

Inner Call Podcast #110 Pulling a Hair from the Emperor's Moustache April 6 2021

In the east there is an ancient tradition that a king may wear a magnificent ornament with nine different gems, which is called a navaratna. This piece of jewellery is not merely decorative, but is supposed to aid and protect the wearer in various occult ways. Perhaps that is why the Emperor Akbar called his council of nine wise ministers his 'navaratna'. Like the planets in the heavens, each one furnished the emperor with the light of a particular skill – but of them all, there was one who stood apart for his insight and understanding : Birbal.

On one particular morning the Emperor came to his assembled council and said, "Now, you ministers, give me your advice. Last night someone dared to pull a hair from my moustache. How should this person be treated?"

The ministers were astonished that someone would do such a thing, and one after another they indignantly proposed various punishments – the person should be thrown in prison! No, banished from the kingdom in disgrace! No, flogged! No, executed! Each punishment was harsher than the last, as the ministers strived to show how they valued the dignity of the Emperor.

Finally, Akbar turned to Birbal, and said, "You have not said anything, Birbal. What is your counsel?"

Birbal smiled slightly, and said, "Perhaps your majesty would like to give the offender some halwah? Or some burfi?"

Akbar gave Birbal a keen look. "Can you explain why you think I should give sweets when the others are demanding the skin of the culprit?"

"It is very simple, majesty," said Birbal. "There is only one who could have pulled a hair from your moustache – your grandson. And I am sure you would very much enjoy giving him some sweets."