



AKBAR: Then I would like you to go to heaven and keep my dear father company.

BARBER: [Aside] Yes! Company! That's it.

BIRBAL: Majesty, it would be an honour. But may I take a few days to prepare?

BARBER: But your father sir, so sad, so very very bored and sad and ...

AKBAR: Silence! Birbal, you are doing me a great favour. Of course you should prepare. I will give you a week.

BARBER: [Rolls his eyes and speaks quietly] A week!

NARRATOR 1: Birbal returned home and

BIRBAL: Dug a deep pit

NARRATOR 2: In the grounds of his house. This would be his grave. But he also dug

BIRBAL: A secret tunnel

NARRATOR 3: That opened under the floor of his private room. Then he returned to meet the Emperor.

BIRBAL: Highness

NARRATOR 1: He said

BIRBAL: In accordance with an old family tradition, I would like to be buried alive. My family has always believed that this is the easiest and quickest way to get to heaven.

NARRATOR 2: And so to the delight of the barber [Barber mimes happiness] Birbal was buried alive. With six feet of earth weighing down on him, he scratched and scraped his way to into the tunnel that took him to the safety of his own house. Birbal hid in his room for over six months. At the end of that time, with long hair and a shaggy beard, he came out of hiding set off for the Emperor's court.

NARRATOR 3: Akbar was having his hair cut

NARRATOR 1: When Birbal arrived at court

BIRBAL: Majesty!

AKBAR: Birbal! Can it be you? How did you get here?

NARRATOR 2: Birbal took a deep breath and replied:

BIRBAL: From Paradise, Oh Great One. Your father enjoyed our talks so much that he gave me special permission to return to earth and tell you all about them.

AKBAR: Did he give you any special message for his devoted son?

BIRBAL: Just one Majesty. Do you see my whiskers and long hair? (Akbar nods) Well, it seems very few barbers make it to heaven. Your father asks you to send him yours at once for he is badly in need of a haircut.