

Story #594 (1968, Tape #2)

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Ögülen

Location: Narrators from Hınıs, kaza
town of Erzurum Province
Tales taped at Kadıköy,
İstanbul

Date: 1968

#594
The Donkey That Climbed the Minaret #594

Efendim, once upon a time there was a man who got married, but he and his wife did not have any children. He begged God and prayed, "O Lord, give me a child. If you do so, I shall mount him on a donkey and walk them up to the top of a minaret." *childless man*
sternly - down

After the man had promised God that he would perform this act, God gave a child to the couple. After another year had passed, the man had a dream and was reminded about the promise he had made: "You forgot about your promise. Fulfill it!"

The man got up in the morning and said to his wife, "Hanım, dress up the child and get him ready. I am going to town to buy a donkey. Then I shall come back."

"All right."

The man left, and the wife got the boy ready. When the man came back with a donkey, he mounted the boy on its back. Then he took them to town. When he had led them to the door of the minaret, he asked, "Hödey,¹ does a donkey walk up a minaret or not?"

The donkey did not answer or move. No matter how much the man insisted, the donkey would not walk up the minaret. Well, the man had made a promise. He had promised God to walk his son, mounted on a

¹A word that peasants sometimes speak to a donkey to get its attention.

donkey, to the top of the minaret. He went to the kadı and told him that such and such was the case.

"I made a promise which I have not fulfilled. What can I do? Please, give me some advice."

The kadı pondered for a while and said, "I can't solve your problem. But there is a stream at the edge of this town, and on the bank of that stream there is a hut where a Bektashi lives. If you go there, he will settle your problem."

The man got up and left. He went and found the Bektashi in a hut. He noticed that he was drinking wine from a bottle and smoking from a çubuk.² The man said, "Selâmünaleyküm."

"Aleyküm selâm."

"I have a problem about such and such. Settle my problem."

"All right. To settle this problem, first take a drink from this wine."

"No, I don't drink wine."

"Why?"

"Elhamdülillâh,³ I am a Muslim."

"Good. Do you smoke?"

"No, I don't smoke."

"Rakı"⁴

"I don't drink."

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² A long pipe used for smoking tobacco.

³ Praise God.

⁴ Rakı is a popular liquor, anise-flavored, among various Middle Eastern peoples.

"Have you ever been dissolute in your lifetime?"

"No."

"You don't smoke, and you don't ever drink wine or raki. Who would make a better donkey? Take that boy on your back and climb up the minaret."