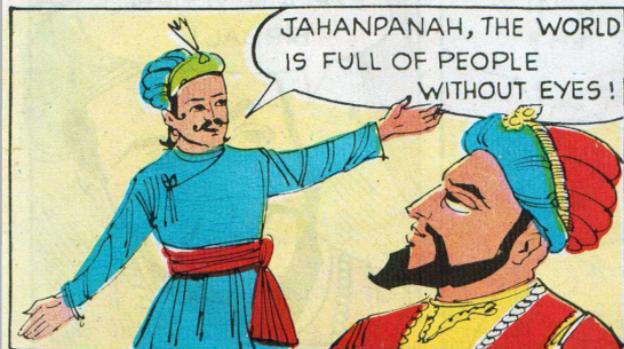
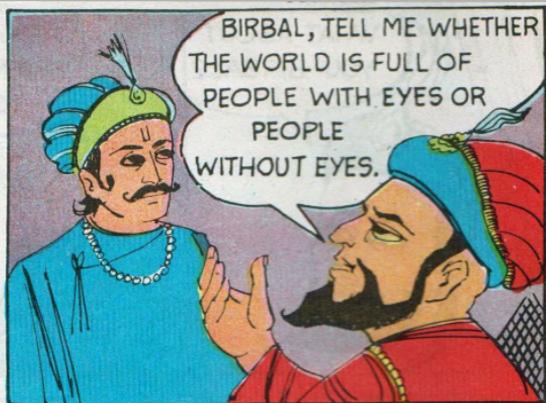
HIS HANDS SHOULD BE CUT OFF.



YES! YES! OR BETTER STILL, HE SHOULD BE HANGED.



# PEOPLE ARE BLIND



HE WOUND IT AROUND HIS HEAD—

WHAT IS IT ?

THAT IS A TURBAN !

THEN HE PUT IT AROUND HIS NECK—

THAT IS A MUFFLER !

WHAT IS THIS ?

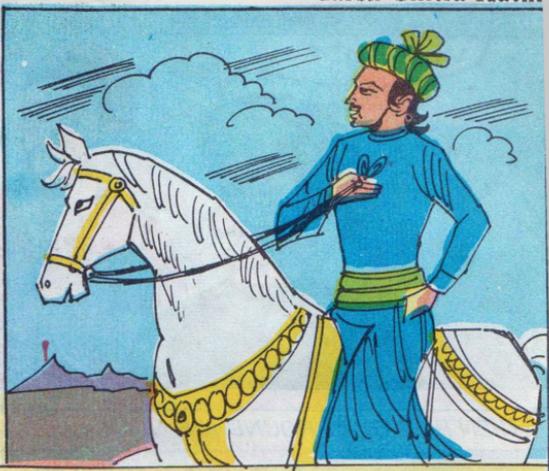
LASTLY HE PUT IT ON LIKE A DHOTI—

WHAT IS THIS ?

THAT IS  
A DHOTI !

LOOK JAHANPANAH! THOUGH THESE PEOPLE HAVE EYES THEY CANNOT SEE THE REAL THING. THIS IS ONLY A PIECE OF CLOTH. BUT BECAUSE IT IS USED IN DIFFERENT WAYS PEOPLE GIVE IT DIFFERENT NAMES AND THINK THAT THESE NAMES ARE DIFFERENT THINGS. THAT'S WHY I SAY THAT THE WORLD IS FULL OF BLIND PEOPLE.

# A KING AND HIS HORSE



A KING WHO HAD HEARD ABOUT THE WISDOM OF BIRBAL WANTED TO SEE BIRBAL AND TO TEST HIS WISDOM, IF POSSIBLE. SO HE SET OUT FOR DELHI ON HORSE-BACK. HE, HOWEVER, HAD DRESSED LIKE A COMMON MAN TO HIDE HIS IDENTITY.



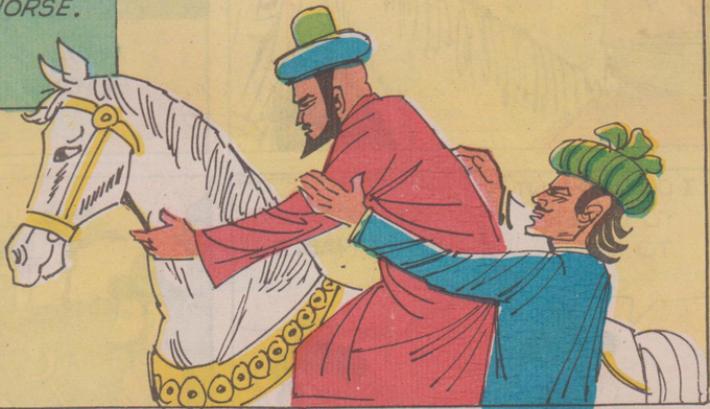
ON THE WAY HE SAW A LAME MAN STANDING ON THE ROADSIDE. HE WAS SPEAKING PITIABLY TO PASSING HORSE-MEN, REQUESTING THEM TO GIVE HIM A RIDE TO DELHI. BUT NOBODY WAS PAYING ANY ATTENTION TO HIM.



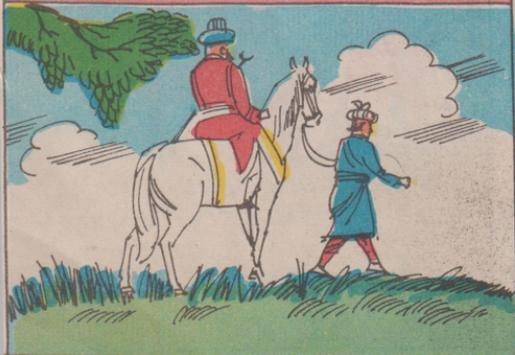
THE KING TOOK PITY ON HIM AND GOT DOWN FROM HIS HORSE.



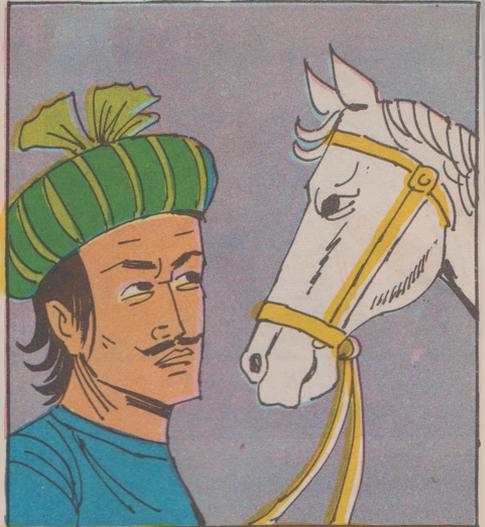
HE THEN HELPED THE LAME MAN MOUNT HIS HORSE.



HOLDING THE REINS IN HIS HANDS THE KING STARTED LEADING THE HORSE.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT ? I HIRED YOU TO LEAD MY HORSE AND YOU WANT TO TAKE IT AWAY BECAUSE I AM A LAME MAN. BUT YOU CANNOT DO SO!



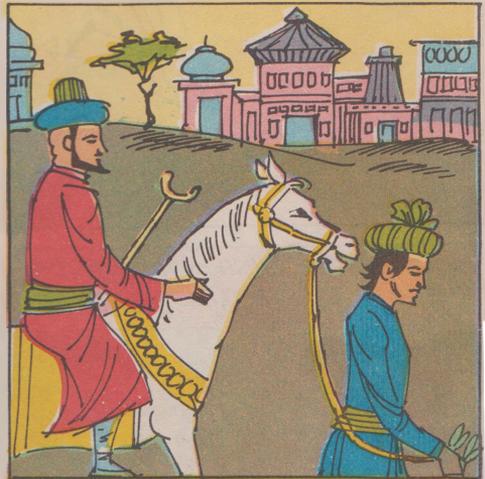
THE KING WAS SHOCKED BEYOND WORDS.

I DON'T WANT TO LISTEN TO YOU.

PLEASE BE REASONABLE...

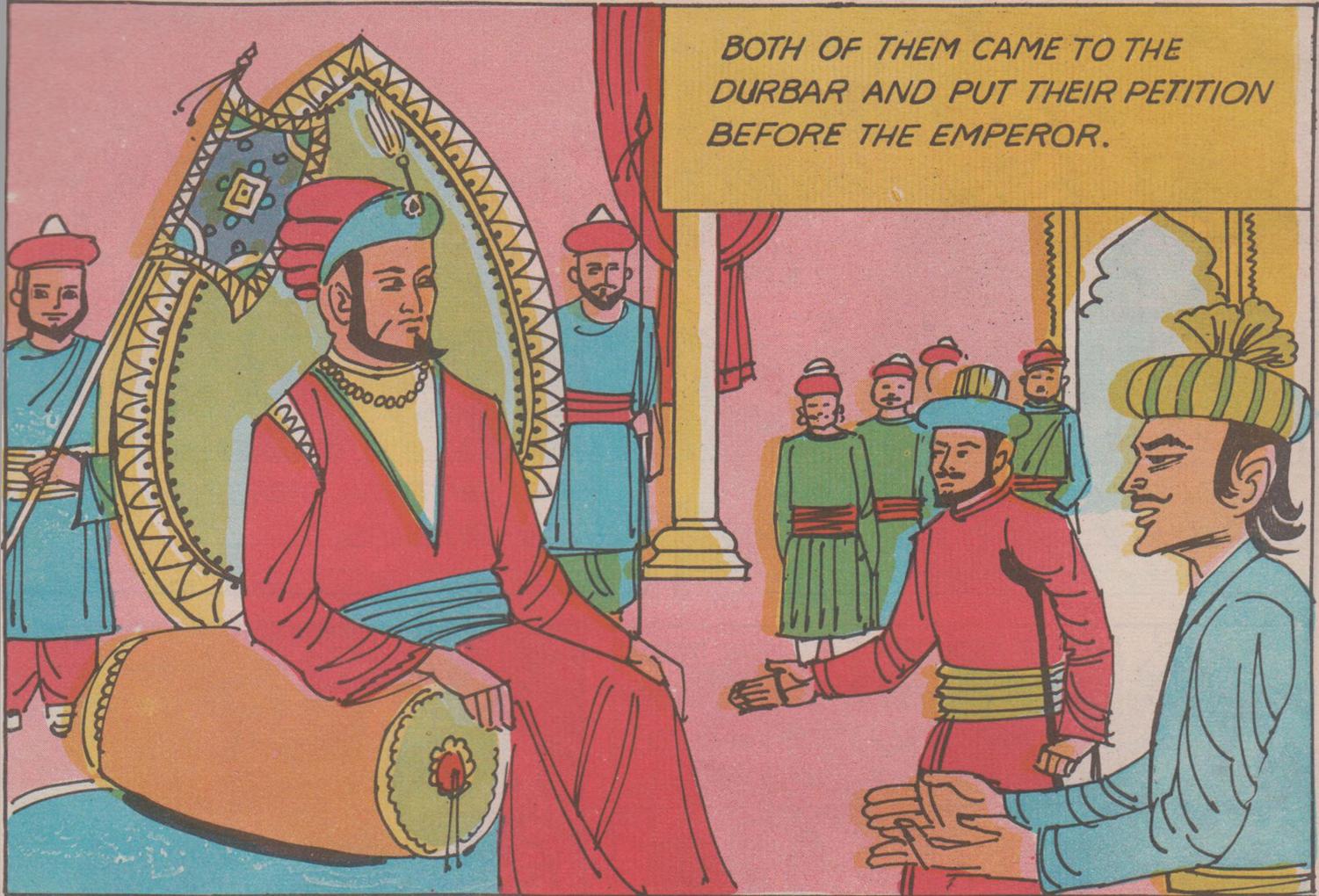


THE KING TRIED TO REASON WITH HIM BUT THE FELLOW WOULD NOT LISTEN AND STARTED QUARRELLING.



AT LAST THEY DECIDED TO SEE THE EMPEROR AND REQUEST HIM TO DECIDE THE CASE.

BOTH OF THEM CAME TO THE DURBAR AND PUT THEIR PETITION BEFORE THE EMPEROR.



THE EMPEROR TOLD BIRBAL TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER AND SETTLE THEIR QUARREL.





BIRBAL HEARD BOTH THE SIDES CAREFULLY...



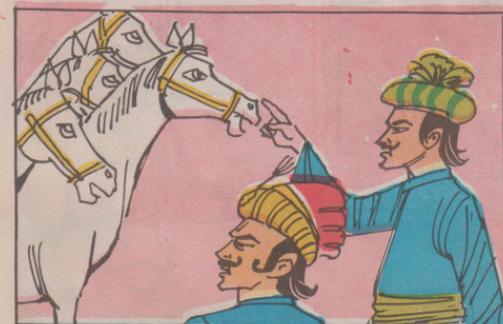
... AND SENT THE HORSE TO THE ROYAL STABLES.



NEXT MORNING BIRBAL TOOK BOTH OF THEM TO THE STABLES AND ASKED THE LAME MAN TO POINT OUT HIS HORSE.



BUT INSTEAD OF LOOKING AT THE HORSE THE LAME MAN STARTED GOING BACK BECAUSE HE COULD NOT DIFFERENTIATE ONE HORSE FROM ANOTHER.



WHEN ASKED TO DO THE SAME THING THE KING IMMEDIATELY POINTED OUT HIS HORSE. ON SEEING HIS MASTER THE HORSE NEIGHED.



THAT'S YOUR HORSE ALL RIGHT! TAKE IT AWAY!

BIRBAL GAVE THE KING HIS HORSE AND BID HIM GOOD BYE. IN THIS WAY THE KING HAD HIS WISH FULFILLED. HE DID NOT ONLY SEE BIRBAL BUT SAW HIS WISDOM TOO.

# SILENT WITNESS

AN OLD MAN WANTED TO GO ON A PILGRIMAGE. HE MADE ALL THE PREPARATIONS.



BEFORE STARTING THE JOURNEY HE WENT TO ONE OF HIS FRIENDS WITH A BAG CONTAINING ALL HIS LIFE'S SAVINGS.

WHY, CERTAINLY!  
WOULD YOU PLEASE KEEP THIS BAG CONTAINING ONE THOUSAND MOHURS TILL I RETURN FROM MY PILGRIMAGE?

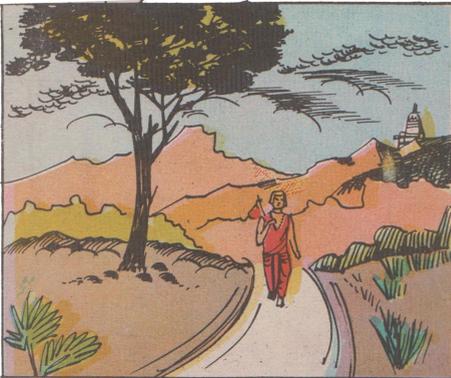
WHY, CERTAINLY!



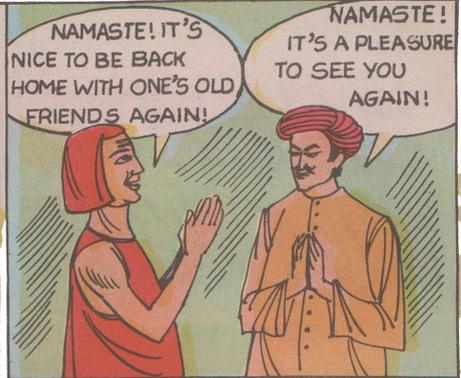
RELIEVED BY HIS FRIEND'S ASSURANCE HE WENT HIS WAY.



NEXT DAY HE STARTED ON HIS PILGRIMAGE.



IT TOOK HIM A NUMBER OF YEARS TO COMPLETE THE PILGRIMAGE. THEN HE RETURNED TO HIS HOME TOWN.

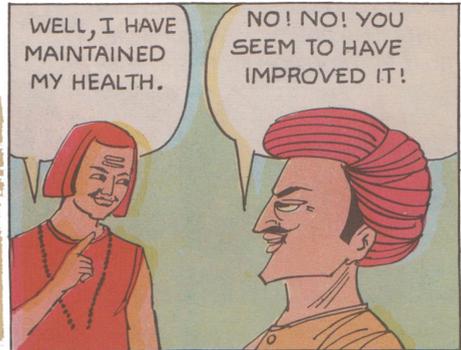


ON RETURNING HE WENT TO HIS FRIEND TO GET HIS MONEY BACK.



I WAS ALMOST HOME-SICK...

YOU SEEM TO BE IN THE PINK OF HEALTH!



WELL, I HAVE MAINTAINED MY HEALTH.

NO! NO! YOU SEEM TO HAVE IMPROVED IT!



DID YOU VISIT ALL THE FIVE HOLY PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE?

YES, ALL THE FIVE OF THEM.



AND THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR KEEPING MY BAG OF MONEY!

WHAT? WHICH BAG OF MONEY?

THE FRIEND TALKED ON MANY SUBJECTS BUT AVOIDED SAYING ANYTHING ABOUT THE MONEY. THIS PUZZLED THE OLD MAN A LOT. AT LAST HE HAD TO REMIND HIS FRIEND.

THE FRIEND FEIGNED SURPRISE AT BEING ASKED ABOUT THE MONEY.

DON'T YOU REMEMBER THE BAG CONTAINING ONE THOUSAND MOHURS WHICH I GAVE YOU BEFORE I WENT ON MY PILGRIMAGE?

NO!



BUT I DID GIVE YOU THE BAG BEFORE I WENT!

NO, YOU DIDN'T.



THE FRIEND BLUNTLY DISCLAIMED ANY KNOWLEDGE OF THE BAG OF MOHURS.

HAVE YOU GONE MAD OR SOMETHING?



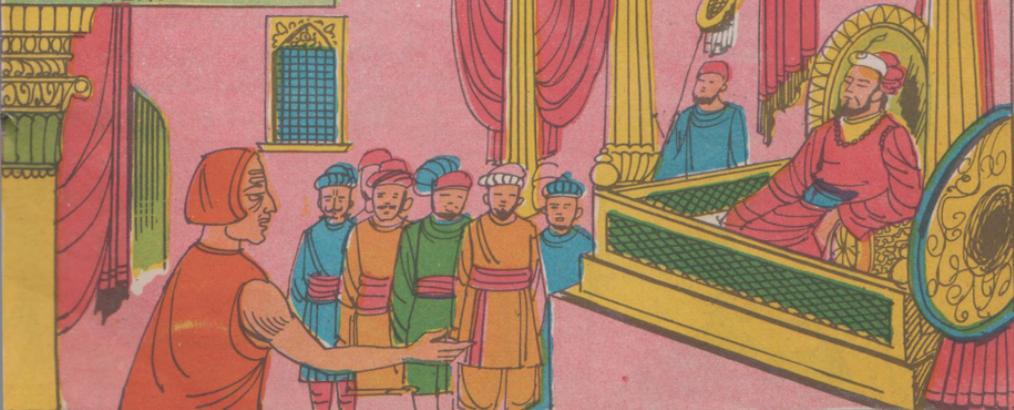
THEN HE TURNED THE OLD MAN OUT OF HIS HOUSE.

I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ONE MORE WORD. GET OUT!

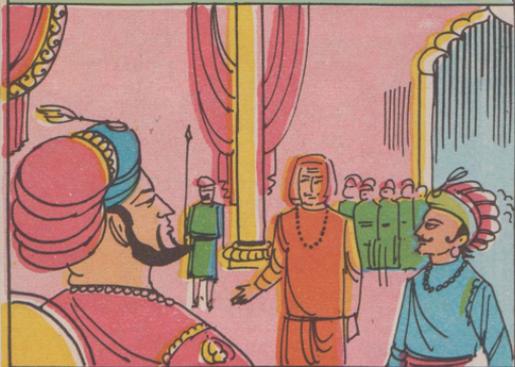
BUT...



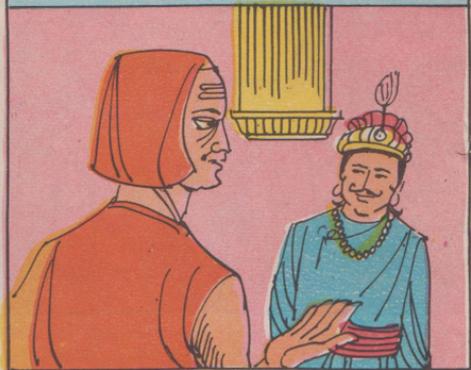
THE POOR OLD MAN WENT TO THE EMPEROR TO LODGE A COMPLAINT AND TO SEEK HIS HELP IN THE MATTER.



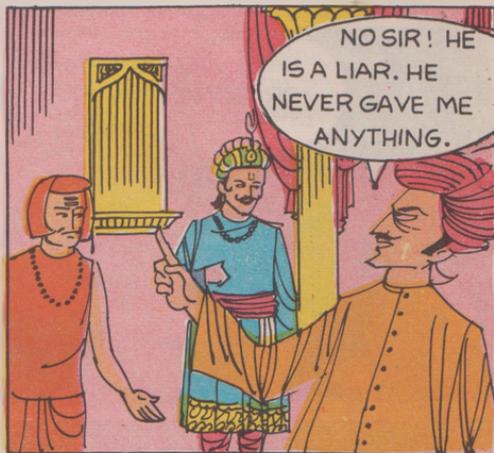
THE EMPEROR LISTENED TO HIS TALE AND ASKED BIRBAL TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER.



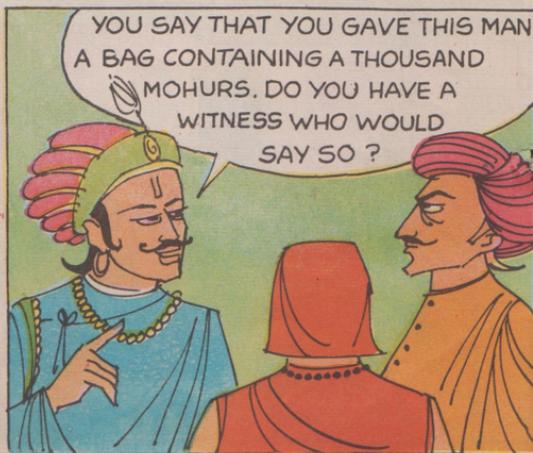
BIRBAL LENT A VERY SYMPATHETIC EAR TO THE OLD MAN'S TALE. THEN HE SENT FOR THE OLD MAN'S FRIEND.



WHEN THE FRIEND APPEARED IN FRONT OF BIRBAL -



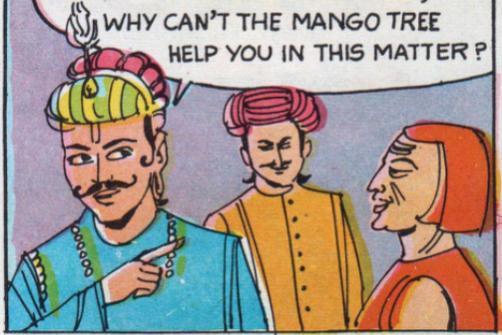
BIRBAL WAS VERY MUCH PUZZLED. HE THOUGHT FOR SOMETIME, THEN -



NO SIR! NO ONE ELSE WAS PRESENT WHEN I GAVE THE BAG OF MOHURS TO HIM UNDER A MANGO TREE...



WHAT A FOOL YOU ARE! IF YOU GAVE HIM THE BAG UNDER A MANGO TREE, WHY CAN'T THE MANGO TREE HELP YOU IN THIS MATTER?



WHAT?



GO RIGHT AWAY AND TELL THE MANGO TREE THAT I WANT IT TO APPEAR BEFORE ME AS A WITNESS. GO QUICKLY!



BIRBAL MEANWHILE ASKED THE FRIEND TO SIT BY HIS SIDE.

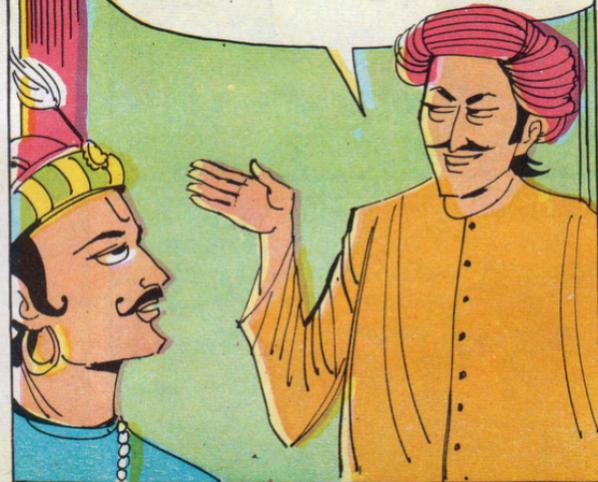


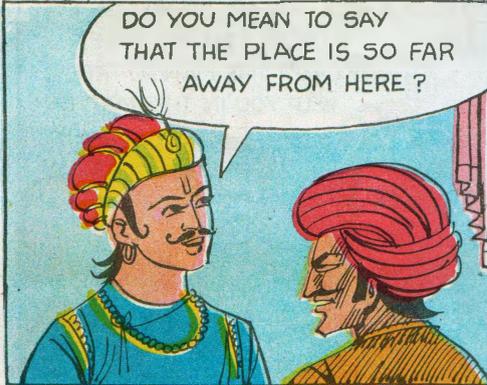
AFTER WAITING FOR AN HOUR BIRBAL PRETENDED IMPATIENCE.

DAMN THAT OLD MAN! HOW MUCH TIME DOES HE REQUIRE FOR A SMALL JOB?



SIR! HE WON'T RETURN SO SOON. HE COULD NOT HAVE REACHED THE PLACE YET!





DO YOU MEAN TO SAY THAT THE PLACE IS SO FAR AWAY FROM HERE ?



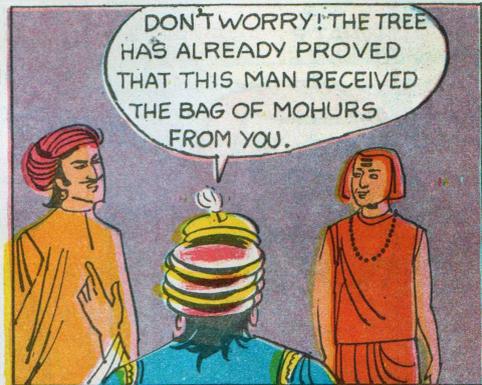
YES SIR, THE PLACE WHERE THE OLD MAN SAYS HE GAVE THE MONEY IS VERY FAR FROM HERE.

I SEE!

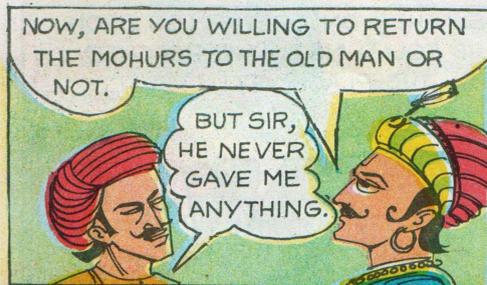
THE OLD MAN RETURNED AFTER SOME TIME.



SIR! I GAVE YOUR MESSAGE TO THE TREE, BUT IT DID NOT SAY ANYTHING.

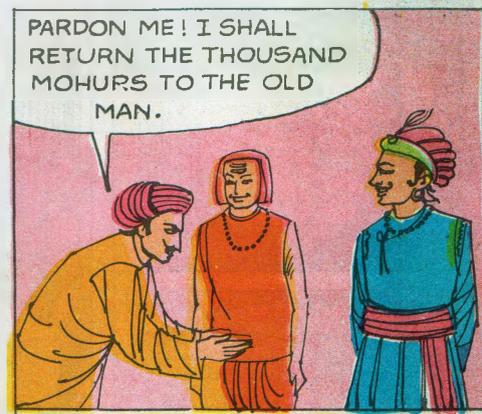


DON'T WORRY! THE TREE HAS ALREADY PROVED THAT THIS MAN RECEIVED THE BAG OF MOHURS FROM YOU.

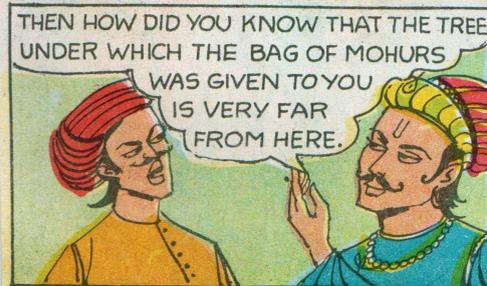


NOW, ARE YOU WILLING TO RETURN THE MOHURS TO THE OLD MAN OR NOT.

BUT SIR, HE NEVER GAVE ME ANYTHING.



PARDON ME! I SHALL RETURN THE THOUSAND MOHURS TO THE OLD MAN.



THEN HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT THE TREE UNDER WHICH THE BAG OF MOHURS

WAS GIVEN TO YOU IS VERY FAR FROM HERE.

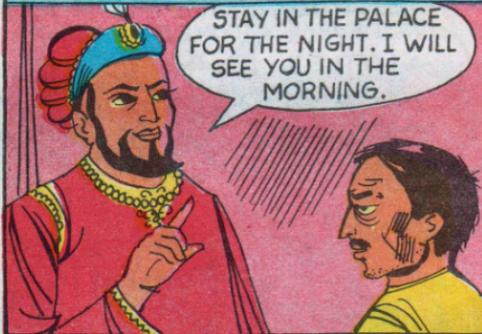
SO, WITH THE HELP OF THE DUMB WITNESS, BIRBAL GOT THE OLD MAN'S MONEY BACK.

# AN UNLUCKY MAN



THERE WAS A POOR MAN IN DELHI. IT WAS SAID ABOUT HIM THAT IF ANYONE SAW HIS FACE IN THE MORNING HE HAD TO GO HUNGRY THE WHOLE DAY.

THE EMPEROR WANTED TO FIND THE TRUTH ABOUT THE MAN. SO HE CALLED HIM ONE DAY AND SAID -



NEXT MORNING WHEN THE EMPEROR SAW THE MAN'S FACE -



AFTER FINISHING HIS BATH THE EMPEROR WAS ABOUT TO SIT FOR HIS BREAKFAST WHEN A SERVANT CAME RUNNING AND INFORMED HIM THAT THE EMPRESS WAS SUDDENLY TAKEN ILL.



THE EMPEROR WENT IMMEDIATELY TO THE EMPRESS' CHAMBER. HE CALLED A DOCTOR AND SAT BESIDE THE EMPRESS TILL SHE WAS GIVEN SOME MEDICINE FOR HER CURE.



AFTER THE EMPRESS WAS BETTER THE EMPEROR CAME BACK TO HAVE HIS BREAKFAST. BUT AS SOON AS HE SAT DOWN TO EAT—

HE WAS CARRIED TO HIS ROOM AND PUT TO BED.



OH-GOD!

The emperor is seated at a breakfast table. On the table is a plate with a white egg and a glass of orange juice on a silver stand. He has a shocked expression on his face.

SUDDENLY HE HAD EXCRUCIATING PAIN IN THE STOMACH AND BECAME VERY SICK.



THE DOCTOR WAS CALLED TO EXAMINE THE EMPEROR—



DON'T EAT ANYTHING TODAY!

The emperor is lying in bed, looking unwell. A doctor in an orange robe is sitting on the edge of the bed, pointing his finger as he gives instructions.

NOT EVEN A LITTLE?

NO! OTHERWISE THE PAIN WILL COME BACK. BESIDES YOU HAVE HAD YOUR BREAKFAST!

NO! I COULD NOT EAT IT!

SO MUCH THE BETTER! IT WOULD DO YOU A LOT OF GOOD IF YOU FAST TODAY.

SARKAR! COULD YOU POSSIBLY HAVE SEEN THE UNLUCKY MAN'S FACE THIS MORNING?



A close-up of the doctor's face. He has a wide, somewhat mischievous smile and is looking upwards. He is wearing a colorful turban and an orange robe.

YES, I DID! NOW I KNOW WHY PEOPLE SAY THAT SEEING HIS FACE IN THE MORNING MAKES A PERSON GO WITHOUT FOOD THE WHOLE DAY.



THE EMPEROR ISSUED AN ORDER—

HANG THE UNLUCKY MAN TOMORROW!



THE UNLUCKY MAN WAS INFORMED OF HIS FATE—

YOU ARE TO BE HANGED TOMORROW. IT'S THE EMPEROR'S ORDER.



PLEASE SAVE MY LIFE. THE EMPEROR HAS ORDERED THAT I SHOULD BE HANGED.

OH I SEE!



THE POOR MAN HAD SOUGHT BIRBAL'S HELP.

DO AS I SAY AND YOUR LIFE WILL BE SPARED.

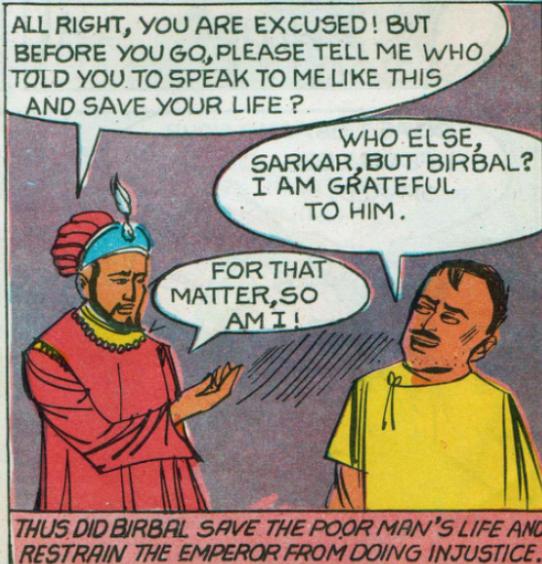
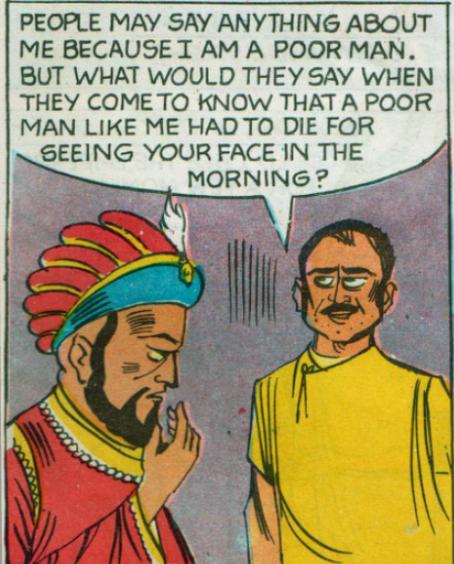
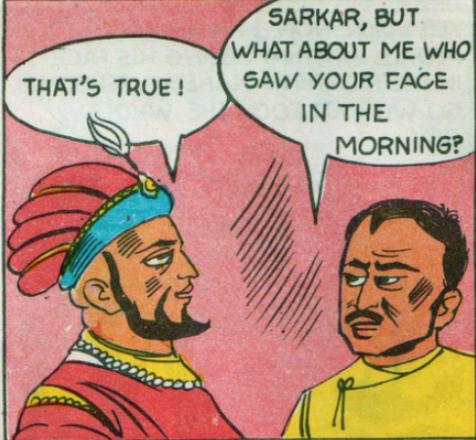


NEXT DAY, AT THE GALLOWS—

COULD I SEE THE EMPEROR FOR A FEW MOMENTS?



HIS WISH WAS GRANTED. WHEN HE WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE EMPEROR —



THUS DID BIRBAL SAVE THE POOR MAN'S LIFE AND RESTRAIN THE EMPEROR FROM DOING INJUSTICE.

# VISIT TO HEAVEN

CERTAIN MINISTERS IN THE DURBAR WERE ENVOIOUS OF BIRBAL'S POPULARITY. THEY SECRETLY HATED HIM. ONCE THEY PLOTTED TO ELIMINATE HIM FOREVER WITH THE HELP OF THE ROYAL BARBER.

ONE DAY THE ROYAL BARBER, WHILE SHAVING THE EMPEROR, SEEING THAT THE LATTER WAS IN A GOOD MOOD HAD AN OPPORTUNITY.

HUZOOR, DO YOU KNOW THAT I USED TO SHAVE YOUR FATHER ALSO? AND A FINE CROP OF HAIR HE HAD!

MAY BE ?



HUZOOR, MAY I ASK YOU SOMETHING ?

YES, WHAT IS IT ?



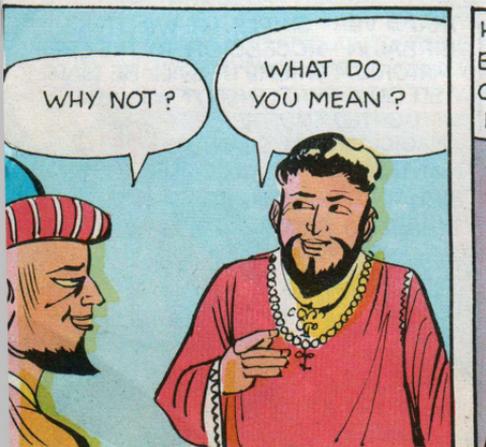
HUZOOR, YOU STAY HERE IN SUCH LUXURY, BUT HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED HOW YOUR FATHER MUST BE PASSING HIS DAYS IN HEAVEN ?

OH, WHAT A FOOL YOU ARE ! HOW COULD WE MAKE SUCH ENQUIRIES ?



WHY NOT ?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN ?



HUZOOR, PERHAPS YOU DON'T KNOW, BUT I KNOW A MAGICIAN WHO IS CAPABLE OF GETTING YOU THIS INFORMATION.

IS THAT SO ?



IT'S VERY EASY, HUZOOR. HE CAN SEND ANYBODY TO HEAVEN ALIVE TO SEE HOW OUR ANCESTORS ARE FARING.

WELL, IF THAT IS SO, THEN MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS AND GET ME THE NEWS OF MY FATHER.

YES SIR! I'LL DO THAT, BUT FOR GETTING SUCH AN IMPORTANT NEWS FROM THE HEAVEN WE MUST SEND SOME VERY IMPORTANT AND EXPERIENCED PERSON FOR THIS JOB.

YOU ARE RIGHT! BUT WHOM SHALL WE SEND?

THERE IS ONLY ONE PERSON IN YOUR KINGDOM WHO IS FIT FOR IT.

AND WHO IS THAT?

BIRBAL, HUZOOR! WHY BIRBAL?

BECAUSE, HUZOOR, NO MAN IN THE WHOLE WORLD IS AS INTELLIGENT AS BIRBAL. THEREFORE ONLY BIRBAL WILL BE ABLE TO DO THE JOB PROPERLY.

YES, THAT'S TRUE!

THAT'S VERY SIMPLE. WE WILL TAKE BIRBAL IN PROCESSION TO THE CREMATORIUM WHERE HE WILL BE MADE TO SIT ON A PYRE, THEN IT WILL BE LIGHTED AND THE MAGICIAN WILL CHANT MANTRAS WHICH WILL TAKE BIRBAL TO HEAVEN, UNHARMED.

BUT HOW DO WE SEND HIM TO HEAVEN?

THE EMPEROR APPROVED THE BARBER'S PLAN. NEXT DAY—

BIRBAL, PREPARE YOURSELF TO GO TO HEAVEN!

DID YOU SAY, TO HEAVEN, JAHANPANAH?

THEN THE EMPEROR EXPLAINED TO HIM THE DETAILS OF THE PLAN. BIRBAL INSTANTLY REALISED THE TRAP SET BY THE BARBER TO GET RID OF HIM. HE DID SOME QUICK THINKING.

JAHANPANAH, IF I MUST GO ON SUCH A LONG JOURNEY I'LL NEED QUITE A LOT OF MONEY.

YOU MAY HAVE AS MUCH MONEY AS YOU WANT.

BESIDES, IT WILL TAKE AT LEAST ONE MONTH TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR MY FAMILY. ONLY AFTER THAT SHALL I BE ABLE TO TAKE UP THE JOURNEY.

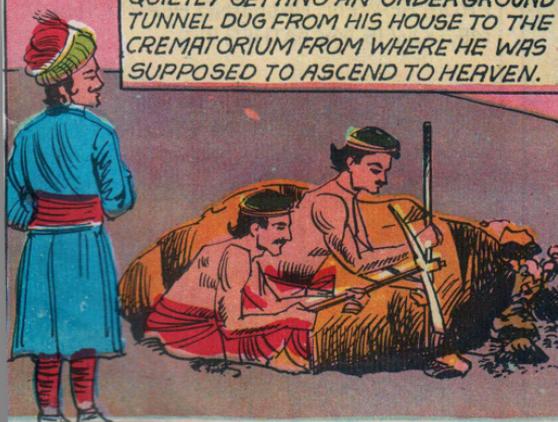
CERTAINLY! YOU MAY TAKE A MONTH'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR THAT PURPOSE.

BUT AFTER A MONTH YOU MUST VISIT HEAVEN AND BRING ME THE NEWS OF MY FATHER.

OF COURSE, JAHANPANAH, I'LL DO THAT.

BIRBAL SPENT THE NEXT FEW DAYS QUIETLY GETTING AN UNDERGROUND TUNNEL DUG FROM HIS HOUSE TO THE CREMATORIUM FROM WHERE HE WAS SUPPOSED TO ASCEND TO HEAVEN.

THERE AFTER, HE PASSED THE REMAINING PERIOD RESTING AT HOME.



ON THE APPOINTED DAY BIRBAL CALLED ON THE EMPEROR—

JAHANPANAH, NOW I AM READY TO GO TO HEAVEN AND BRING THE NEWS OF YOUR FATHER.



THERE UPON BIRBAL WAS TAKEN IN PRO-  
CESSION TO THE SITE WHICH HE HIMSELF  
HAD CHOSEN FOR THE HEAVENLY EXPEDITION.



WHEN HE WAS SEATED ON THE PYRE THE  
MAGICIAN SET FIRE TO IT WITH THE  
CHANTING OF SOME MANTRAS. THE BAR-  
BER AND HIS FELLOW CONSPIRATORS WERE  
DELIGHTED TO SEE BIRBAL GOING ON HIS  
JOURNEY OF NO RETURN.



AS SOON AS THE PYRE WAS LIT BIRBAL  
HIDDEN BY THE SMOKE QUICKLY OPENED  
THE SECRET DOOR UNDERNEATH THE  
SPOT AND PASSING THROUGH IT  
RETURNED TO HIS HOUSE.



HE SPENT THE NEXT THREE MONTHS IN  
SECLUSION AND ALLOWED HIS HAIR AND  
BEARD TO GROW. THEN ONE FINE MOR-  
NING HE VISITED THE EMPEROR WHO, ON  
SEEING HIS FAVORITE MINISTER, RUSHED  
TO WELCOME HIM.

HOW ARE  
YOU BIRBAL?

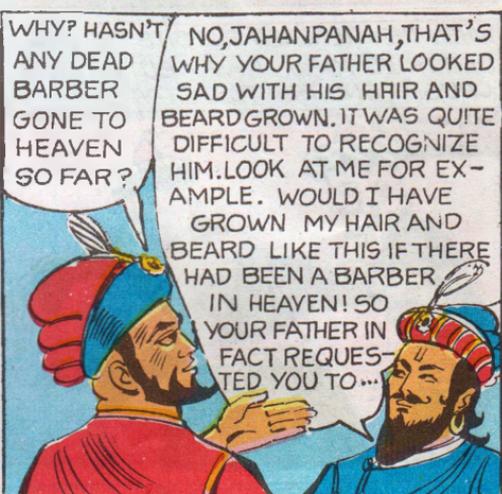
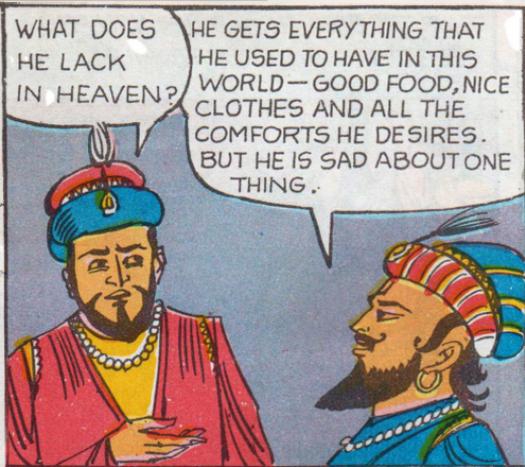
I AM FINE  
JAHANPANAH.



I AM SO HAPPY YOU HAVE COME BACK  
FROM HEAVEN, HALE AND HEARTY. TELL  
ME, HOW IS MY FATHER?

ALL IS WELL WITH  
HIM, EXCEPT FOR  
ONE THING.





THE EMPEROR CALLED THE BARBER AND THE MAGICIAN AND INFORMED THEM ABOUT THE REQUEST OF HIS FATHER IN HEAVEN.

... AND SO YOU PREPARE YOURSELF TO GO TO HEAVEN AND SERVE MY FATHER THERE.



THUS THE BARBER WAS TAKEN IN PROCESSION TO THE CREMATORIUM.



WHEN THEY REACHED THE SITE THE BARBER TRIED TO RUN AWAY. BUT HE WAS CAUGHT AND TIED TO THE PYRE.



AND THE RITUAL WAS STARTED.



NEXT MOMENT THE WILD FLAMES OF THE PYRE CONSUMED THE BARBER. THE EMPEROR HAD THE SATISFACTION THAT HE HAD FULFILLED THE DESIRE OF HIS FATHER WHO WAS IN HEAVEN. THE INCIDENT HAD SUCH A GREAT EFFECT ON BIRBAL'S ENEMIES THAT THEY GAVE UP ALL IDEAS OF DISPLACING HIM.

# BAKSHESH BY HALF

BIRBAL, ON HEARING THAT THE PALACE CHOWKIDARS WERE DEMANDING BAKSHEESH FROM POOR ARTISTS, WRITERS POETS OR MAGICIAN WHO CAME TO SEE THE EMPEROR, WANTED TO FIND OUT THE TRUTH. SO, DISGUIISING HIMSELF AS A BEARDED POET, HE DECIDED TO VISIT THE EMPEROR.

AS SOON AS HE ARRIVED AT THE PALACE GATE THE CHOWKIDAR ON DUTY HALTED HIM AND INSISTED TO BE TOLD THE PURPOSE OF HIS VISIT.



I WANT TO SEE THE EMPEROR.

HUZOOR IS VERY BUSY. BESIDES I HAVE INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO ALLOW ANYBODY IN.



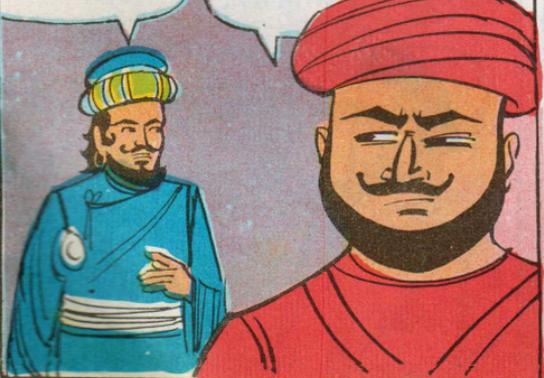
OH! PLEASE LET ME GO IN AND SEE HIM.

YOU SIMPLY CAN'T SEE HIM BECAUSE I AM NOT GOING TO LET YOU ENTER.



BUT I MUST SEE THE EMPEROR.

SEEING THAT YOU ARE SO KEEN I SHALL LET YOU IN ON ONE CONDITION.



IF YOU PROMISE TO SHARE WITH ME EQUALLY WHATEVER BAKSHEESH THE EMPEROR GIVES YOU, ONLY THEN SHALL I LET YOU IN.

THAT'S A DEAL! HALF OF WHAT I GET SHALL GO TO YOU.



SO BIRBAL, IN THE GUISE OF A POET, WAS ALLOWED TO SEE THE EMPEROR—

HUZOOR! ON HEARING THAT YOU ARE A GREAT ADMIRER OF ART I HAVE COME HERE TO RECITE SOME POEMS.

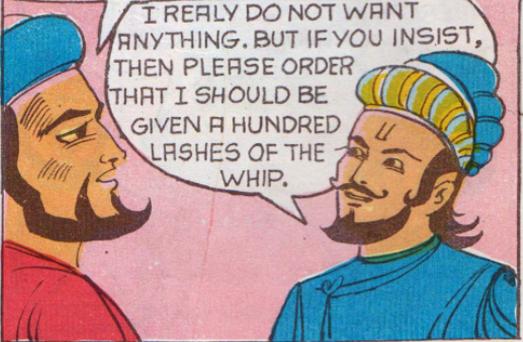


MASHA ALLAH! WHAT BEAUTIFUL POEMS YOU HAVE WRITTEN! I AM VERY PLEASUED WITH YOU. TELL ME WHAT YOU WANT AND IT WOULD BE GRANTED.



NO HUZOOR, I DON'T WANT ANYTHING. I JUST WANTED TO READ MY POEMS TO YOU.

THAT'S NOT RIGHT! YOU MUST RECEIVE SOMETHING! ASK AND IT SHALL BE YOURS! DON'T FEEL SHY! SPEAK OUT!



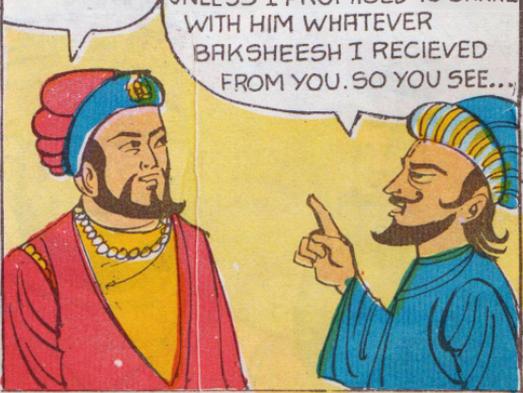
I REALY DO NOT WANT ANYTHING. BUT IF YOU INSIST, THEN PLEASE ORDER THAT I SHOULD BE GIVEN A HUNDRED LASHES OF THE WHIP.

FOR YOUR POEMS! HAVE YOU GONE MAD OR SOMETHING?



NO HUZOOR! I ASK IT FOR YOUR OWN GOOD AND I AM NOT ALONE.

HOW DO YOU MEAN?



HUZOOR, YOUR CHOWKIDAR REFUSED TO LET ME SEE YOU UNLESS I PROMISED TO SHARE WITH HIM WHATEVER BAKSHEESH I RECIEVED FROM YOU. SO YOU SEE...

THE EMPEROR GOT ENRAGED WHEN HE HEARD THAT THE CHOWKIDAR WAS CORRUPT.

CALL THE CHOWKIDAR IMMEDIATELY.

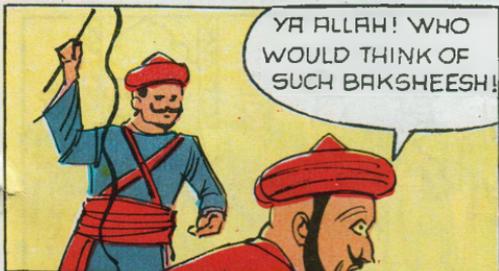


YES! I HAVE CALLED YOU TO RECEIVE YOUR SHARE OF BAKSHEESH. YOU WILL GET FIFTY LASHES OF THE WHIP.

YOU CALLED ME HUZOOR?



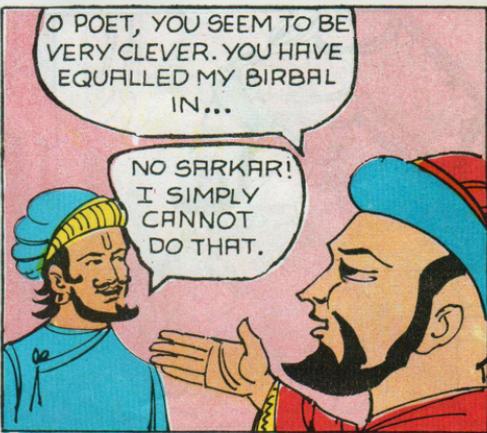
YA ALLAH! WHO WOULD THINK OF SUCH BAKSHEESH!



THE ROYAL ORDER WAS CARRIED OUT PROMPTLY. AND THE PUNISHMENT SERVED AS A WARNING NOT ONLY TO GREEDY CHOWKIDARS BUT ALL THOSE WHO WORKED IN THE PALACE.

O POET, YOU SEEM TO BE VERY CLEVER. YOU HAVE EQUALLED MY BIRBAL IN...

NO SARKAR! I SIMPLY CANNOT DO THAT.



I CANNOT POSSIBLY DO THAT ALSO.

WHY NOT? YOU HAVE YET TO SEE HIM.



BECAUSE I AM YOUR BIRBAL, JAHANPANAHI!

OH, I SEE!



# THE COCK AND THE HEN

MAKING FUN OF BIRBAL WAS NO EASY MATTER. YET THE EMPEROR WOULD TRY WAYS FOR DOING IT, TIME AND AGAIN.

ONE MORNING, THE EMPEROR WAS THINKING OF A NEW WAY TO FOOL BIRBAL.



YES, THAT'S A VERY GOOD IDEA! IT WOULD SERVE THE PURPOSE.



THAT DAY THE EMPEROR DISTRIBUTED AN EGG EACH TO ALL HIS COURTIERS AND TOLD THEM OF HIS PLAN.

WHEN BIRBAL REACHED THE COURT—



BIRBAL, YESTERDAY I SAW A HOLY MAN IN MY DREAM. HE TOLD ME THAT ONLY THOSE COURTIERS WHO JUMP INTO THE POND IN THE GARDEN AND BRING OUT AN EGG ARE LOYAL TO ME.



SO I WANT TO FIND OUT TODAY WHO ARE LOYAL TO ME.

THE EMPEROR TOOK ALL THE COURTIERS TO THE POND.

NOW I WANT EACH ONE OF YOU TO JUMP IN AND BRING OUT AN EGG.

SOON THE MINISTERS BEGAN JUMPING IN THE POND—

HERE IT IS!

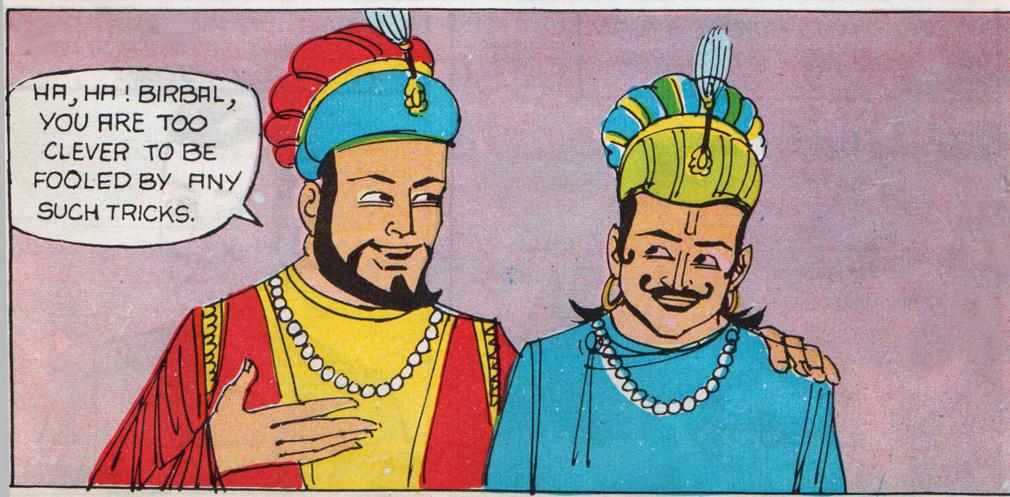
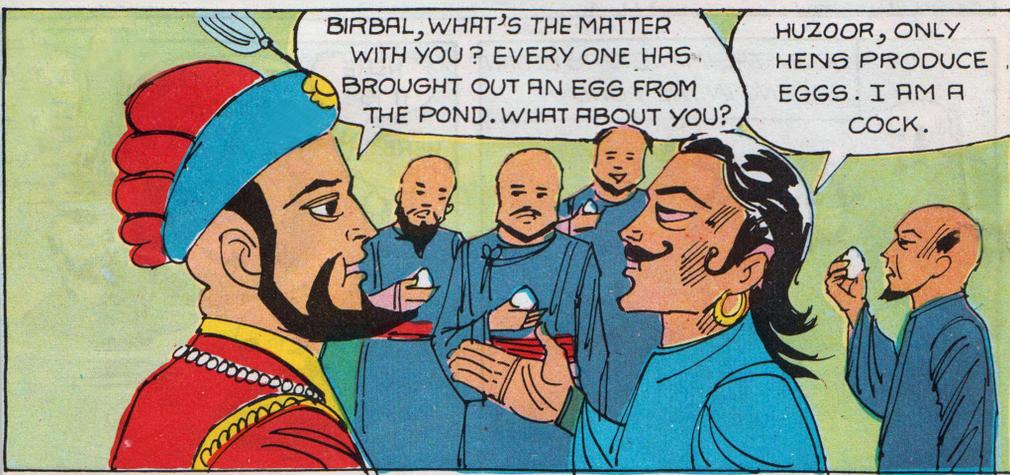
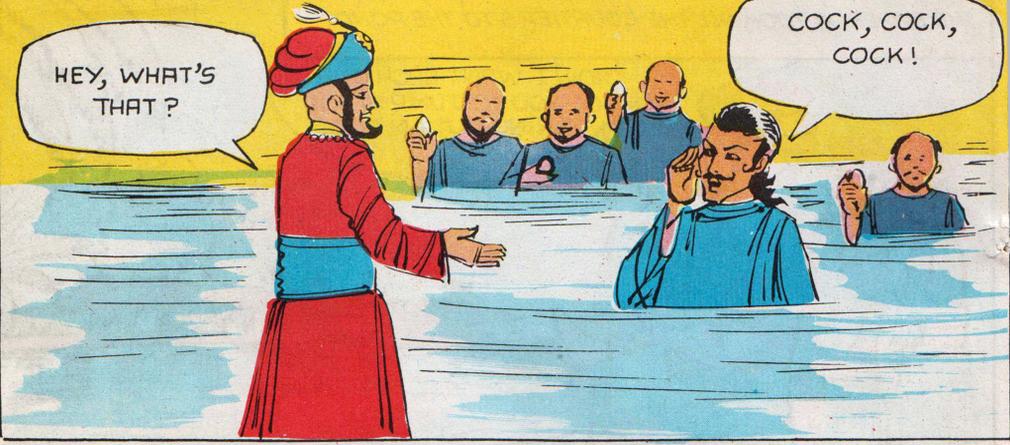
I TOO HAVE FOUND ONE!

ME, TOO!

HERE IT IS!

AT LAST IT WAS BIRBAL'S TURN. HE JUMPED INTO THE POND AND LOOKED FOR AN EGG IN IT.

BUT HE DID NOT FIND ANY. AT ONCE HE REALISED THAT THE EMPEROR WAS TRYING TO PULL HIS LEG.





Kerala's Kaikottikali is a dance performed during the festival of Onam, in which the dancers move in a circle of flowers, with rhythmic hand movements symbolising the emergence of shoots and leaves. Handclaps accompany the graceful foot movements to the beat of popular melodies.

The Koli dance of Maharashtra is the folk dance of coastal fisher-folk and tells the story of their trials and tribulations, the swaying back and forth of the waves, and the brooding wait for the catch to be brought home. In two parallel rows they dance their laborious lives in mime; the arduous rowing against the tide, the waves breaking on the shore, the culminating joyousness of a good catch, as the beat quickens and the dancers break apart to fall, exhausted but happy, to the ground.

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