

Story #375 (Not on tape)

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Nasreddin Hodja Backwards on the Donkey

One of Nasreddin Hodja's public duties was to read the lesson from the Koran in the mosque on Friday. For some reason or another, one Friday he was late in getting ready, so the arrival of his students to accompany him to the mosque found him quite unprepared.

Hastily slipping into his shoes on the doorstep, the Hodja hurried across the dooryard to his little donkey and mounted him. But to his chagrin, the Hodja found that he had seated himself backward on the donkey.

The boys nudged one another, overcome with hilarity at their teacher's strange predicament. "I say, Hodja Efendi," inquired the ringleader. "Why is it that you have seated yourself backward on your donkey?" And they all waited to see how the Hodja would explain himself out of this ridiculous situation.

For his part, the Hodja could not afford to appear ludicrous before his students. A moment's thought was necessary, but shortly he made the matter clear.

"My boys, if I were to ride my donkey ahead of you in the usual fashion, I should have my back to you and would thus be unable to keep a watchful eye on you. On the other hand, it would be undignified for me as your teacher to ride behind you. Therefore, I have chosen the only position which allows me at once to watch you and to precede you to the mosque!"