

Story #265 Tape #2, 1969)

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The Grasshopper

One day an old man left home in order to earn a little money to meet the needs of his children. He stopoed at a village on a Friday. Villagers said to the old man, "Oh, Hoja, it is Friday today. Let us go to the Friday service." They took their ablution, and the hoja climbed up the mimber to deliver his sermon

He tried hard to remember something to say, but nothing came to his mind. Finally he made up his mind to say something like this: "Oh people, I am going to save myself. You do the same!" Having said this, he rushed for the door.

The congregation shouted, "The ^{HOJA} ~~hoja~~ is running away."

Right then the roof of the mosque fell in. The congregation then decided that the hoja had some miraculous power and that he ought to be watched.

A few days later the Padishah's treasury was robbed. They told the Padishah of the presence of a hoja who could find out the culprits. The Padishah asked for him. He said to him, "Hoja, if you can, find the criminals, or else your neck will be

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delivered to the hangman."

"All right, my Padishah, but first I would like to be provided with forty melons and forty loaves of bread. You will then put me in a room with these melons and loaves of bread, and then hope for the best. Something is bound to happen."

The forty ^{three} robbers of the treasury heard of the measures that the Padishah had taken in order to find out the criminals, and they began to worry when the news reached them that the Hoja who had the power of knowing everything was hired for the purpose. They decided to send one among them to listen to the Hoja and find out what he was doing. When this man was listening through the Hoja's door, the Hoja was addressing one of the melons, "Come forward, one of the forty."

The man listening through the door started. He ran back to his friends and said to them, "Friends, he knew I was at the door of the room. He said, 'Come along, one of the forty'"

"Did he really?" asked his friends in amazement.

"That is what he said."

Then they decided that two of them would go this time. They went and listened through the hoja's door. The hoja said, "One more came, and thirty-eight left."

The two robbers ran back to report to their friends that the Hoja had again known of their being at the door

"It cannot be. You are lying," said their friends.

"By God, he knew."

"All right, then, let three men go today," they decided.

Three men went to listen through the Hoja's door. The

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Hoja said, "One more comes, and thirty-seven are left behind."

The men ran back terrified and reported to their friends that the matter was such and such. They decided that four of them would go the next day, and if he knew again, then they would tell the Hoja that they were the criminals and beg him not to allow the Padishah to execute them. The next day four of them went to the Hoja's door, where they heard the Hoja saying, "Only thirty-six left."

Thereupon they knocked on the door. "Hoja, open the door."

"No, it is forbidden to enter here," answered the Hoja from inside.

"But, please, Hoja, we are forty altogether. ^{Bribes} We are the robbers who broke into the Padishah's treasury. If you promise not to give us away, we shall tell you where we have hidden the gold." They told the Hoja where they had hidden the money they had stolen. The Hoja was taking note. "The gold was hidden under such-and-such stone, and the silver was hidden under this-and-that stone."

He then said to them, "All right, you may now go. I shall not let anyone touch you." The next morning, the Hoja went to see the Padishah. He said to him, "Your Majesty, let us, you and I, take a little walk. But take a couple of men with shovels with you." They started walking. When they stopped by a stone, the Hoja said to the Padishah, "Your Majesty, have this place dug up. My book shows that there is something here." Gold was dug up from under the stone. Shortly afterwards the silver was also discovered under another stone.

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The Padishah then said to the Hoja, "Hoja, you have discovered where my gold and silver were hidden. You should also know who the criminals are." To this the Hoja replied, "Your Majesty, I am not allowed to give their names. Otherwise the talisman will be broken." The Padishah did not insist.

The Padishah one day suggested that he and the Hoja take a trip together. On the way the Padishah had to pass water. When he was relieving himself, a grasshopper came and rested on his penis. He caught the grasshopper and asked the Hoja, "Do you know what I have in my hand?"

The Hoja thought that this time he would really be revealed. The proverb, "Oh grasshopper, you jumped one, you jumped twice, but the third time you jumped on my penis," came to his mind. He said to himself, "This time the Padishah will kill me." With this thought in his mind, he happened to shout, "A grasshopper, your majesty!"

"You knew it, Hoja," said the Padishah.

Hoja was duly rewarded and sent back to his family.