

Story 689 (1979, Tape 1

Narrator: Rifat Önen, 44
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kaza of Ilica,
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The Donkey and the Camel

Once there was and once there was not a ^{thought} caravan of camels traveling along a certain route. When the camels had grown tired under the weight of their heavy burdens, their drivers let them rest on a grassy plain and graze while they rested. They would stop there for a while beside the bank of a small river, and then later they would continue on their way.

While they were grazing there, another caravan passed along quite close to them. A stray donkey belonging to that second caravan stopped near the camels of the first caravan. The donkey said, "O friends, I have an uncontrollable urge to bray."

"Do not bray!" said the nearest camel. "You will awaken our drivers and bring to an end our pleasant resting here. Furthermore, they will probably catch you and load you too with baggage."

"I cannot help it!" said the donkey. "I must bray!" He brayed several times very loudly and soon attracted the attention of the camel drivers.

"Let us go and catch that beast," one of them said. This they did, and after they had caught him, they loaded him with goods and made him part of their own caravan.

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They set forth again on their journey, and at first the donkey walked along with the camels, but after half a day donkey was unable to keep pace with the camels. When the drivers noticed this, they loaded the donkey on the back one of the camels, right on top of the heavy load he was already carrying.

After traveling some distance this way, they came to a narrow trail with a mountain on one side and a cliff on the other side that dropped off more than a hundred meters. When they reached that place, the camel that was carrying the donkey said, "Brother donkey, I have an irresistible urge to dance."

The donkey said, "Brother camel, this is no place to dance. If you dance here, I may fall off your back!"

"I cannot help it, brother donkey; I simply must dance!" This he did, and the donkey, falling off his back, tumbled down the cliff and disappeared.