How the Dog Changed from Infidel to Blessed Creature

In a certain village there was an ağa¹ who had a favorite sheepdog. The ağa was so fond of this dog that each year at lambing time he gave it two of the newborn animals. After thirty years this unusually long-lived dog had in this way acquired a flock of sixty sheep.

When the dog finally died, the ağa decided to honor it with a regular funeral service. He went to the local hoca² and requested him to conduct this graveyard ritual. The hoca objected, saying, "I cannot very well conduct a

¹An ağa is a rural landowner, sometimes wealthy, often powerful. The word does not indicate an official title but describes an economic status. Ağas are often the principal employers of farm workers, and they are often viewed by their employees as harsh, driving, and abusive. The term ağa is also used in a complimentary way, as an honorific, for a distinguished or just older person than the one using the term. Thus an older brother is called ağa bey by his siblings. So too, ağa bey may be used as a deferential term to one older or more prestigious than the speaker. A taxi driver may refer to his passenger as ağa bey; a salesman speaking to a male customer may call him ağa bey.

²A hoca is a preacher and the religious leader of a community. In pre-Republican times the hoca was also the
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sacred service for an unclean and infidel creature!" when the ağa insisted upon having his wish fulfilled, the hoca could not refuse to comply.

As soon as he left the cemetery, the angry hoca went to the kadi of that area to make a complaint. When the kadi understood what had happened, he too became angry, and he ordered that the ağa report to his courtroom immediately. When the ağa arrived there, the kadi said to him, "I understand that you required this hoca to conduct a Muslim funeral service for your dog. How could you do such a thing?"

"Kadi Efendi," I did so because that dog was such an unusually good creature. Shortly before his death, dog said to me, 'Through your kindness, I now own a flock of 60 sheep. When I die I request that you give 30 of those community teacher. Separation of church and state in the Republic required that teachers be people of secular rather than religious training.

A kadi was a judge of Muslim canonical law in pre-Republican Turkey. In folktales he is often less than honest, particularly in his proneness to accept bribes. In Division VII of ATON there is a section of kadi jokes.

In earlier times efendi was an honorific added to the first name or title of a distinguished man: Ahmet Efendi, Kadi Efendi. By the mid-20th century, however, the prestige of the word had so eroded that it was used only in complimenting servants and children.
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sheep to the hocas who conducts my funeral service and the other 30 to the esteemed kadi of this area. The dog also owned a cow, and that too he requested be given to the hocas."

Amazed and pleased by what he had just heard, the hocas said, "What a blessed soul that dog really was!"

The kadi observed drily, "You found that dog to be an unclean infidel, but for thirty sheep and a cow you managed to convert it into a worthy member of our faith!"

5 The word used here by the narrator was rahmetli, meaning the departed.