Akbar’s stolen ring

Akbar once lost a ring his father had gifted to him. He immediately reached out to Birbal and asked for his help. Birbal said that he will help him find his ring. He then told the courtiers present that he is aware that one of them stole the ring. Akbar angrily asked which one of them stole his ring. Birbal replied that the courtier with the straw in his beard is the one who has the king’s ring.

Akbar seeks help from Birbal to find his stolen ring.

Immediately, the guilty courtier stroked his beard to check for the straw. Birbal pointed at him and told Akbar that he is the culprit.

Moral: A guilty conscience will always give it away.

The pot full of wit

Akbar was once infuriated with Birbal and banished him from his kingdom. Birbal travelled to a faraway village and assumed a new identity and started working as a farmer. After a couple of weeks, Akbar started to miss Birbal and hence asked his soldiers to find where he is and bring him back to the kingdom. The soldiers searched from one end of the kingdom to another but could not find Birbal.

Akbar then came up with an idea to find Birbal. He sent word across the kingdom that the head of each village has to send him a pot full of wit. Anyone who cannot send the pot full of wit can instead fill up the pot with gold and diamonds and send it to him.

Akbar felt the only way to lure Birbal back to the city is to send a challenge his way.

The people in Birbal’s village found the announcement absurd and were wondering how to fill the pot with wit. Birbal stepped in to help and came up with a way to give the king what he wanted. He put a small watermelon into the pot without separating it from its vine. He watered it every day and grew it big enough so that all the space in the pot was taken up.

Birbal then separated the watermelon from the vine and sent the pot to the king. The instruction that was sent with the pot read, “You can find the wit in the pot if you carefully remove the watermelon without cutting it.” Akbar realised that only Birbal could have sent the pot. He travelled to the village himself and brought Birbal back to the capital.

Moral: Even the toughest questions can be answered cleverly if you think hard.