

TALES
BY
NASREDDIN HODJA



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We, the people in Turkey are all familiar with the jokes and stories of Nasreddin Hodja. Since our childhood, we have been hearing these jokes all along. These funny stories are part of our culture. The whole thing dates back to the man, Nasreddin Hodja who has lived in central Turkey, in the small town called Aksheir. The jokes were part of his daily life.

He was a man with great humor, he was very clever and had an answer to almost all the problems of his time. Even today, about 600 years after he has lived and passed away, we still laugh and think about his tricks, common sense, ridicule, anecdotes.

Every person and every institution of the Turkish society has received a criticism or remark from his philosophical mind. He did not spare his satire for the state, religion, culture or habits. All of the human psychology and social weaknesses received their part of laugh from him. He has seen the human element in each aspect of the everyday life and has used his wit to make everybody aware of the other side of the reality. That is why his jokes are still alive today.

He has lived in 13th century, he still lives among us with his jokes. Nasr-ed-Din means "Victory of Faith", Hodja means the "Master" or "Teacher". He has received this honorable title later in his life.



OTHERWISE

One day, when the Hodja was in a certain village, some people invited him to dinner. As you know, the Hodja never lets the opportunity of a free meal. So he accepted and went to the house carrying a bag which was made from thick tissue paper. During the meal when the Hodja was eating with great appetite, he noticed that his bag has disappeared. He shouted:

"Who has stolen my bag? If he doesn't return it, I know what I'll do!"

The thief was afraid of the Hodja, so he gave the bag back. Then he asked:

"Hodja Effendi what would you have done, if I hadn't returned it to you?"

"Oh, nothing special", said the Hodja.

"I have a lot of tissue paper at home. I would just have made a new bag for myself."

PAN

One day, the Hodja borrowed a pan from his neighbor. After he had finished using it, he took it back to the neighbor with a small pan tucked inside.

When the man saw it, he was most surprised.

"What is that?" he asked.

"Well, said the Hodja, when I borrowed your pan it was pregnant and it brought a child into the world."

The man smiled and accepted them.

A few days later the Hodja borrowed the pan again but this time he did not return it.

The man was rather cross. He went to the Hodja and asked "What about my pan?"

"I am very sorry", said the Hodja, "but it died."

"Don't make jokes with me", replied the man, "How can a pan die?"

"If you believe that it brought a child into the world", said the Hodja,

"why can't you believe that it died?"

HODJA'S DONKEY

One day Hodja's donkey got stolen. Hodja began to search for it. While searching, he shouted a lot. The judge who heard that, asked him, "Who has stolen your donkey, and how?" The Hodja became very angry and said: "If I knew the answer, my donkey wouldn't have been stolen!"

