

Story 1530 (1992 Tape 1

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Nasreddin Hoca¹ Discovers the Folly of Trying to Please Everyone

day Nasreddin Hoca and his son were traveling to a marketplace in a nearby town. As they started out, the son was riding on their donkey and Nasreddin Hoca was walking just ahead of it. Along the way they came upon a group of people who criticized them. These people said to each other, "Look at that! There is an example of how some modern youth behave. That boy is riding comfortably on a donkey while his old father is walking. Youths such as that have no respect for their elders!"

When Nasreddin Hoca heard the remarks made by those people, he thought briefly and then said, "Son, they are right. Let us exchange places. I should ride upon the donkey, and you should walk." They made this change and continued on their way.

had not gone very far, however, before they encountered another group of travelers. Observing the Hoca and his

¹A hoca is a preacher and the religious leader of a community. In pre-Republican times the hoca was also the community teacher. Separation of church and state in the Republic required that teachers be people of secular rather than of religious training. Nasreddin Hoca is Turkey's most popular comic folk character.

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son, some of those travelers said, "Look at that! That man is riding on a donkey, but his small child is forced to walk! Such a fellow does not even seem to realize how selfish and inconsiderate such behavior is!"

Nasreddin Hoca considered these remarks and decided that they were correct. Then he said, "Son, it may very well seem selfish of me to be riding while you are walking. Let me dismount, and then both of us will walk." Hoca dismounted, and they both continued on foot.

The next group of people that they met laughed at them. These people said, "Those two must be stupid Their donkey has no burden, but both of them are walking! Don't they know how to use a donkey?"

Nasreddin Hoca and his son overheard these remarks and were upset by them. Finally Nasreddin Hoca said, "Son, as you can see, if you try to please everyone, you will end up making yourself miserable!"