

Inner Call Podcast #130 The Unconquerable Mullah June 20 2021

Once it happened that Mullah Nasruddin was sitting in a tea shop when a man arrived with news that the Governor of the province was appealing for help.

“He is looking for a wrestler,” the man said, “and not just any wrestler, but a champion.”

The governor, it seemed, had received a challenge from a wandering warrior, who said that he could defeat anyone in battle. He defied the governor to bring forward his best man or suffer humiliation. Obviously, the honour of the province was at stake, and so the governor was offering a hundred pieces of gold to any citizen who could vanquish this man. The contest was set for the next day, in the square in front of the palace.

“But he is huge,” said the man. “I have seen him. His shoulders look like the slopes of a mountain, his eyes are as fierce as an eagle’s, and his hands are the size of hams. He could tear an ordinary person to pieces and eat him.”

The assembled guests in the tea shop all agreed that the governor’s offer was not for them. Nevertheless, the next day, at the appointed hour, one of them did come striding into the square – the Mullah.

Bare-chested, with a wrestler’s leather belt that was too large for him slung around his waist, the skinny Nasruddin looked like a broom stick beside the massive warrior, who could barely contain his laughter at the sight. “Is this the measure of your province?” he said jeeringly to the governor.

Nasruddin bowed respectfully to the governor, and then said to the wrestler, “Here is my challenge. Do, with eyes open, what I can do with eyes shut.”

To the warrior this sounded like no challenge at all. Surely, he could do anything the Mullah could do, eyes open or shut, and with one hand tied behind his back. “Yes, I accept.”

At this, one of the Mullah’s friends from the tea shop stepped forward and placed a stool there. Nasruddin sat down, and then, holding up a finger, he said, in a loud voice, “Now, I close my eyes!” And with that, the friend threw a whole bucket of sand in Nasruddin’s face.

Nasruddin brushed the sand away from his face and beard, and then stood up and offered the stool to the warrior. “Your turn,” he said, “with eyes open.”

But the warrior had to refuse the challenge, and Nasruddin went home a richer man.