

Story 1408 (1989 Tape 7)

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Nasreddin Hoca, His Son, and the Donkey

One day Nasreddin Hoca and his son left their village with their donkey and started toward the nearest town. The son rode on the donkey and the Hoca walked alongside of them. Soon they met a man who exclaimed, "Hoca, Hoca--what a disgrace! You are an elderly man, but you are walking while your son rides upon the donkey."

After the man had passed on, the Hoca thought about this for a minute and then he said, "He is right! It is I who should be riding on the donkey." So the boy dismounted and walked while the Hoca rode.

A short while later they met another man, and this man looked at them in a strange way. Then he said, "For shame, Hoca! You force this small boy to walk while you ride on the donkey!"

The Hoca gave this remark some thought and decided that it was probably a justified criticism. He therefore said, "Son, climb up behind me and we shall both ride on the donkey."

They went a short distance farther and met a third man. This man gazed at them with an expression of displeasure on

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his face. He said, "Aman,<sup>1</sup> Hoca, what a thing to do! Don't you think it is cruel for both of you to ride on that poor donkey during this hot weather?"

The Hoca realized that there was some truth to what this man had said. Therefore he and his son dismounted, and the two of them walked alongside the donkey toward the town. Soon a fourth man came along and asked, "Are you stupid? Here both of you are walking while the donkey is carrying no load whatsoever!"

Greatly annoyed by all of the opinions that had been offered by people they had encountered, the Hoca made one final adjustment in their method of traveling toward the town. He placed the donkey's hind legs on his son's shoulders and the donkey's front legs on his own shoulders. Carrying the donkey in this way, they continued on to the town.

<sup>1</sup>Aman is a common exclamation in Turkish. It may (negatively) mean alas or oh, dear! More positively, it may suggest, oh, my goodness or the equivalent of wow! or golly!