

Lesson - 11

AKBAR AND BIRBAL

A. WARMER

Tenaliraman, Mulla Nasruddin, Gonu Jha and Birbal are some famous characters from the folk tales of India. Do you know any folk tale? Tell it to your class.

◆ *Here you will enjoy Birbal's wisdom.*

There was a Mughal Emperor in India named Akbar, the Great. His full name was Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar. He himself was illiterate, but he invited several learned people to his court. Among these people, nine were very famous. They were called 'Nav Ratna' or nine jewels of his court. Birbal was one of them.

Birbal is one of the most popular figures in the Indian history among children as well as adults. He was Akbar's minister and Akbar loved him for his wisdom, wit and humour. He was a poet and author, too. The stories of Akbar and Birbal have been recorded in many books. Many of these stories have become folk stories in the Indian tradition.

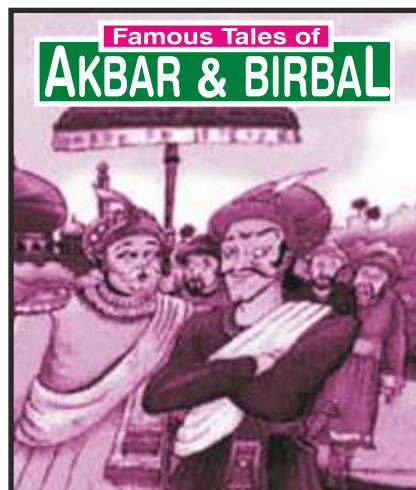
Here is an interesting story of Akbar and Birbal.

Once a Pandit visited Akbar's court. He was very learned and could speak many languages. He challenged everybody in the court saying that he could answer any question in any language. The courtiers asked him questions in different languages and he replied all of them in that very language. He

was so expert in all these languages that no one was able to guess his mother tongue.

Then he said to the king “If your courtiers find out my mother tongue by tomorrow, I will accept them wise. But if they fail to do so, you should accept me superior to all of them.”

Emperor Akbar agreed. He asked all the courtiers to judge the Pandit’s mother tongue. All of them failed. Now Akbar turned to Birbal and asked him to solve this problem. Birbal accepted the challenge.



That night Birbal went to the Pandit’s bedroom when he was fast asleep. Birbal tickled his ear with a dry grass. The Pandit’s sleep was disturbed. He turned to other side and slept. Birbal tickled his ear again. Now the Pandit’s sleep was disturbed, he woke up and said loudly, "Yevvurura adi" (Who is it?) Birbal hid himself. When the Pandit saw there was no one, he slept again. Birbal came back.

The next morning, the court assembled. The Pandit

repeated his question what his mother tongue was. Birbal finally replied "Telugu is the Pandit's mother tongue."

The Pandit was very much surprised at Birbal's correct answer and accepted his defeat.

Akbar asked Birbal how he found out the answer. Birbal said that a man in distress always talks in his mother tongue in sleep. Then he narrated the whole story of the previous night. Akbar praised him for his timely wisdom.

GLOSSARY AND NOTES

folk tales	: (फोक टेल्स), लोक गीत	local song followed by tradition
wisdom	: (विजडम), बुद्धिमान	the quality of having experience and knowledge
emperor	: (एम्पर(र)), सम्राट	a great king
illiterate	: (इलिटरेट), अनपढ़	not educated
court	: (कोर्ट), न्यायालय	a place for legal trials
jewel	: (जेवेल), रत्न	gems, precious stone
tradition	: (ट्रेडिशन), परम्परा	convention
adult	: (एडल्ट), बालिग	fully grown person
poet	: (पोएट), कवि	one who composes a poem
humour	: (हयूम(र)), विनोद	fun
accept	: (एक्सेप्ट), स्वीकार करना	acknowledge
courtier	: (कोर्टिय(र)), दरबारी	a person related to the court
judge	: (जज), न्यायाधीश	a person who conducts the legal trials
tickle	: (टिक्ल), गुदगुदाना	to touch lightly

B. COMPREHENSION

B.1 Think and Tell

B.1.1 Answer the following:

1. Who was Akbar?

2. Who were 'Nav Ratnas'?
3. Why did Akbar love Birbal?
4. What was the Pandit's challenge?
5. Why was the Pandit surprised at Birbal's answers?

B.2 Think and Write

B.2.1 Answer each of the following in word or sentence :

1. What was Akbar's full name?
2. Who was Birbal?
3. Where did Birbal go at night?
4. Who answered the Pandit's question?
5. Why did Akbar praise Birbal?

B.2.2 Answer each of the following in not more than 50 words :

1. How can you say that Akbar was a patron of learned people?
2. How did Birbal find out the Pandit's mother tongue?
3. Wisdom is applying one's mind to the problem and finding out solution. How does it apply to Birbal?

C. WORD POWER

C.1 Go through the text again and again guess the meaning of the following words :

pale, still, burry, faintly, wrapped, sneezed

C.2 Find out the words that are opposite in meaning :

Friend, death, wet, awake, unhappy

D. WORD STRESS

In English if a word has more than one syllable, one of the

syllables is pronounced more strongly than others. In the following words, the stress is shown by a vertical stroke (‘) before the stressed syllable.

Stress on the first syllable	Stress on the second syllable
‘army ‘baby ‘teacher ‘paper ‘nation	a‘bout be‘cause to‘day en‘joy num‘ber

E. LET'S TALK AND WRITE

(A) Discuss in your group what you will do if you were a king.

(B) Write a short essay on ‘If I were a King’.

F. TRANSLATION

F.1 Translate the following into English :

एक गाँव था ।
गाँव के पास एक नदी थी ।
नदी में पानी था ।
नदी में एक नाव भी था ।
नाव में कोई नहीं था ।

F.2 Translate the following into your mother tongue :

There was a town.
There were many muhallas at the town .
There were many houses in the muhallas.
There were many rooms in the houses.
There were many doors and windows in the rooms.

