

..... 26. Water in the Well



What a farmer needs most for his fields is a good source of water. Kasim had his eye on a well that was just outside the boundary of his field. But Ahmad, the man who owned the well, was a crafty old man. He wouldn't allow anyone to draw water from his well. He told Kasim, "Why do you come to me again and again to beg for access to my well? I feel sorry to turn down your request every time. I have a suggestion for you. Collect some money and buy the whole well from me."



Kasim thought over the suggestion and liked it. He knew Ahmad would ask for a lot of money but he saw in his mind's eye, channels of water running from the well through his field and made a decision. He took all his savings to Ahmad and bought the well.

The next day, he went to the well happily and dug out a channel. But when he began to draw water, there was

a surprise in store for him. Suddenly Ahmad came forward and announced, "What are you doing, Kasim? How dare you touch the water in my presence?"

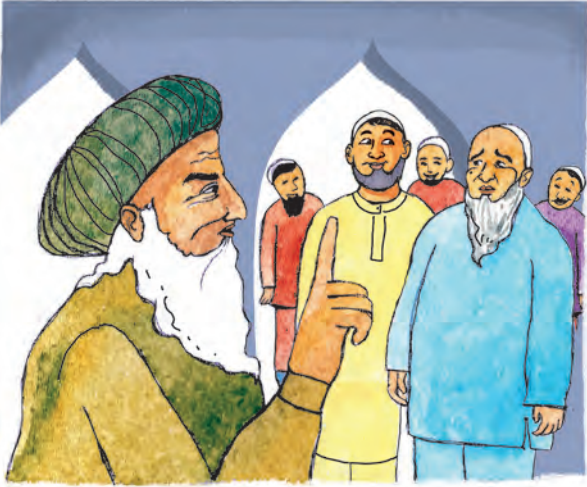
"What do you mean - haven't you sold this well to me?"



"Ah, I sold the well all right, but not the water in the well. The water still belongs to me. You can't use it. If you needed the water along with the well, you should have said so. I have a suggestion for you. Pay for the water separately and use it. You can buy fresh water every day. I don't mind!"

Kasim was shocked to hear Ahmad's argument. It was so unfair, so unjust! He rushed to the Qazi and told him the whole story. The Qazi was a wise man. He told Kasim to bring Ahmad to his court so that he could hear both sides of the case.

Ahmad was summoned to the court. The Qazi heard his argument patiently.



“Hmm, I see that you are right. What you have sold is the well, the water is all yours. Isn’t that so?”

Kasim’s heart sank, when he heard the Qazi’s words. Ahmad in his heart of hearts was overjoyed. He had never thought the Qazi would side with him.

“My Lord, I am so grateful you understand the fine points of this case. The water does indeed belong to me.”

“In that case, Ahmad, why are you keeping it in Kasim’s well? You have no right to keep your belongings in his property. You must remove them immediately. Or else, you can pay a daily rent to Kasim. Then he will allow you to use his well.”

Ahmad was so confused that he did not know what to say. All the people present in the court began to laugh.

But Kasim was a generous man. He never troubled Ahmad for the ‘rent’ that was due from him.

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Things to do :

1. Find a word that has a similar meaning.

* sorry * whole * happily * unfair * remove

2. Answer the following questions.

- (1) What does a farmer need most for his fields?
- (2) Where was the well situated?
- (3) What did Ahmad tell Kasim when he dug a channel and began to draw water?
- (4) What did the Judge tell Ahmad?
- (5) How do we come to know that Kasim was a generous man?

3. Find the meaning of the following phrases and use them in your own sentences.

* again and again * thought over * in his mind’s eye * in store for
 * (his/her) heart sank * heart of hearts

4. Group Work

Form groups of 5-8. In each group, rewrite the story in the form of a play. Present scenes from your play in the classroom.