

Story 1083 (1980 Tape 1

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A Donkey to Bray from the Minaret

Lesson

Once there was a man who had no children. Although he had prayed before for a child, one day he prayed in a different way. He said, "O my God, if you will give me a child, I shall have a donkey bray from the top of a minaret."

About a year later this man's wife gave birth to a child. He rejoiced at this event but he also remembered the promise he had made to God. He thought to himself, "How can I fulfill my promise?"¹

He thought about how to proceed. He said to the müftü, "I promised that if He granted me a child, I would have a donkey bray from the top of a minaret. Well, God has given me a child now, and if I don't keep my promise God may cause my child to

How can I fulfill my promise?"

The müftü said, "What kind of a prayer was that? I cannot answer your question."

¹A minaret is a very tall and very slender tower. The spiral staircase that winds up the interior of the minaret has very narrow wedge-shaped steps, and often there is no hand rail. Climbing a minaret is difficult for a human being; for a donkey it would be impossible.

²A müftü is a Moslem jurist, a specialist in Moslem canonical law.

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He then went to a Christian priest with the same question, but the priest could not help him. He went to a Jewish rabbi, too, but the rabbi had no answer either. The man then went to the coffeehouse, where he sat by himself thinking about his problem

After a while another customer noticed how thoughtful he was and asked him, "What are you thinking about so deeply? What is the matter?"

"I have a great problem--one too difficult for you to solve."

"Well, tell me about it, anyway," said the second man. After the second man understood the problem, he said to the new father, "Do you drink?"

"No," said the new father. "I am a faithful Moslem."

"Do you gamble?"

I am a Moslem."

The second man then said, "Well, then, climb up the minaret and bray! Could there be any greater donkey than you?"