

Story 1758 (1994 Tape 4)

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of Sivas Province

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How to Catch Speeding Hoca and His Speeding Donkey

Nasreddin Hoca¹ once went to a local market and bought a donkey. As he was leading the donkey to his home, the animal became balky and refused to walk any farther. Hoca began to hit the donkey with a stick, but this beating had no effect. The donkey still refused to move.

A passerby said to Hoca, "What are you doing?"

"I bought this donkey half an hour ago, but I have discovered that it is very lazy. It refuses to walk."

The passerby said, "There is an easier way of making it walk than the method you are using."

"What should I do?" asked Hoca.

"Go back to the market and buy some hot peppers. Rub some of them on the donkey's anus, and you will find that it will walk very fast."

¹Nasreddin Hoca is the most popular comic folk character in Turkish oral narrative. He is at times very wise and at other times equally foolish. In the Turkish Republic a hoca is a preacher and religious leader. During the earlier Ottoman era he was also a teacher, education then being the responsibility of the religious establishment.

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After Nasreddin Hoca had done what the passerby advised, the donkey not only walked swiftly; it soon began to run as fast as the wind. In fact, it went so fast Hoca feared he might lose it. Wondering what he might do to catch the donkey, he said to himself, "Let me rub some of those peppers on my anus, too."

Nasreddin Hoca and the donkey both arrived in Hoca's village running at a high speed. Hoca had even managed to overtake the donkey. He guided the donkey onto the threshing floor² near Hoca's house, and there they began racing around and around that circular space.

When Nasreddin Hoca's wife saw them doing this, she came out of the house and tried to catch up with them, but she couldn't do so. She shouted, "Stop, Hoca Stop! What has happened to you?"

After Hoca and the donkey had run several more laps

²Before the advent of modern farming machinery in Turkey, grain was threshed on a clay-paved circle about 100-150 feet in diameter. Grain stalks were placed on this "floor" and chopped to bits by having dragged over them a door-sized rectangle of planks with sharp pieces of flint protruding from its bottom. All of this chopped mass was then winnowed--i.e. tossed aloft so that the wind would blow away the bits of straw and leave remaining only the kernels of grain.

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around the threshing floor, Hoca twisted his head back toward his wife, without slowing down a bit, and shouted, "Woman, do you want to catch us?"

course I do! Stop for a while! What is the matter with you?"

you want to catch up with us to talk about that, rub some hot peppers on your anus!"