

❖ The best of ❖

Akber & Birbal



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EMESCO

Changing Fortunes

The great Emperor Akbar was very fond of having palmists and astrologers at his court. All of them would tell him exactly what he wanted to hear and leave richly rewarded.

One day, a palmist from a distant land visited Akbar. He was a truthful fellow, and took his profession seriously. Reading the emperor's hand, he said, "Alampanah, someone very dear to you will die before you!"

Akbar flew into a rage.

"You have the gall to predict that my son or one of my queens is going to die soon!" he roared. "Throw this traitor into the dungeon!"

Before the helpless palmist could say a word, he was led away by the king's men. Birbal, Akbar's matchless adviser, had been quietly watching the entire exchange.

"Poor fellow," he thought. "He shouldn't be punished for speaking the truth!"

Birbal requested the emperor to give the palmist another chance. Akbar agreed.

The next day, the palmist made a great show of examining the emperor's palm. Then, as Birbal had instructed him, he said, "Alampanah, I see a long and happy life for you. I also see a long and happy life for your near and dear ones. But you, Sire, will live the longest and be the happiest."

Akbar was happy and rewarded the palmist handsomely. The grateful palmist thanked Birbal for saving his life.

"Sir, you are a great man," he said.

Said the clever Birbal, "My friend, what you say is very important. But how you say it is even more important!"

