

Story 1754 (1994 Tape 3)

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Osmaniye kaza,  
Adana Province

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### A Political Allegory

Now I want to tell you an anecdote about politicians. It is a story that was very popular after the election of 1989. To understand it, you have to know that Demirel was defeated in the election of 1982 but returned to power as a result of the election of 1989

One day an ağa<sup>1</sup> and his tractor driver were going to the nearest town. After they had been riding for a while, the ağa said to his driver, "Here is a proposal for you to consider. Whether or not you accept this proposal is for you to decide."

<sup>1</sup>An ağa (English, agha) is a rural landowner, sometimes wealthy, often powerful. The word does not indicate an official title but describes an economic status. They are often the principal employers of farm workers, and they are often viewed by their employees as harsh, driving, and abusive. The term ağa is also used in a complimentary way, as an honorific, for a distinguished or just older person than the one using the term. Thus an older brother is called ağa bey by his younger siblings. Ağa bey may be used as a deferential term to one older or more prestigious than the speaker. A taxi driver may refer to his passenger as ağa bey; a salesman speaking to a male customer may call him ağa bey.

Story 1754

"Very well," answered the driver. "Tell me it is."

"If you will eat the little pile of cow manure just dropped by that cow over there, I shall give you this tractor."

The driver thought, "Even if I worked all my life, I could never afford to buy a tractor like this one." After thinking in this way for a moment, he said to the aṣṭa, "All right. I shall eat that manure

After he had eaten the manure, he was given tractor, just as the aṣṭa had promised. At that point, he became the new aṣṭa, and the former aṣṭa became his driver. They then continued on to the town and completed their business there.

As they were riding home to their village, the former aṣṭa, now a driver, thought, "I was an aṣṭa three hours ago, but now I am only a tractor driver."

On the other hand, the new aṣṭa was also thinking. He thought, "I am very upset. A tractor is not worth having to eat dung!" After they had ridden a little farther, the new aṣṭa said to the new driver, "If you will eat that little pile of cow dung, I shall give the

Story 1754

tractor back to you."

"All right." Thereupon the new driver ate the cow manure. By doing this, he not only got his tractor back, but he also became the ağa again.

When they got back to their village, the driver, with a very sour look, said, "Oh, ağa, when we left home, you were the ağa, and I was the driver. Then we changed places. Now you are the ağa again, and I am the driver again. Why on earth did we eat that dung?"