

Story 754 1985 Tape 1)

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The Mortality of a Cauldron

One day back in those old days Nasreddin Hoca needed a cauldron. He looked everywhere in his own house but could find there any that was suitable for his present needs. He therefore went to the home of a neighbor to see if he could borrow such a cauldron. When the neighbor lent him one, the Hoca took it home and used it to accomplish the work he was doing.

A few days later Nasreddin Hoca took a pot along with the cauldron and delivered them to the home of the neighbor. When the neighbor opened the door to the Hoca's knocking, he was surprised to see the Hoca with both a pot and a cauldron. "What is the meaning of this, Hoca?" he asked. "What is this pot?"

Hoca said, "This is the cauldron which I borrowed a few ago from you, and this pot is its child. It was born in my house." The neighbor was delighted with this news, and he accepted the pot with pleasure. Hoca thanked him for the loan and then returned to his own home.

After a while Hoca again needed a large cauldron. He

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went to the same neighbor and asked to borrow his cauldron again. The neighbor gladly lent it to the Hoca, for he supposed that each time it was lent, it would be returned with a pot

Anyway, Hoca got the cauldron and carried it home. After three or five days,<sup>1</sup> the neighbor was still waiting for the return of the cauldron, but the Hoca did not bring it. Then when he couldn't wait any longer, he went to the Hoca's house and knocked on the door. As the Hoca opened the door, the neighbor said, "Hoca, you borrowed a cauldron from me the other day but you have not returned it yet. Are you finished with it?"

"Yes, I am finished with it, but I forgot to tell you something sad about it. Your cauldron has passed away, but may you live long."

"Alas, do not say so!" said the neighbor in confusion. "How could a cauldron die? What a nonsensical thing to say!"

The Hoca answered, "You believe that a cauldron can give birth to a pot. Why, then, shouldn't you believe that a cauldron can die?"

The neighbor suddenly understood what a stupid thing he had done in accepting the pot, and he left the Hoca's house without saying anything else.

<sup>1</sup>Instead of saying "three or four," or "a few," many Turks say "three or five." The expression appears a great many times in ATON.