

THE PHILOSOPHER'S PHILOSOPHER
NASREDDIN
HODJA

by
Nebi ÖZDEMİR



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A. NASREDDIN HODJA'S HISTORICAL IDENTITY:

a. Nasreddin Hodja's Historical Identity and Related Documents:

There are two distinct trains of thought as to whether Nasreddin Hodja was really a historical person or not. Lack of sufficient evidence makes many researchers doubtful of his being a real person in history. These researchers inform us that the Nasreddin Hodja, the popular Turkish hero and an amalgamation of different comic heroes (for example, Djuha, the hero of many comic stories in Arabia) and a historic person (such as the 13th century savant Nasreddin Hodja Tûsî) are one and the same. They are equally sceptical that there was a master of wit called Nasreddin Hodja in any geographical area outside Anatolia. A great number of people, however, strongly support the idea that Nasreddin Hodja was a historical figure who lived in Anatolia and remains alive today through the many different stories which have been created around him.

As well as the stories about Nasreddin Hodja and his life, there are various pieces of historical evidence concerning him. The first of these is the inscription to be found on one of the pillars of his tomb, a few lines written in 1393/1394 by Mehmed, a yeoman in the service of Bayazit 1. The tomb of Nasreddin Hodja, which lacks a tablet, and a tombstone, on which the date, which it is said should be 683, is mistakenly written as 386 but on which the name of Nasreddin Hodja does not appear, are cited as evidence by various researchers. Tablets from the grave of Nasreddin Hodja's daughters which is today in Akşehir Museum are also accepted as important pieces of evidence. These are those of Nasreddin Hodja's older daughter Fatima Hatun, found in 1931 in a graveyard in Sivrihisar and dated H.727 (M.1326/1327) together with that of his younger daughter, found at the foot of Nasreddin Hodja's grave, dated H.727 (M.1326/1327) and inscribed "Dürri Melek binti Nasreddin Hodja." The most important proof is the information concerning the upkeep of Nasreddin Hodja's tomb and the income for this provided by the Nasreddin Hodja Pious Foundation given in the Provincial Records for 881 (1476)¹

Data from written records concerning goods and many concepts coming from hearsay are accepted as proof of the historical existence of Nasreddin Hodja. For example the name of Nasreddin Hodja is mentioned in two places in the *Ebû'l- Hayr-ı Rûmî's Saltuknâme* (completed in 1480). The work called *Kitab-ı Dâfiü'l- Gumûm Rafiü'l Humûm* written by Mehmed Gazalî from Bursa (known as Deli Birader, the Mad Brother) includes stories widely known at the time but which had not been recorded in that way before. Again in the *Güvâhî's Pendnâme* (c. 1527)

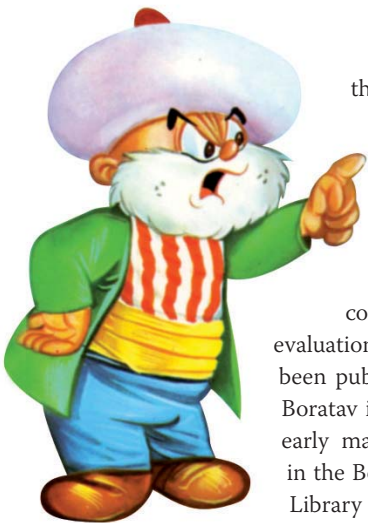
¹ Boratav, P.N., 1996, Nasreddin Hodja, Edebiyatçılar Derneği, Ankara: pp 17- 24.; Sakaoğlu, S. ve A.B. Alptekin, 2009, Nasreddin Hodja, Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Pub., Ankara: pp 5-8.; Duman, Mustafa, 2008, Nasreddin Hodja ve 1555 Fıkrası, Heyamola Pub., İstanbul: pp 26-27.

there are three Nasreddin Hodja stories- (No brain (Akli yoktu ki),” Eat, my fur coat, eat (Ye kürküm ye), Ready Money (Peşin parayı gördün de)- in rhyme. Another source from the 16th century, when his jokes began to be universal, is that of Basîrî (a poet from the time of Bayazıt II died c. 1535) in his work *Letâif* where he relates two Nasreddin Hodja stories. In the same way four stories and one anecdote about Nasreddin Hodja can be found in the *Mecmâü'l Letâ'if* (c. 1531) begun by Lâmi'î Çelebi of Bursa and completed by his son Abdullah or Derviş Mehmed. A record in the 1581 work *Kitâb-ı Mir'ât-ı Cihân* by Osman of Bayburt shows Nasreddin Hodja as a patron in 784. The story told by Yahyâ of Taşlıca in the 29th stanza of his poem *Gencine-i Râz*, dated 1594, about the pitcher which was filled with honey at the top but soil at the bottom (the story called ‘The Fault’ is not in the document) is an attempt to criticize in verse the practice of bribery in judicial proceedings. In the work by Muhyî (d. 1533), *Menâkıb-ı İbrahim-i Gülşenî*, there is a Nasreddin Hodja story (He died and came to give the news of his death). The Nasreddin Hodja story (The tap which had its mouth shut) is to be found in Nev'izâde Atâyî's work (d. 1635) *Sohbetü'l-Ebkâr*. The Polish traveller Simeon visited the tomb of Nasreddin Hodja when he came to Akşehir in 1618 and recorded this in Vol 3 of his “Travels of Simeon”. Evliya Çelebi, who came to Akşehir in 1638, gives information about Nasreddin Hodja in his “Book of Travels.” In his work, Evliya Çelebi gives space to the story about Tamburlaine (You're not worth five farthings) as related by Nasreddin Hodja and this mistakenly suggests that Nasreddin Hodja and Tamburlaine were contemporaries. Evliya Çelebi describes Nasreddin Hodja as being similar to the witty Arab hero Djuhâ, This demonstrates that the attempt to combine the two witty heroes into one is groundless. In the journal written about Murat IV's campaigns to Revan and Tabriz, the section which introduces Akşehir informs us that “Nasreddin Hodja lies here.” The *Niyâzî-i Mısri'* (17th century) memoirs relates



a Nasreddin Hodja story about a lady who took bribes. In the *Riyâzü's-Şu'arâ* (Riyâzî Mehmed Efendi; 17th. century) and *Tuhfetü'l Haremeyn* (Yusuf Nâbi; d. 1712) there are records of Nasreddin Hodja. An anonymous work called *Menzilname* (possibly 18th century?) tells us about Akşehir and says that the tomb of Nasreddin Hodja is in the city, and recommends it be visited. In a work (completed in 1675) written by Hüseyin Efendi of Ayvansaray, now in the Library of Topkapı Palace Treasury, various information about Nasreddin Hodja's life is given.

Data about Nasreddin Hodja from the second half of the 15th century has been mentioned earlier. From the 16th century onwards, in particular, the stories of Nasreddin Hodja began to be transferred from oral culture into written culture and are to be found in many documents. In the same way, it can be seen that, after the beginning of the 16th century, the stories of Nasreddin Hodja were written down from memory in individual writings. Today



the oldest extant written story about Nasreddin Hodja can be dated to 1571 from a book bearing the title *Hikâyet-i Kitab-ı Nasreddin Hodja*. Written by an individual called Hüseyin, this work contains 43 stories.² An important evaluation of Nasreddin Hodja has been published by Pertev Naili Boratav. Boratav informs us that, apart from the early manuscript OR.195 to be found in the Bodleian Library, in the National Library in Paris alone there are 12 manuscript stories about Nasreddin

Hodja, the earliest of which dates from the 16th century and the latest from the 19th century. In the library of the Ankara University Faculty of Languages, History and Geography, among the writings of İsmail Sa'ib is a 142-page book written in 1171 (1777) and catalogued as No: 1/1838 under the title of *Hikâyât-ı Hâce Nasreddin Hodja Efendi*.³ Mustafa Duman has found and collected together 68 manuscripts about Nasreddin Hodja and says the number may increase.⁴

As well as the works mentioned above, sources of information about Nasreddin Hodja increased with the inception of printing. Kâtib Çelebi's *Kitab-ı Cihânnümâ* is accepted as being the first printed work to mention Nasreddin Hodja. Interesting information is also to be found in the following printed works: *ed- Dürrerü'l Müntehabâtî'l Mensûre fî Islahü'l-Galatâtî'l-Meşhûre* (1806; Mehmed Hafid), *el-Okyanûsü'l Basîf fî Tercemetü'l-*

² Duman, 2008, Op.cit.: p 64

³ Boratav, 1996, Op.cit.: pp 9- 16.

⁴ Duman, 2008, Op.cit.: p 129

Muhîd (1887-8; Mütercim Ahmed Asım), *Kethüdâzâde Efendi'nin Terceme-i Hâline Zeyl-i Âcizânemdir* (1877; Emin), *Âsâr-ı Perîşân* (1880; Mehmed Tefik), *Kâmûsü'l-a'lâm* (1889; Şemseddin Sami), *Menâkıb-ı İslâm, Dârül-Hilâfeti'l-aliyye* (1908; Ahmed Rasim), *Yâd-ı Mâzî* (1914; Bereketzâde İsmail Hakkı), "Konya Vilâyeti" (1922; Dr. Nazmi). Moreover 136 stories about Nasreddin Hodja collected by I. Kunos are contained in the seventh volume of the work in 8 volumes called "Hoca Nusrattın Efendi".⁵

b. The Name of Nasreddin Hodja:

Nasreddin Hodja is variously referred to in writing as "Nasrüddin, Hâce Nasrüddin, Nasrüddin Hâce (*Saltukname*), Nasreddin Hodja (*Mehmed Gazali-Daîü'l- Gumûm Rafiu'l Humûm*), Nasirüddin Hâce (*Güvâhî- Pendnâme*), Nasreddin Hodja (*Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*), Nasrüddin Hâce (*Riyazi Tezkiresi*)" though today Nasreddin Hodja is the version generally accepted. In early writings it became usual to refer to *Nasreddin Hodja* as "Hoca Nasreddin Rahmetullahı aleyh" and it is this which makes it possible to separate the original Nasreddin Hodja from other individuals with the same name..⁶ The Turkish people came to Nasreddin Hodja through such records and agree that these describe him as an individual of status. On the other hand, while some people stress that in the stories the phrase "Hoca merhum, bir gün" comes from Nasrettin Hodja himself and shows him to have been a historic individual, others see this simply as a revision of an old saying which had come down through the years.

In different times and in different places Nasreddin Hodja has been known by different names. Known as Nasreddin Hodja in the Turkish world, in other places he is given the names "Nesirdin Ependi, Ependi (East Türkistan),

⁵ Sakaoğlu ve Alptekin, 2009, Op.cit.: pp 19- 25.

⁶ Duman, 2008, Op.cit.: p 42

Kocanasır/Kojanasır (Kazakistan), Apendi (Kırgızistan), Hojanasreddin (Karakalpak Turks), Efendi (Tacikistan), Hâce Nasreddin (Başkurtistan), Nasriddin Afandi, Afandi (Özbekistan), Ependi, Nasreddin Ependi (Türkmenistan), Molla Nesreddin (Azerbajjan), Molla Nasreddin (Iraki Türkmen), Nasır (Karaçay), Molla Nasreddin, Nasridin (Kumuklar), Nasreddin Oca (Crimean Tatars), Nasreddin Hodja (Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Western Thrace), Nastradin, Nastradin (the Gagavuz Turk), Nusrettin, Molla Nasrettin (Ahıska Turks), Nastredin (Balkan Turks), Molla Nasreddin, Nasridin, Molla Nasruddinni (Kumuk Turks-Dagestan), Nasra (Karaçaylar)". Some of the names used in other countries are "Nasiruddin Hojja (Bangladesh), Molla Nasirudin, Molla Nasiruddin, Nasreddin Hodja (Pakistan), Molla Nasreddin, Molla (Iran), Nasreddin (Russia), Afanti (China), Nasaret (Chechenistan), Nasreddin Hodza, Nasreddin Hodsa (Hungary), Nasratin Hoge (Romania), Nasraldi (Bulgaria), Nasreddin Xotzas, Anastratin (Greece), Koja (Nogay Turks), Nusreddin, Gasdanî, Aslanî (Greek Cypriots), Nasradin, Strandilhoca, Stradin (Macedonia), Nasrudin Hodza (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Nastro, Nastroya (Albania), Nasrudin Hodza, Nasradin (Serbia), Hoscha Nasreddin, Hodscha Nasreddin, Nasreddin Chodja (Germany), Nasreddin Hodja (France), Molla, Molla Nasreddin (India)".⁷

An evaluation of the above facts shows that while the name "Nasreddin" is widespread, in the sources the pronunciation and written form vary according to the different tongues or dialects. This also shows that the "Nasreddin geographical region" is wide and varied. This reveals and records the fact that the countries and peoples

⁷ Boratav, 1996, Op.cit.: pp 68-88.; Sakaoğlu ve Alptekin, 2009, Op.cit.: pp 27- 28.; Atatürk Cultural Centre, 2009, Information on the International Symposium on the 21st Century Understanding of Nasreddin Hodja, AKM Pub., Ankara.

thus united by Nasreddin Hodja all share a common humanity within their own region and have transformed Nasreddin Hodja and placed him high among those heroes who are both sophisticated and intelligent.

c. The Life and Family of Nasreddin Hodja:

In the light of the information available on Nasreddin Hodja, it seems he was born in 1208 in Hortu (today known as Nasreddin Hoca) village, Sivrihisar, in the province of Eskişehir, an area where people who enjoyed jokes and had a sophisticated outlook on life lived.⁸ Another source informs us that he was born in Sivrihisar.⁹ At that time it was said that Sivrihisar was a place where people cleverly combined criticism and wit. Whether he was born in the village or the town, it is generally accepted that Nasreddin Hodja was born in Sivrihisar. His father was the imam, Abdullah Efendi.¹⁰ Unsupported information gives his mother's name as Sıdika¹¹, though one story reports that she was his step-mother.¹² An old document supports the rumour that Nasreddin Hodja had a sister.¹³



⁸ Yıldırım, Dursun, 2008, Nasreddin Hodja Fıkralarından Seçmeler, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Pub., Ankara: pp 1-2.

⁹ Konyalı, İsmail Hakkı, 1945, Nasreddin Hoca'nın Şehri Akşehir, İstanbul: p 732.; Duman, 2008, Op.cit.: p 19.

¹⁰ Köprülüzade Mehmed Fuad, 1918, Nasreddin Hodja, Kanaat Matbaası ve Kitaphanesi, İstanbul: p 9.

¹¹ Önder, Mehmet, 1971, Nasreddin Hoca, Türkiye İş Bankası Pub., İstanbul: p 12.

¹² Kut, Günay, 1992, "Nasreddin Hikayeleri Yazmalarının Kolları Üzerine Bir Deneme", IV. Milletlerarası Türk Halk Kültürü Bildirileri, (IVth International Turkish People's Cultural Information) Vol.II, Ankara: p 182.

¹³ Kut, 1992, Op.cit.: p 169; Boratav, 1996, Op.cit.: p 130; Sakaoglu ve Alptekin, 2009, Op.cit.: p 29.

Nasreddin Hodja received his first schooling from his father and after his father's death worked as an imam for a while. In 1237 Nasreddin Hodja went to Akşehir in order to improve himself and continue his education. He lived for an important part of his life there among renowned savants. According to another claim, Nasreddin Hodja went first to Konya before passing on to Akşehir.¹⁴ In Akşehir Nasreddin Hodja became the student and friend of Seyyid Mahmûd Hayrânî and Seyyid Hâce İbrahim Sultan. This information comes from pious foundations receipts for properties belonging to these savants to which Nasreddin Hodja was a witness. Moreover, according to these documents, Nasreddin Hodja was at that time a trustworthy and respected person who was able to witness such receipts in the presence of a judge.¹⁵

Although there is insufficient information concerning his wife and other relatives, based on the stories various speculations have been made about these. One source tells us that Nasreddin Hodja's wife was buried in Kozağaç Village near Akşehir.¹⁶ It is also rumoured that after his first wife's death Nasreddin Hodja married a second time.¹⁷ According to Nasreddin Hodja's tombstone he had two daughters, Fâtıma Hâtun (the elder) and Dürri Melek Hâtun (the younger); other stories say he had a son. According to another source, he had two sons (the name of one being Ömer) and it is said that their tombstones can be found in the cemetery at Sivrihisar today protecting the Nasreddin Hodja Kümbet.¹⁸ In some sources, references

¹⁴ Sakaoğlu ve Alptekin, 2009, Op.cit.: p 33.

¹⁵ Yıldırım, 2008, Op.cit.: pp 2-3.

¹⁶ Köprülüzade, 1918, Op.cit.: p 10.

¹⁷ Önder, 1971, Op.cit.: p 63.

¹⁸ Kaya, Nuri, 2010, "Röportaj: Sivrihisar'a Hayatını Adayan Orhan Keskin", Eskiye, p. 22, December 2010: pp 82- 83.

to Nasreddin Hodja's relatives (a grandson, together with Hacı İsmail, Abdüsselam) are found. Istanbul's first judge, Hızır Bey Çelebi, the celebrated scholar of the day and father of Sinan Pasha, was born in Sivrihisar in 1407 and it is said that Nasreddin Hodja was his great-great grandson.¹⁹

Although Nasreddin Hodja was engaged in several different jobs, most of his life was spent as an imam, preacher, professor of theology, judge or farmer. Nasreddin Hodja died in 1285 in Akşehir aged 77 or 78 His tomb, open on five sides with a huge locked gate on one side and a dome raised on six marble columns is in the great cemetery in the centre of Akşehir (a Seljuk cemetery). The first gravestone inscribed to Nasreddin Hodja is not extant today. According to some reports a stone from 683 (1285) was found during the last restoration of the tomb; the stone there today, wrongly inscribed with the date 386, is a different one.²⁰

Later claims were made concerning "Nasreddin Hodja from Kastamonu, Nasreddin Hodja from Kayseri, Nasreddin Hodja from Akşehir (Akşehir born and bred), Nasreddin Hodja from Sivrihisar (born and bred in Sivrihisar), Nasreddin Hodja from Isfahan, Nasreddin Hodja Tûsî from Azerbaijan, Nasreddin Hodja from Bukhara, Ahi Evren Şeyh Nasirü'd-din Mahmud (Ahi Evren and Nasreddin Hodja were the same person). There is no scientific evidence for these but it shows the strength and widespread influence of the traditional wit of Nasreddin Hodja.

¹⁹ Lamiizade Abdullah Çelebi, 1994, *Latifeler* (Hazl. Yaşar Çalışkan), MEB Pub.: pp 89-90. with Ünver, Süheyl, 1944, *Kadıköy'üne Unvanı Verilen Hızır Bey Çelebi, Hayatı ve Eserleri* (1407- 1459), Istanbul: pp 38-39. Duman and others, 2008, Op.cit.: pp 39-44.

²⁰ Duman, 2008, Op.cit.: p 26

B. STORIES CONCERNING NASREDDIN:

Folk-tales began to be woven around the real life of this outstanding character. If we take the first drop in the bucket as his real life, the bubbles that appear around this constitute the myths created around him. In time this mythical life ignored the nucleus and cemented his character. Just like that of Mevlana and Yunus Emre, the life and character of Nasreddin Hodja gained a mythical quality. To put it another way, the gaps and uncertainties in his life were made up for in the tales told. While on the one hand folk tales incorporate his real life, on the other hand, his development into a popular hero creates a requisite uncertainty about the truth of these stories. In fact, one can see that the real-life Nasreddin Hodja has been elevated to a kind of wise man/dervish in the tales created by the Turkish people.

According to reports, Nasreddin Hodja's book consisting of love poem and words of wisdom was lost when Emir Temür Bey came to Akşehir. According to another report, one day Nasreddin Hodja got up, sat on his tombstone, and said to the guard, "Go and tell the people of Akşehir to come here from the mosque as I have something to say to them." Surprised, the guard ran to the mosque and did as Nasreddin Hodja had commanded. When the people in the mosque came to the tomb they couldn't see Nasreddin Hodja, but as they were returning, there was an earthquake and the dome of the mosque collapsed. In this way, the congregation escaped death. Other stories are used to show belief in the saintly character of Nasreddin Hodja from Akşehir. For example anyone who gives a wedding party will be sure to visit the tomb of Nasreddin Hodja in order for the bridal couple to enjoy a peaceful and happy married life He will be invited to the wedding and asked to bring the wise men with him. In a similar way the corner at the head of the table is reserved for Nasreddin

Hodja and left empty. According to another tale in the region, a person who visits the Hodja's tomb and laughs will bring bad luck. Earth from the tomb of Nasreddin Hodja is believed to be good for various illnesses (such as diseases of the eye). The poet Nesimi together with Hallacı Mansur and Şeyh Şüca are said to have been followers of Nasreddin Hodja, and there are people who say that in a dialogue with Murat III a descendent of Nasreddin Hodja related the joke played on Evliya Çelebi by the cemetery guard.²¹ It is possible that this data when newly added to the mythical character of Nasreddin Hodja began the creation in the hearts of the people of Nasreddin Hodja as the philosopher's philosopher.



²¹ Yıldırım, 2008, Op.cit.: pp 6-13.

C. NASREDDIN HODJA'S HUMOROUS WORLD:

Diogenes and Nasreddin Hodja, considered to be a descendent of Aesop as a thinker, represent the anecdotes which are basic to the form. The protagonists in many types of anecdote in the Turkish world and throughout the universe bear resemblances to Nasreddin Hodja. "Mämmetveli Kemine or Mıralı (Türkmen), Aldar Köse and Tazşa (Cossacks), Soruk Bollur, Naara Suox (Saha-Yakuts), Lapşu Stappan (Çuvaş Turk), Tastarakay (Altay and Hakas people), Özenbaşlı Ahmet Ahay (Crimean Tatar), Behlül Dânenide (Irak), Karakuş Kadı, Ebu Nuvas, Telhek, Daho, Cuhâ (Arab), Cuhâ el-Rûmî/Ottoman Cuha, Balakir, Işkodralı, Shepherd, Hiter Peter/Hitır Pitır/ Hitar Pitar/ Hitar Peter/ Clever Peter, Pıkala/ Pacala, Iter Peyo/ Clever Peyo (Balkan countries; Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia), Şalver Köse, Bozacı Kosti, Petri the Liar(Gagavuz; similar adapted and local types), Simonas Stanevičius (Lithuanian type of anecdote), Till Eulenspiegel (Germany), Şeyh Çilli, Lal Bucakkar, Birbal, Molla Do-Piyaze (Pakistan), Müşfiki (Tacikistan), Bertoldo, Giuf/ Giuha/ Giubali (Italy)"²² are some examples of these. This shows that on the one hand stories similar to those of Nasreddin Hodja were created while on the other Nasreddin Hodja became an exponent of the universal witty anecdote. In fact, in these stories Clever Peter is of the same type as shown in those of Nasreddin Hodja. In this kind of story some types are integral to those in the Nasreddin Hodja stories or are simply shown in a change of scene so that many times it can be said that these types are adapted or created from that of Nasreddin Hodja. In all of these stories the common ground is that "life must be seen in reverse" or from the opposite point of view.

²² Sakaoğlu ve Alptekin, 2009, Op.cit.: pp 63-104.

The stories given below, taken from Mustafa Duman's work entitled *Nasreddin Hodja ve 1555 Fikrası* (Nasreddin Hodja and his 1555 Stories) and collected together with the input of many researchers, show that Nasreddin Hodja is beloved by and identified with people from many different nations.²³ Moreover, these stories throw light on remembered Nasreddin Hodja stories. It should be emphasized that there are many versions of these stories which are given in a somewhat adapted form below:

Georgia:

One day Molla Nasreddin Hodja dressed himself in black and went out. On seeing him people asked him, "Hey, Molla, what happened, why are you dressed in mourning? He replied," Don't say anything, let Azrail think that I am dead."

The Halac:

One day Molla Nasreddin Hodja's donkey fell over a cliff and died. The Molla brought the people of the village to the edge of the cliff and said, "Look, my donkey fell down here and died. When you return to the village, don't annoy me with questions such as 'Where's your donkey?' or 'How did it fall?'

Western Thrace:

Nasreddin Hodja was asked, "Teacher, what's the hardest thing and what's the easiest thing in the world?" He replied. "The most difficult thing is to know oneself and the easiest is to give advice to others."

Macedonia:

Nasreddin was lying on the river bank surveying his surroundings. Suddenly at one and the same time his eye was caught by a cow grazing in the meadow and a crow flying in the air. The Hodja mused, saying, "Oh, God, why is it that crow which is of no use to anyone can fly, while

²³ Duman, 2008, Op.cit.: pp 399-584.

the cow which is so useful to man can't?" No sooner had he said this than something wet hit his forehead. The Hodja then exclaimed, "Oh, Almighty God, once more you have shown that you are the greatest and most omniscient being. If that had been a cow flying up there what would I look like now?"

Albania:

The Angels decided that Nasreddin Hodja had lived long enough and it was time for him to die. The Hodja asked them for time to perform his ablutions and say the five ritual prayers. With God's approval, they allowed him to do this. After performing his ritual ablutions and saying the first prayer, the Hodja rose and sat down. When the angels asked, "Why are you sitting down, Nasreddin Hodja?" he said, "Well, I've said the first prayer, but I'll say the second one when I feel like it." On account of these words, God showed mercy on him by granting him forty more years to live.

Turkish Cypriots:

One day when Nasreddin Hodja was chanting the call to prayer from the minaret, he noticed that something had fallen on his turban. When the call to prayer was finished, he took off his turban and saw that a bird had shat on it. He raised his head and saw that a large crow was perched on the top of the minaret. The Hodja said to the crow, "If you're a Muslim, don't disturb the man chanting the call to prayer; if you're not a Muslim, what are you doing on the minaret?"

Bulgaria:

Nasreddin Hodja asked Clever Peter: "Peter, can I trust you to keep a secret?" Peter answered, "You can trust me as much as you trust yourself." Then Hodja exclaimed, "In that case, I'll never trust you!"

Nasreddin Hodja wrote in his will that he wanted to be buried in an upright position. When asked why, he answered, "To leave space for other people."

Romania:

As his belly was growling, the Hodja went into a cookshop for a bowl of soup. After he had waited for some time, the cook brought the soup. When he saw the soup the Hodja said, "I don't want that. Take it back. I want hot soup." The cook was surprised and said, "But, Hodja, you haven't even tasted the soup. How do you know it's cold?" The Hodja replied, "From your finger which is in the soup."

The Gagavuz:

Nasreddin Hodja met one of the municipal authorities in a narrow street. As the street was so narrow one of them would have to give way to the other. The man said to the Hodja, "Step aside. I don't give way to every Tom, Dick or Harry I come across." Stepping aside, the Hodja said, "I do!"

United States of America:

A man who had been crossed in love many times said to the Hodja, "I'm always falling in love with beautiful women but I never find one who responds. Isn't there a remedy for this?" "Well," said the Hodja, "why don't you try falling in love with an ugly woman?"

Serbia:

Nasreddin Hodja owed someone 200 kurush and hadn't paid his creditor. The creditor went to the judge and complained about Nasreddin Hodja, The judge asked Nasreddin Hodja about this matter. "Yes," said the Hodja, "it's true. I owe this man 200 kurush. But for four years I've been asking him for three months' grace in which to pay off the debt. He doesn't grant me this so how can I pay off my debt?"

One night the Hodja went out into the street and started to crow like a rooster. The neighbours asked,

"Hodja, what's up?" "I've got a lot of work to do today so I want the dawn to come quickly," he said.

Croatia:

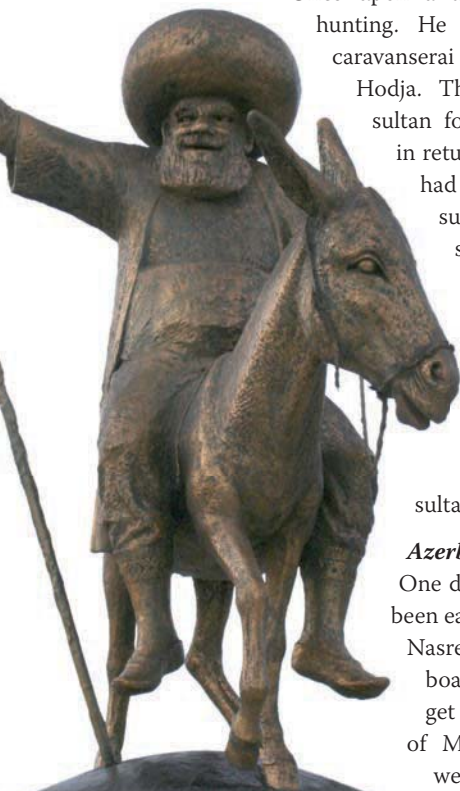
Hodja Nasreddin was sitting in front of his house, resting. A neighbour came by and said, "Your donkey started braying very early this morning. What happened?" The Hodja replied, "What are you asking me for? Go and ask the donkey."

Finnish Tatars and Kazans:

Once upon a time the sultan went hunting. He ate his lunch at a caravanserai run by Nasreddin Hodja. The Hodja asked the sultan for one thousand akka in return for the omelette he had cooked for him. The sultan was surprised and said, "My Goodness, that's very expensive. Are hens and eggs scarce in these parts?" The Hodja replied, "There are plenty of hens and eggs around here but sultans are harder to find."

Azerbaijan:

One day a dervish, who had been eavesdropping on Molla Nasreddin's conversation, boasted, saying "I can get whatever I want out of Molla Nasreddin," and went to find the Molla. He said to him, "Molla, I have



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a question for you. I see that you are a wise man and will give me the right answer." "Go ahead, ask your question," said the Molla to the dervish. The dervish asked him about Adam and Eve and ended, by saying "Look here, because of Adam and Eve, you and I are brothers. So I'd like you to give me some money." Molla Nasreddin handed the dervish a penny. When the dervish complained that, that was too little, Molla Nasreddin said to him, "Don't let your other brothers hear of this or you won't have even as much as that. And in any case, if we are brothers, you should give me something, too." After saying this, he took back the penny he had given the dervish.

Molla Nasreddin was asked, "Molla, you are a learned man, you must know. How many stars are there in the sky?" The Molla replied, "To tell the truth, I've often thought about counting the number of stars in the sky. But it so happens that they can't be counted from the ground. You have to go up into the sky to count them. However, I am so busy during the day I don't have time. And at night, it's so dark, I'm afraid of falling."

One day a person who listened to no one, respected no one and upset or ill-treated everyone, said to Molla Nasreddin as an excuse for his behaviour, "What can I do? It's not my fault. It's the dough I was made from." In reply the Molla said, "It's not the fault of the dough, it's the cooking of it. You were kneaded well but left unbaked."

Uzbekistan:

When Nasreddin Efendi was a child at school, he asked the teacher difficult questions. One day the teacher said to him, "Don't boast of your knowledge. Many of those who are clever and quick in childhood grow up to be stupid and slow." Nasreddin Efendi retorted, "That means you, too, were clever and quick in your childhood."

Nasreddin Efendi had a headache and was deaf in one ear. Feeling unwell in this way, he went to one of the city

judges. In order to tease him, the judge said, “Efendi, you are welcome. What’s the matter with your ear? Perhaps you borrowed it from a donkey.” Without turning a hair, Nasreddin Efendi said, “That’s right. God divided up the donkey’s head and gave you the brains and me the ear.”

Nasreddin Efendi was asked how a person could become wise. This is what he said: “If a wise man is speaking, lend him your ears. If it is you speaking, listen to what you are saying.”

The sultan had built a defensive wall around his palace. When Nasreddin Hodja asked the builders why it was so strong, they said, “So his enemies can’t climb over it.” The Hodja then asked another question: “From the inside or from the outside?”

The Tatars:

A man who had lost his purse suspected one of his neighbours had stolen it but neither of them owned up to the deed. The judge of that area, Nasreddin Hodja, learned of the situation and summoned the two suspects. He gave each of them a stick, saying, “These sticks I’ve given you are of equal length. Bring them back to me tomorrow. The stick of the guilty person will have grown by a span.” The next morning the suspects brought back the sticks and gave them to Nasreddin Hodja. On examining the sticks, Nasreddin Hodja saw that one of them was a span shorter than the other. It seems that the thief, believing that his stick would grow by a span and thus reveal his guilt, had shortened his stick by a span. Nasreddin Hodja said to the owner of the short stick, “It was you who took the purse. Now give it back.”

The Kirghiz:

Apendi was talking with his young son. The son asked him, “Father, are we good people?” Apendi replied, “Of course, we are good people, my son.” Then the son asked him again, “Well, if we are, why don’t the troubles hanging

over us go to the bad people? Apendi replied, "Troubles don't want to live with the bad people. It's because we're good people that our troubles don't want to leave us."

Nasreddin Apendi had bought an ox one day from the marketplace and was taking it home. On the way he encountered an acquaintance of his who pestered him at length with foolish questions such as: Who did you buy the ox from? How much did you pay? How old is it? etc.etc. Unwillingly, Apendi replied. Before he had gone another five steps, he came across another acquaintance. He, too, asked, "Apendi, did you buy an ox?" Apendi answered, "No, I didn't buy an ox. The ox bought me. Ask it your questions."

The Uygurs:

In order to tease Hodja Efendi, one day a man asked him, "What a pity it is that your mother is dead. Otherwise I'd have married her and you'd have been my son. "It isn't too late for that," retorted Hodja Efendi. "Give your daughter to me and I'll still be your son."

A greedy man had eaten too much at a feast and his stomach began to ache. Nasreddin Efendi asked him why he had eaten so much. "It was someone else's food, that's why," he replied. Then Nasreddin Efendi said, "The food may have been someone else's but the stomach belongs to you."

One day Nasreddin Efendi brought a sheep to the marketplace to sell. When someone asked him the price, Nasreddin Efendi said, "I bought this sheep for five liras and I am going to sell it for six. However, if this price doesn't suit you, I'll sell it to you for seven. As the real price of this sheep, however, is eight liras you'll have to give me nine. If you want to buy it and take it away immediately, that'll be ten liras."

Nasreddin Efendi used to make long baggy trousers called shalvar. A rich but miserly man came to him and said,

“Make me a pair of shalvar made of stone so they won’t wear out.” The Hodja replied, “I’ll do that but first bring me as much sand as you can.” When the man asked the Hodja, “What are you going to do with all that sand?” he replied, “It’s to line the shalvar with.”

In order to cause Nasreddin Hodja Efendi trouble, a molla asked him, “What is the name of the devil’s wife?” Not to be outdone, Nasreddin Hodja Efendi said to the molla, “You’re the one who knows where the devil sleeps. It’s you who know the name of his wife.”

One of the mollas once asked Nasir Efendi, “Don’t ask, there are so many people coming to see me that I can’t find time to say any prayers. I’m wondering how to get rid of them.” Nasir Efendi replied, “Ask them for a loan, They’ll not come near you again.”

Nasreddin Efendi was tired of being poor. One evening as he was sitting by the wall of his tumble-down house, he prayed, “Oh God, you are Almighty. Either take my life or relieve me of this poverty.” At that minute, with a great rumble, the wall began to collapse. Escaping with difficulty from under the rubble, Nasreddin Hodja Efendi exclaimed, “Oh God, you may not be interested in my request but- strike me dead- you don’t even let me finish what I have to say.”

A city gentleman said to Nasreddin Efendi, “Efendi, you are a learned man, tell me when the Day of Judgement will come.” Nasreddin Efendi replied, “The day after you die.” “How do you know that?” the gentleman asked. Nasreddin Efendi: “Because that’s the day when the quarrels over your inheritance will turn the world upside down.”

A neighbour asked Nasreddin Hodja Efendi to lend him his sieve. Nasreddin Hodja Efendi said, “I would have lent it to you but it isn’t empty. My wife is keeping water in it.” The neighbour protested, saying, “Nasreddin Hodja Efendi, how can water ever be kept in a sieve?” Nasreddin

Hodja Efendi replied, "If a person doesn't feel like lending his sieve, forget about keeping water in it, he'll even spread flour on a rope."

When Nasreddin Hodja was engaged in selling honey, a crafty merchant wanting to cheat him, asked for a pot of honey. While Nasreddin Hodja was weighing the honey, he started to pester him with questions. When Nasreddin Hodja asked for the money for the honey, the merchant said, "I think I gave it to you while we were talking." Sizing up the situation, Nasreddin Hodja took the pot and poured the honey back into the bowl. After wiping the pot clean of any honey, he gave it back to the man empty, saying, "I think you ate the honey while we were talking."

One day when Nasreddin Hodja Efendi had got on his donkey and was on his way to the city, he met the city judge. Before he could greet him, the donkey began to bray. The judge, angry at this, said, "You have a very disrespectful donkey, Nasreddin Hodja Efendi, it brays at quite the wrong time." Efendi replied, "Actually my donkey is very respectful but when it sees friends like you, it becomes so overcome with joy it forgets itself."

One day the city judge, in order to play a joke on Nasreddin Hodja Efendi, said to him, "Efendi, I've heard that you see everything double. Is that true?" Nasreddin Hodja Efendi replied, "That is true! For example, at this minute I see you have four feet."

An elderly village shepherd said to Nasreddin Hodja Efendi, "A wolf ate most of the sheep I was rearing. Can you tell me if there is anywhere in this world a wolf which won't eat sheep?" Nasreddin Hodja replied, "Well, yes of course there is. A dead wolf won't eat sheep."

Turkmenistan:

One day Nasreddin Hodja's son felt very cold when he went to bed. When he couldn't stand it any longer, he asked his father, "Does the cold shiver?" When Nasreddin

Hodja Efendi replied, "No son, the cold doesn't shiver," the son asked him again, "Well, if it doesn't shiver, why does it come under my blanket?"

Kazakhstan:

One day a merchant had the town crier proclaim, "The man who drinks the Black Sea dry will be given one hundred akça." When Nasreddin Hodja heard this he came to the merchant and said he would drink the Black Sea dry. All the people gathered together at the given time and place. "I'm ready," the Hodja announced. The merchant said. "Very well, then let's begin," but the Hodja said, "First of all, you must stop these rivers flowing into the sea so that I can drink up the water without it increasing all the time." The merchant then acknowledged he was beaten and gave Nasreddin Hodja the hundred akça.

When Nasreddin Hodja was returning from the marketplace he found a purse full of gold. Showing the purse to everyone, he asked, "Who's lost his money?" A poor man answered, "That money is mine." Later a rich man appeared and protested, "No, that purse is mine." The Hodja looked at the man and asked, "Is this purse really yours?" The rich man, overjoyed, replied "Yes, the purse is mine." On hearing this, the Hodja emptied the money out of the purse and gave the purse to the rich man and the money to the poor man.

One winter's day a gentleman met Nasreddin Hodja on the road and said, "Even though I'm well wrapped up, I'm still shivering. But you are dressed in rags. Don't you feel cold? What's your secret?" The Hodja replied, "The secret is that my clothes are full of holes. The cold enters through one hole and goes out through another one. But when it enters though a hole in your clothes, it can't find another one to go out of. That's why you're shivering." On hearing this, the gentleman exchanged his new clothes for those of Nasreddin Hodja.

On waking up from a dream in which he dreamed he had swallowed a live rat, a cross-grained neighbour of Nasreddin Hodja's asked him what the meaning of this could be. The Hodja replied, "This dream means that you must swallow a live cat".

Nasreddin Hodja was walking along talking to himself. Someone saw him and asked him, "Hodja, why do you go around talking to yourself?" Without showing any reaction, the Hodja replied, "All my life I've enjoyed talking with intelligent people, one of those intelligent people happens to be me."

A foreigner came to the city where Nasreddin Hodja lived in order to learn the Tatar language. When he complained to the Hodja that it was a difficult language to learn, the Hodja replied, "Our language is easy to learn. In fact, even our children can speak it."

While Nasreddin Hodja was planting young fruit tree saplings in his garden, one of his neighbours asked him, "When will these trees mature and give fruit? You'll never get to eat that fruit." The Hodja retorted, "Of course, none of us will eat the fruit of these trees I'm planting. We eat the fruit of the trees the people before us planted. Let the next generation eat the fruit from our trees."

One evening Nasreddin Hodja came running agitatedly out of his house. When his neighbours saw him, one of them went and asked him where he was going. The Hodja replied, "I'm going to hide the night." When the neighbour asked him why, the Hodja, "You idiot! So that at night thieves can't steal and keep us awake."

One day Nasreddin Hodja was walking along the river bank when the official robe he was carrying over his arm fell into the river. Then the Hodja exclaimed "Oh! What a good thing I wasn't wearing my robe or I'd have fallen into the water and been carried away, too."

One night the stove in Nasreddin Hodja's house went out. Nasreddin Hodja's wife asked him to go and fetch some kindling to light the fire again. The Hodja said to her, "Light the fire first and then I'll look for some kindling. How can I find anything in the dark?"

Nasreddin Hodja one day wanted to go out visiting. As his shalvar (baggy trousers) were old, he put on a new pair borrowed from a neighbour and went off to make his visits. As the shalvar were a bit too big around the waist, they kept slipping down. When people told him, "Hodja, your shalvar are falling down," he replied, "Let it fall if it wants to, that's not my shalvar."

Nasreddin Hodja was very hungry and asked his wife to prepare something for him to eat. His wife said, "Be patient, just see how beautifully I'm saying my prayers. You can fill your belly later." The Hodja replied: "Oh! Beauty doesn't fill the belly."

A certain man had come to Nasreddin Hodja's house several times but could never find him at home. This time he waited for a while and then as noone arrived, he wrote "Donkey" on the door and left. The next day he met Nasreddin Hodja in the street and said, "Hodja, I came looking for you yesterday but you weren't at home." The Hodja replied, "Yes, I knew you'd been there." When the man asked him how he knew this, the Hodja said, "You wrote your name on the door."

Nasreddin Hodja was asked, "Hodja, why is sea water salty?" The Hodja replied: "So the fish won't smell."

Iran:

Nasreddin Hodja asked his wife why she didn't know how old she was. She replied, "Every day I count the things in the house, so that if anyone should steal something, God forbid, I'll know it's gone. I never think of counting my age. Who's going to steal that?"





Molla Nasreddin Hodja asked his wife, "What will you need to cook pilaff today?" His wife answered, "I'll need five kilos of rice and two kilos of butter." When Nasreddin Hodja asked her, "Isn't two kilos of butter too much for five kilos of rice?" his wife retorted, "The pilaff one dreams of is always best when it's buttery."

Molla Nasreddin Hodja's friends were begging him to invite them to visit him. As the Molla was poor he didn't want to do that. But one day his friends got together and came to his house to pay him a visit. Nasreddin Hodja set the table and asked them to sit down, saying, "Eat according to what your pockets provide." After eating their meal and making conversation, the guests got up to leave. They then realized that their kaftans and shoes had disappeared. Then Molla Nasreddin Hodja said, "Your kaftans and your shoes are at the pawn-broker's. I got a loan from him in order to put food on the table. If you go and pay him back the money, you can get your kaftans and your shoes."

A poet who had no talent once read his poems to Molla Nasreddin Hodja. When Nasreddin Hodja said, "That's a very bad poem," the poet got angry and began to curse and swear with great eloquence. Then Nasreddin Hodja said, "My son, your prose is ten times better than your poetry."

Molla Nasreddin Hodja went to the marketplace to buy a beast of burden. The villagers at the marketplace were busily buying and selling donkeys. One of the men Nasreddin Hodja came across complained to him, saying, "There's nothing in this marketplace but peasants and donkeys." When Molla Nasreddin Hodja asked him, "Are you a peasant?" the man replied "No, I'm not." "Then you must be from the other group," said Nasreddin Hodja.

Molla Nasreddin Hodja was walking with one of his friends in the country when an ox bellowed. As a joke, his friend said to Nasreddin Hodja, "Look, the ox is calling you." Whereupon Nasreddin Hodja went up to the ox and



acted as if he were talking to it. When he returned, his friend asked what the ox had said to him. He answered, "The ox asked if it was fitting for me to make friends with a donkey."

One day Molla Nasreddin Hodja collected the people together and said to them, "This year plant seedless cotton seeds so that next year we won't have to separate the seeds when we harvest the cotton. When you sow the cotton seeds, scatter a few strands of wool among them so that you can make clothes for yourselves when the weather gets cold."

A certain man claimed that he was an astrologer. Molla Nasreddin Hodja asked him who his neighbour was and when he did not get an answer, exclaimed, "How can a man who doesn't know his own neighbour give us news about the stars?"

While Molla Nasreddin Hodja was preaching a sermon, someone asked him a difficult question. When the Hodja said that he didn't know the answer, the other retorted, "Well. if you don't know the answer, why did you climb into the pulpit?". Molla Nasreddin Hodja replied, "I climbed into this pulpit to tell you what I know. If I had wanted to climb into a pulpit to tell you what I don't know, the pulpit would have ended way up in sky."

Molla Nasreddin Hodja was asked, "Why don't fish speak?" Molla Nasreddin Hodja gave this answer, "You don't know the language spoken by the fish. Whoever hears your words knows the language fish speak."

D. THE PHILOSOPHER OF PHILOSOPHERS: NASREDDIN HODJA

Nasreddin Hodja is the philosopher of all philosophers who created that realism and wit which is the basis of Turkish humour and critical thought. He represents the main Turkish and also universal, type of wisdom found in the comic heroes of stories based on a satirical way of thinking and a humorous perspective. One must look at evaluations of Nasreddin Hodja as a historical identity, together with those of him as a philosopher of philosophers, from different points of view based on assessments of the critical thought and wit created in the anecdotes. Some researchers adopt the view of Nasreddin Hodja as a historical person and their approach to the anecdotes about him is to claim that some of the stories may or may not be his. This selective approach makes use of historical facts, on the one hand, and, on the other, of various definitive characteristics to create a different or “storybook” type of Nasreddin Hodja. The approach by means of the “Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes”²⁴ is the basis, going back eight centuries, for the essential Nasreddin Hodja as a philosopher among philosophers, created by the Turkish people. For this reason, Nasreddin Hodja and the wealth of stories created about him has a dynamic character. The main type of figure in the Nasreddin Hodja stories is a product of the people’s collective memory. The means for creating this comes from the historical person known as Nasreddin Hodja. In contrast to this, there is no information as

²⁴ Oğuz, M. Öcal, 2009, “Nasreddin Hoca’nın Fıkraları mı, Nasreddin Hoca Fıkraları mı?, 21.Yüzyılı Nasreddin Hoca ile Anlamak, Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Pub., Ankara: pp 555-560.

to the way Nasreddin Hodja acted at the time when he actually lived. In fact, the Nasreddin Hodja stories began to circulate only two centuries or so after the time when he reputedly lived. From another point of view, the Nasreddin Hodja stories, enriched by the introduction of various differences, have carried on from that day to this. In this way, Nasreddin Hodja has stepped outside the boundaries of his own times and geographical area and become a universal hero of witty anecdotes. The area from where Nasreddin Hodja came and the times in which he lived today have an important place when considering humour around the world and will be mentioned more and more often in the future. For a young researcher surfing the web Nasreddin Hodja has the same place in virtual reality as Tamburlaine does. Nasreddin Hodja, with his eighty years of living history, has turned into an undying philosopher of philosophers. Created and supported by the people for over eight centuries, Nasreddin Hodja, who actually lived for eighty years, has been turned into an undying philosopher of philosophers. Nasreddin Hodja, created by the Turkish people, later combined with other universal comic characters to become the representative of such a type. In conclusion, it may be said that the typical Nasreddin Hodja figure is a product of different times and places. Thus, Nasreddin Hodja has transcended time and place and can be said to be a philosopher of philosophers, created according to the critical thought and pervading humour of his own region and times. For over eight hundred years, he has been giving an education to those interested followers of his school of satire and humour.

Nasreddin is introduced in the Turkish-speaking world as a combination of those personalities known throughout the world as critical figures in the communal memory of such types. According to Dursun Yıldırım, together with having a historical identity, Nasreddin Hodja is the greatest representative of individual creative wit; he is

the type created by the people as the representative in their folk stories of wit, intelligence and perception.²⁵ Nasreddin Hodja is the philosopher of philosophers, an amalgamation of universal story-type heroes. Umay Günay describes Nasreddin Hodja as “a universal type in whom the Turkish spirit is found to be embodied.”²⁶ According to Gülin Ögüt Eker “Nasreddin Hodja, teaches people how difficulties can be solved through experience and how to live with their weaknesses; he supports the idea that reason and constructive criticism can be used to solve problems through a spirit of compromise even in the most sensitive issues.” Nasreddin Hodja has in particular, the special characteristics of a counselor, a protector of the people, a folk-hero, a social critic, a reconciler, a therapist, a preacher, a master of words, a management advisor, and bellwether.²⁷

No cultural event or figure can stay alive for 800 years without being acknowledged by the people. Nasreddin Hodja, taken as the Turkish folk philosopher or, in a more topical phrase, as the embodiment of the Turkish method of critical thought, has for centuries been the people’s teacher and transmitter of knowledge. Nasreddin Hodja teaches the coming generations how to make jokes through the pleasing medium of the folk-story with its systematic method of critical thought. The Nasreddin Hodja stories possess a refined essence and strength which show how the most complicated issue can easily be solved without straying away from a systematic thought process.

²⁵ Yıldırım, Dursun, 1999, *Türk Edebiyatında Bektaşî Fıkraları*, Akçağ Pub., Ankara: pp 25-26.

²⁶ Günay, Umay, 1990, “Nasreddin Fıkraları ve Masallar Konusundaki Düşünceler”, *Ist International Nasreddin Hodja Symposium Information*, Ministry of Culture pub., Ankara: pp 99-103.

²⁷ For quote and other sources see Eker, Gülin Ögüt, 2009, *İnsan, Kültür, Mizah*, Grafiker Pub., Ankara: pp 119-122.

A careful examination of the typical fictional comic hero shows that this hero has become a symbol of the society's way of critical thinking. Representative critical thinking should be kept alive in every period through the main distinctive methods (whether verbal, written or printed, electronic or virtual reality) in other words, they must exist in the best methods of their time. In this way, the distinctive wit of the time will be carried on from generation to generation through its existence in collective/cultural memory.

The impossible reality of the way Nasreddin Hodja is shared among cities and countries is a mystery which has been carried down through the centuries. Whereas Mevlana, Yunus Emre and Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli symbolize the heart, Nasreddin Hodja symbolizes the intelligence and together they create the basic philosophy of the Anatolian Turkish people. Cultural memories of a time before the advent of Islam were carried by the Turks into Anatolia in the 13th to 14th centuries (a time when individuality achieved its zenith) and there became synthesized into a new, independent and immortal personality. It must be accepted that when civilizations unite they form a superior individuality. Nasreddin Hodja is the chief cultural figure in the transportation of the Turkish system of critical thinking and, therefore, the outstanding concept of its wit, into a new geographical area, into the present age and into the future. The stories of Nasreddin Hodja, based on an unseen but creative and intelligent mind, are foremost in the recording of the satirical world of folk philosophy.

Every description or explanation concerning Nasreddin Hodja presently and in future is a unified whole. It is one with what has been transmitted from the past to the present and what will live on into the future. Nasreddin Hodja represents every kind of profession, every class, each rank and file of society and unites every separate individual within a universal social identity. The different specialities displayed by Nasreddin Hodja in the stories

demonstrate the kind of critical thinking which, on the one hand, internalizes this localized yet common identity and, on the other, ensures its intellectual development. We all have our own Nasreddin Hodja. Every researcher or literary analyst creates Nasreddin Hodja according to his/her own point of view or, rather, according to her/his own personality. Even so Nasreddin Hodja gives each individual and each universal identity the opportunity to become the other and look from the outside in. Those who can get past the barrier created by the clothes Nasreddin Hodja wears can consider, from a critical point of view, the profession, class and society to which they individually belong. The great importance of this in the development of an individual and universal identity should be stressed. Within this concept, Nasreddin Hodja as a historical character is not significant. In fact, everyone has a bit of Nasreddin Hodja in them. In particular, the minute one espouses analytical thought one becomes a “Nasreddin Hodja.” Many researchers declare that the dynamism which creates analytical thought is the basis of wit. Consequently, Nasreddin Hodja is the driving force in the world of folk philosophy and analytical thought.



Proverbial sayings are extremely useful when researching Turkish folk philosophy. These have not been dwelt on sufficiently in the preparation of a catalogue or in considering the relationships between one kind or field and another. In Turkey the relationships between folk philosophy, proverbial sayings and the Nasreddin Hodja stories should be examined anew. The recognition of a relationship between a story and a proverb would throw light on Turkish folk philosophy as well as on the basis for the system of analytical thought. Some proverbs which may be considered further include the proverb, "He who pays the piper calls the tune." Although it is not known whether it was the story or the proverb gave rise to the other but it is obvious that there is a relationship between the two. As a result, cultural creativity, form, element and tradition become mutually influential. Under this mutual influence new forms, new traditions and new elements appear. Therefore we may say that the nucleus of the cultural genetic code of folk philosophy can easily be observed in proverbs and anecdotes.

The image of Nasreddin Hodja seated backwards on his donkey is symbolic of "looking at the world from another point of view, of "reading between the lines" This makes it obligatory to read the canon of Nasreddin Hodja stories, either created by Nasreddin Hodja himself or others, or an out of the ordinary-event, by reading it crosswise or between the lines Moreover, the natural or intrinsic wit hidden in the Nasreddin Hodja stories becomes clear when we read between the lines. A critical and positive examination of humour, that is, by extension, the Nasreddin Hodja stories, shows that those who having opted out of what we call the river of life and are looking at it from the banks, must be shown the monotony of their existence. Read from between the lines, the Nasreddin Hodja stories allow us to pass from the objective world to the world of the mind. Criticism of the opposite sex and back chat are

the main themes of the anecdotes.²⁸ One should be aware that this analysis and individual criticism remind one that it is this basic dynamic which leads to the development of the society and the individual.²⁹ On the other hand, the appearance and development of this analytical yet creative way of thinking as a congenial medium through its wit is accepted by everyone. This is because the most creative moments of a person's life come when one wants to read between the lines. It is humour and an analytical outlook which trigger this creativity. The development of humour is seen when analytical thought and creativity put forth fresh shoots. The younger generation's relationship with this humour breaks down when they take the words too seriously. To expect individualism from security, formulaic thought and memorized knowledge is not a realistic approach to life. On this subject, Nasreddin Hodja has been a guide for many centuries. Nasreddin Hodja must become the background for an education in analytical thought about the whole of life, including such areas as beliefs, management and sexuality. No boundaries should hinder Nasreddin Hodja. Just as wit creates and feeds analytical thinking so analytical thinking creates and feeds wit. All those who are forced to ride the right way on a donkey and perceive the world in the same way as everyone else, those who have no value or individuality from the point of view of the outlook and wit seen in Nasreddin Hodja's stories, could become the subject of an independent Nasreddin Hodja story. Nasreddin Hodja is the symbol of those who perceive life by seating themselves backwards on a donkey, who desire to turn the world upside down, consequently the symbol of critical thinking and trenchant wit. What

²⁸ Feinberg, Leonard, 2005, "Mizahın Sırrı", Halkbiliminde Kuramlar ve Yaklaşımlar-2, (Ed. M.Ö. Oğuz ve S. Gürçayır), Geleneksel Pub., Ankara: pp 487- 502.

²⁹ Hançerlioğlu, Orhan, 1979 (5th Edition), Felsefe Sözlüğü, Remzi Kitabevi, İstanbul.

everyone one in the world knows, sees and has an opinion on can not be said to be of much interest. Nasreddin Hodja continues to look at the world, people, events, values, traditions, accepted ideas, in fact, even beliefs from a different angle and teaches people in the same way he has done for eight centuries. For this reason, he is one of the most important characters in the history of philosophy in Turkey and throughout the world.

A topsy-turvy world is the symbol of a desired and independent cultural creativity, of a festive spirit and in particular, of the world of comedy, wit and analytical thinking. A festive atmosphere begins to flow through the medium of humour and critical thinking, bringing a stressed-out existence back to life. Within this framework Nasreddin Hodja gives life equilibrium and health. With Nasreddin Hodja life is questioned, re-appraised, decoded, eased, enriched and developed. In other words, for existence/ communal life to continue in an ordered way, there is a need to read between the lines, as realized in the world of tolerant wit. Just as Nasreddin Hodja stories are placed in a definite context so humour removes all differences and advocates equality and, therefore, peace throughout the community. Humour through creative advice ensures that solutions to social and individual questions will be produced and universally accepted. Moreover, humour is influential in a period when the ideas of a deep-rooted culture and civilization are changing. Such a time of change and revolution is the reason for the Turkish people, and other nations, to determine what kind of humour and what type of story, and therefore to turn to Nasreddin Hodja. In this way, the elements of individual and social foreign culture make themselves known in the analytical world of humour and meanwhile choose to continue their existence within such a concept. The real elements of humour, and therefore of Nasreddin Hodja's stories, live on in the refined memories of the community. Many cultural elements were unable to be destroyed

or changed in the period before and during the Islamic period and continue to live on in the Nasreddin Hodja's stories. These elements explain the Turkish people's view of the world, or rather their critical appraisal, which has gone on developing from the first period of history and come down to the present day. The collective mind, which created Nasreddin Hodja and turned him into the philosopher of philosophers, reflects at the same time the joint legacy of humanity.

Just as the wit of Nasreddin Hodja became clearly apparent, so analytical thought was produced and developed in a world where tolerant humour and a different aspect on life could exist side by side. A humorous man's face is full of smiles and so the symbol of a smiling face chosen to represent comedy must be accepted as the basis for the development of the human thought process. In the saying "A joke is the product of a witty mind" this factor is being emphasized.³⁰ Here what is called a witty mind is the creative analysis and positive thought process which is expressed through humour. As a result Nasreddin Hodja, with his philosophical smile, has become the symbol of a joke which takes a critical look at mankind and throughout the ages instructs us how to pass on this gift of humour.

It can be understood that, at the beginning of the Common Era, the change in the system of belief brought about a division of matters into serious and non-serious; over time the attempts to elevate seriousness to a higher plane did not quite achieve the expected result. In fact, it can be seen that the greater part of the culture, traditions and values which have existed for thousands of years, even the collective memory, was created by non-serious matters on a non-serious plane. To seat Nasreddin Hodja the right way round on his donkey and thus create an

³⁰ Şakacı, Figen, 2007 (3. Edition), Mizah Zekanın Zekatıdır, "Tarık Minkari Kitabı", (Söyleşi) Türkiye İş Bankası Pub., İstanbul.

artificial 'seriousness' has hidden behind it the image of Nasreddin Hodja seated backwards on the donkey, thus falsifying the separation into serious and non-serious and thereby showing the unifying strength of life perceived and interpreted as a whole. "To sit backwards on a donkey" is the symbol of the Turkish folk-philosophy created by approaching life from a different angle. Nasreddin Hodja sitting backwards is the satirical outlook of the people themselves. The sentence, "You know best," implying a hidden criticism, is equal in the world of humour to the creation by everyone of a Nasreddin Hodja type in his own image. The Nasreddin Hodja type of story was, in fact, created in opposition to the artificial separation of life into serious and non-serious matters. Nasreddin Hodja represents the type of philosophical person created by the people to remove all forms of separation and thus make everyone equal. It is worth reminding ourselves that the donkey is accepted as a symbol of wisdom. Nasreddin Hodja's being presented as both judge and imam strongly emphasizes this idea of equality in life: in law and in religion everyone is equal. In the Nasreddin Hodja stories those who use methods to distinguish themselves are criticized by means of the reader/writer. Thus in the Nasreddin Hodja stories the tendency towards every kind of differentiation seen in education and rooted in status is the main subject for criticism.

In addition, the birth of humour sandwiched between the serious and the non-serious, and the intrinsic criticism hidden in the seriousness on which it is based, which later became more artificial, is brushed aside in this approach. Lack of seriousness is not humour. Criticism is a defining factor of humour. To artificially solemnize Nasreddin Hodja strengthens his sense of humour. In contrast to this, Nasreddin Hodja is not lacking in seriousness. He is a symbol of the balance in life required by nature. He is a symbol, not of division, but of the unity which, by equalizing, denies any form of separation. Finally, in the

stories of Nasreddin Hodja there is a secret magic which creates a unifying equaity, teaches the art of analytical thinking, and forces development and adaptation.

With regard to the view of the recreation of the image, it is accepted in both Turkey and the rest of the world that the fixed and widespread image of Nasreddin Hodja is open to reinvention and enrichment through new characteristics. The real type of Nasreddin Hodja story describes the main character through well-known imagery. The main humorous Nasreddin Hodja type of image/ actor starts from the beginning period of imagery-making and it is clear that there is no foreseeable end to this. The people who created the main Nasreddin Hodja figure will decide on how auxiliary or peer figures will act. The main Nasreddin Hodja image was born from many complementary/ peer/ inferior images and his image is still evolving. The period during which the main image was resolved was one of uncertainly and diverse opinion on the hero's life. During this time the stories and legends had an important function. The Nasreddin Hodja main type was well known, created from the self or joint image seen at different times. The image of Nasreddin Hodja is famous. While in each story or legend Nasreddin Hodja is timeless, there is also a factor which helps to create a new image of him.

Knowledge engenders discussion on the relationship between analytical thought and humour. To interpret humour from the point of view of life is the philosopher's basic rule. Wit is the individual portrayal of this. The humorous way in which those who see the futility of artificial seriousness and turn the irritations of life into a joke is its source. Positive or productive criticism and the humour related to this put knowledge and, therefore, life on a level attainable in maturity. Wit makes fun of life and is the basic means of becoming mature and philosophical about life. It is for this reason that Nasreddin Hodja is the philosopher of philosophers, the teacher of philosophers

past, present and future. Nasreddin Hodja's fund of wit is, from one point of view, a school and a storehouse of wisdom.

As well as the ordinary people, at the head of those who created Nasreddin Hodja as a type of wit and critic come the researchers of the last century and today. Every researcher creates a different image of Nasreddin Hodja in his analytical criticism. This creates a dynamism in Nasreddin Hodja lore and characterization. There is no end to this. On the other hand, the Nasreddin Hodja fund of wit has become that of all mankind. As a result of this, the proclamation by UNESCO of 1996 as the year of Nasreddin Hodja, who, as the main representative of Turkish analytical thought and of universal wit, has become a common denominator to all people, was meaningful.

In the Nasreddin Hodja stories the main thought, wisdom, outlook or approach presents the concepts of femininity/ introductory speech /curiosity in contrast to masculinity/ eloquence/ ability to reply in order to create a polished dialogue. The same method is used in folk drama, which is the creator of Turkish wit, and can be found in humorous writing and comic books, and can generally be encountered as the basis used by film and television producers and broadcasters. The Nasreddin Hodja stories are introduced by Nasreddin Hoca, the point is made by him and it is he, as the people, who reveals the truth. The dialogue in these anecdotes usually starts with a question. Questioning is the basic tool for the dissemination of knowledge. The question comes from either an individual or society, but they can always provide their own answer. A society in which the entrenched system of education is of question and questioning, of interrogation, rather than the contrary, answers and answering, is capable of producing answers to the questions of others. Those who can ask questions and know how to interrogate are the descendents of Nasreddin Hodja. He teaches Turkish society how to first ask questions, to ask different questions

about similar events and therefore produce answers. By questioning memorized learning, taboos, and pre-formed judgements, these are made to disappear and the individual is freed. Thus, societal development opens the way towards, primarily, the dimension of rational thought.

The dialogue technique of question and answer is an influential communicative device which makes clear the relationship of an individual with other people. For this reason, in courses dealing with personal development and leadership which have recently become the mode, the Nasreddin Hodja image as seen in the stories has been used to produce effective results. The personality of the philosopher's philosopher improves on the lessons the era's leaders learn from life. The story in which Nasreddin Hodja is asked, "Teacher, how can I become a man?" and replies, "If someone is listening, speak; if someone is speaking, listen" is an example which explains this. Those Nasreddin Hodja and Sufi stories which state as a principle of life "Speak little, think a lot" bear a striking similarity in the direct counterpoint seen in this oft-repeated piece of advice.

The Nasreddin Hodja story continues even today to be the type which teaches Turkish society the Turkish language, effective delivery and how to establish relationships. The truth is that Nasreddin Hodja speaks to the people in their own language which lives on and is developed through the medium of story-telling. For this reason, every section of Turkish society resorts to Nasreddin Hodja when describing themselves. They make him a point of reference which everyone will understand when one of his effective stories is related. The art of humour and analytical thought has developed in those who can establish meaningful relationships between themselves and other people. In the same way that an Englishman learns the language of Shakespeare, so Nasreddin Hodja imparts an effective use of Turkish; the Turkish language, which is one of the most mathematical in the world, continues to

teach and develop an analytical way of thought. Turkish vocabulary first developed in the area of humour from which stories were made up which enriched, developed and gave life to the past and handed the substance of it down to the future. It must be remembered that only Turkish can create the world of Turkish thought and there is a working relationship between language/thought and critical thinking/humour. In creating humour, the mother tongue is a tongue which looks at humour from a critical perspective while at the same time creates, develops and enriches thought. Anecdote, caricature and comedy are all subjects for research in teaching both the mother tongue and a foreign language. Distilled in the vocabulary of a language, humour ensures that a meaningful play on words and a distinctive voice is achieved in the language involved.

Hasan Pulur, Çetin Altan ve Selahattin Duman, who are today the followers of Çaylak Tevfik and Ahmet Mithat in written culture and experts in media humour, continue the traditional Nasreddin Hodja style of critical wit in their newspaper columns and books. In their columns they make frequent reference to Nasreddin Hodja and create their own figure of Nasreddin Hodja. As a result, the Nasreddin Hodja stories are evaluated according to the period of development of jargon and culture in the Turkish press.

As the stories have their roots in oral culture, it is claimed that masculinity is dominant in Nasreddin Hodja stories. The Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes emerges from two different socio-cultural areas, the public and the private (domestic) domain. In many cases the Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes are carried over from the domestic to the public domain and so become entwined or unified. Often the masculine or feminine connections or the division which is dependent on gender disappears. Again in oral culture and, therefore, in a period when the masculine sex dominated, the uncertain position of women in Turkish

society is reflected in the criticism of this in the Nasreddin Hodja stories. "Unity, equality" is what Nasreddin declares and what is explored by both raconteurs and listeners who immediately begin to question this uncertainty when they recognize it. In contrast to this, while in the public domain the woman seems to lose, in anecdotes concerning the home women are quite dominant. It is interesting to notice that, while Nasreddin Hodja can win over any one else, he can by no means make his wife obey him. As a result, witty women, who are on the increase today, are the spiritual descendents of Nasreddin Hodja.

In the era following the period of reform (Tanzimat) humoristic journalism and traditional caricature the literature of wit in written form, developed from the humour remembered through oral culture did not reflect the question of nationalism. The influence of the Nasreddin Hodja stories on this is immense. The well-known image and stories of Nasreddin Hodja are sure to be encountered in on-going publications. For Turkish humorists Nasreddin Hodja and his fund of stories are a source of infinite treasure. Some Turkish humorists who bring out journals in the name of Nasreddin Hodja, contrary to artists in other fields, stress on every possible occasion the honour they feel for being the descendents of Nasreddin Hodja. They dedicate their writing to Nasreddin Hodja, the inspirer of their work and the ancestor and mentor of the newspaper column, and they will continue to do so. The indisputable basis of this tradition is the work of an open-minded individual and the adoption of this approach attracts attention. On examining western examples, it may be seen that models have been taken and adapted to the Nasreddin Hodja figure who symbolizes the wise type of intellectual. Traditions and creations not fed by their own cultural memory have been unable to overcome the question of nationality. As a result the wit of Nasreddin Hodja is today, as in the past, the source of individual freedom and humanism in Turkish society.

a kind of composite hero derived from other stories of this kind of critical wit. For this reason, Nasreddin Hodja is a central figure, in fact, the centre in all public spaces such as the market, or the street. Thus light is thrown on socio-cultural life from a humorous yet critical angle. In fact, however distant the Turkish people may have been to the life of trade in Ottoman society, Nasreddin Hodja was right in the centre of it.

The untouchability of Nasreddin Hodja attracts notice. The philosopher of philosophers, whose critical observations enlighten every area of society, is himself not to be criticized. People have made this a special characteristic and it is on this that his immunity feeds. Otherwise, within a short time, another type of Nasreddin Hodja would naturally have been created. Up until now, this had not happened and this proves that he can be neither questioned nor restricted. This untouchability has prolonged his life for centuries. In brief, as long as there is anything left to criticize, Nasreddin Hodja will continue to be the Turkish and universal symbol of critical observation, that is to say, he will live until the end of time.

Like Bekri Mustafa, İncili Çavuş, Bektaşî and Temel, Nasreddin Hodja is portrayed as the everlasting comic hero and philosopher of philosophers through an amalgamation of all classic or contemporary anecdotal stories. Like a jigsaw, he brings together many parts to make a unified whole. In fact, new parts are always being added to the main picture. Nasreddin Hodja represents either the main character in the story or the many sides of this which are brought together in the protagonist. Nasreddin Hodja, the universal representative of Turkish humour or critical thought, is also the creator of many different kinds of character. Nasreddin Hodja enriches and develops the main type of protagonist to reveal a new type of fictional character. It may be said that underlying the main protagonist in the story are other Nasreddin Hodja anecdotal types. The main Nasreddin Hodja type is a composite from which sub-types are created and continue

to be recreated according to the subject people wish to criticize. As long as people go on creating Nasreddin Hodja in their own image, he will continue to be reshaped. The multitude which appear during this time will all be brought to life under the name of Nasreddin Hodja. The many different forms seen in the Nasreddin Hodja canon bear witness to this.

Another point which attracts attention in the Nasreddin Hodja stories is that, while everyone tries to put Nasreddin Hodja to the test, he himself does not. This is not a situation meant only to show Nasreddin Hodja's tolerant attitude. In reality people are evaluating themselves in the person of Nasreddin Hodja. What is being put to the test here is life itself. Individually and as a whole, the stories of Nasreddin Hodja make people look at themselves and pass private judgement. Like Yunus Emre and Mevlana, Nasreddin Hodja leads one to contemplate and question one's inner self.

Nasreddin Hodja brings all people, establishments, traditions, values and opinions under the magnifying glass of critical observation so an evaluation of these, as well as of self, becomes a main theme. It is he who begins this process to be carried on by those who show the courage to step into the shoes of the person under scrutiny, and to make this the centre of a personal inquisition; in short, such a person will have the objectivity, ability and authority to evaluate all aspects and members of communal life. Nasreddin Hodja himself will be accepted as the central critic on his own terms as a philosopher. The private enquiry begun by the philosopher will teach a lesson to others. He holds up for criticism not just what is obvious, such as gender, but what is swept under the carpet, hidden in a corner or even suppressed in the sub-conscious such an exploration ensures the health and rejuvenation of an individual or a society.

Nasreddin's character and stories are the source of the creation, transference, education and development of



analytical thinking in Turkish society. In connection with this, one may mention the Nasreddin Hodja school of analytical thinking where the same person, the narrator, is both student and teacher, both group and society. The culture of this school both creates and maintains a different product and tradition.

As in the stories, analytical thought has the special quality of strengthening and activating those who create, renew and develop a society. The stories explain in a more explicit way what is found in proverbs, the distillation



of analytical thought. Proverbs based on the last word provide the basis on which the story is created. In general, it is said that the proverbs arise from the stories. From a critical point of view, what is innate to the story is to be found in the argument or short explanation. What is hinted at in the words of the story is here refined to become realized as the proverb. The words, which are couched in masculine expression in the story, become in time a proverb. On the other hand, in order to knead the raw material of the cultural area, to get away from the multi-dimensional word heavy/dense, and to develop the

ability to think analytically some dynamic such as a story is needed. This is explained as a period of maturity in verbal culture and philosophical events. Then the object is to go from the diffuse to the essential from word to meaning. The strength of the Nasreddin Hodja canon is hidden in this constructive particularity.

The expression used in the Nasreddin Hodja stories, from the point of view of narration, is seen to be quite simple and comprehensible. Analytical strength is gained from simple and comprehensible expression and description. There is no room for misinterpretation in the philosophical school of Nasreddin Hodja. This is a feature of the main character of Nasreddin Hodja and of his critical thought. There are no unnecessary words in his anecdotes. Attention was paid to this characteristic in choosing the stories for the last section.

To introduce Nasreddin Hodja under the slogan of “the man who makes the world laugh” is not a very apposite approach. Instead of saying “laughter-provoking thought,” it would be more appropriate to say “Thought-provoking laughter” and this would represent Nasreddin Hodja in a more effective way. At this point a photograph of Einstein sticking his tongue out at the world would complement this image of Nasreddin Hodja. The aim of wit is to make the critique pleasurable. This is rooted in the criticism. As a result, it is not the timing that makes the world laugh but the maturity of thought in the joke.

As the main character in the stories, Nasreddin Hodja is the source of the creation, transmission, teaching and development of critical analysis in Turkish society. One may say that Nasreddin Hodja is the student and the teacher in the school of critical thought, the same Nasreddin Hodja who is the narrator to the group/society person. In this school, different forms of cultural products and traditions are given life and continuity.

Analytical thinking appears as the result of a certain thought process or series of thoughts. Similarly the Nasreddin Hodja stories are also based on the answer to the questions of 'why?' and 'wherefore?'. The people in the joke situation and the way they are reflected in every aspect of this makes the punch-line an improvisational reflex. Without the people in the story being aware of it, they are included in this period of critical thinking and, therefore, in the way in which it is resolved. So wit and critical thinking are infectious and capable of speedy dissemination. This particularity lies at the root of the way in which the Nasreddin Hodja stories have spread throughout the world. The basis of the Nasreddin Hodja stories is to support, advise and teach this satirical criticism of life through the medium of analytical thought, to present a variety of criticism in a tolerant and positive way by separating the ego from the "other." Humour, therefore, by extension the stories of Nasreddin Hodja, ensures the adoption, development and rooting of empathy in the life of the community. In this, Nasreddin Hodja represents the Turkish people and the unity of mankind. In other words, he is the philosopher who spends his money in the name of peace, the stories themselves are the payment.

The Nasreddin Hodja stories are not meant to create a fixed way of thinking in society, and it is their aim and expectation that there will be an inquiry into such a fixed way of thinking which will lead to its removal. The lack of reality in this type of prejudiced thinking which hinders the development of a society can be made clear through the humorous and critical approach seen in the stories. The Nasreddin Hodja stories create, develop and renew society through their use of critical thinking. As in the stories, analytical thought possesses the ability to distill, activate and strengthen the creativity, adaptability, and development of a society. The stories explain in a more explicit way what is found in the proverbs, that is,

the distillation of analytical thought. The proverb is the final, refined expression for which the story prepares the groundwork. It is generally said that the proverbs arise from the stories. From a critical point of view what is innate to the story is found in the argument or summing-up, which is then refined to become realized as a proverb. What is hinted at in the words becomes the pith of the proverb. The male-oriented words in the story turn in time to proverbial sayings. On the other hand, there is a need for a dynamic, such as a story, to knead the raw material, to go beyond the many sided meaning embodied in dense/full, and to develop skill in critical thinking. This may be described as verbal culture combined with a philosophical outlook on events. The object is to pass from the diffused to the essential word or meaning. The strength of the Nasreddin Hodja canon is canceled in this constructive speciality.

From the point of view of narration, the way in which the Nasreddin stories are expressed is seen to be simple and comprehensible. This gives analytical criticism its strength. There is no room for misinterpretation in the philosophical school of Nasreddin Hodja. This is a feature shared by both the main image of Nasreddin Hodja and of critical thinking. There is no unnecessary verbiage in the Nasreddin Hodja stories. Attention was paid to this characteristic in choosing the stories for the last section.

In the Nasreddin Hodja canon, rather than a criticism of old/new, there is an inquiry into the continuity of life's natural flow and the daily round. The judge-like figure of the 'old' Nasreddin Hodja is represented today by the explorer of virtual reality on the net. The relationship between old/new is integral to the Nasreddin Hodja form of wit. In fact, in the world of virtual reality, at the head of the most widely-shared subjects comes humour with 15 million references, three million of which concern

Turkish Humour and of these two million are on the wit of Nasreddin Hodja (data as of July 2008). Some of these are classic anecdotes, others newly created or adapted to contemporary taste. In brief, Nasreddin Hodja continues to exist, “within the novel and the new.” In this connection, everything said or written about Nasreddin Hodja has been added to the culture of virtual reality through the medium of the electronic world. Thus the understanding of Nasreddin Hodja as a one-dimensional straight line has now become a predominantly interpreted as being multi-dimensional. It is for this reason that, one can place Tamburlaine side by side with the virtual reality explorers of the 21st century at the same table as Nasreddin Hodja. It is clear that there will be new faces at this table in future eras. Evolving with the times and making the times adapt to him, Nasreddin Hodja will always remain in fashion.

The desire to tell a story is strengthened by a feeling of being impromptu. In the many theories concerning humour, this is expressed best when there is a desire to criticize an individual or society. As has been explained before, in a critical approach, thought and desire are included as the basic requirements for the creation of humour. Individuals at the moment they become possessed of the strength to criticize find the answers to the most abstruse questions which form the basis of humour: “the living recognize life through living” Humour appears at such times to provide life’s pioneers with a little relaxation. Humour, and that is the basic indicator of critical thinking, regards the whole world and all people with a tolerant, positive and creative smile. The Nasreddin Hodja stories were created using the same outlook.

Mevlana, Yunus Emre and Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli are the spontaneous forerunners in this philosophy seen in Turkish culture before and after the conversion to Islam, and Nasreddin Hodja continues to nurture this philosophy

in the wit which is the basis of his stories. Mysticism and the wisdom displayed in the Nasreddin Hodja stories form a synthesis which is the base of the homespun Turkish philosophy. Each of these harmoniously combines yesterday with today, the world with the after-life, wit with spontaneity, and tolerance with criticism in the life of the mind. The thoughts and feelings of the Anatolian people are fed from these two sources. Turkish people feel, think, judge and speak, on the one hand, like Yunus and, on the other, like Nasreddin Hodja. In the Middle Ages the Turkish people, just as today, communicated and brought to life through the medium of mysticism and humour what they could not voice openly. It is through the triad Yunus-Mevlana-Nasreddin that Turkish people regulate their emotions. This results in mysticism and humour which give a place in life to acceptance and resignation. Momentary or longer-lasting troubles were, and continue to be, overcome through the medium of mystic humour.

The expertise and variety in the character of Nasreddin Hodja and in the stories are constantly being added to in the life of the society. These stories are mainly enriched through the advice they engender. It may seem difficult to add anything new to the mature views and rich variety of the Nasreddin Hodja stories and perhaps the new ones are not as effective as the old. It is for this reason that the new anecdotes added to the original canon of the Nasreddin Hodja stories, are mainly couched in the form of cautionary tales about contemporary life. Every new invention feeds the fund of stories or rather the transference of traditions from the past to the present, and creates an acceptance of the relationship between the oral, the written and the virtual reality of the present which provides a natural opportunity for every kind of cautionary tale. A few examples of the kind conveyed in the Nasreddin Hodja stories are given below. While these continue to show Nasreddin Hodja seated backwards on

his donkey, they do not forget to include the cell-phone seen in his hand or the laptop in front of him:

- One day Nasreddin Hodja was trying to hack his way into a Yahoo programme using a low-grade hacking programme. He was asked by those around him

- What are you doing ?

- Can't you see? I'm hacking into a Yahoo programme!

- Yes, but, you can't hack into Yahoo with that programme.

- But what if I do!

- Nasreddin Hodja was once asked:

- Have you heard that a joke site has been hacked into?

- What's that to do with me? asked the Hodja

- Well, it's your site that was hacked into, the man replied.

- In that case, what has it to do with you?

- The Hodja was asked:

- Where is the center of the world?

The Hodja replied:

- Go into Google and search for "world center."

- The Hodja was constantly asked to return a Windows XP CD.

He seemed to take no notice but finally said:

- I'm using that CD as a coaster.

- Oh, is a CD meant to be used as a coaster?

The Hodja replied:

- If you don't want to give it back, it can be used as a coaster.

- Some friends were complaining to the Hodja:

- Hodja, your wife spends a lot of time surfing the net.

The Hodja replied:

- That can't be true. If she were doing so much surfing, she'd have visited our site.

- A man once asked the Hodja:

- Hodja, how many dangerous hits does your site get?

- The Hodja replied: 10.000 a month.

A few years went by. The same man asked the the same question:

-Hodja, how many dangerous hits does your site get?

And again he replied: 10.000

- But hasn't anything changed in so many years?

The Hodja retorted:

- A real man only opens his mouth once.

- One day the Hodja was on his way to a shop that sold CDs. Some children stopped him and asked:

- Hodja, won't you buy us some CD games ?.

At the same time one of them gave the Hodja some money and asked him to buy the CD 'Doom' for him.

When the Hodja returned with his CDs that evening, the children stopped him again and asked: Well, where are our CDs?

The Hodja took out just one CD and gave it to the child who had given him the money, saying:

- He who pays the money, plays the game.

- A virus had infected the Hodja's computer. As the Hodja was wandering around in an unhappy mood, those around him asked:

- Hodja, who shall we fetch to look at your computer?

The Hodja said:

- Bring a man who was infected by the Çernobil Virus... he'll understand my position the best.

- Without seeing her face beforehand, the Hodja married a woman he had met and chatted to while surfing the internet. When he saw her on their wedding night, he realized that she was very ugly. He immediately left and went on a long journey. When his wife e-mailed him, she asked:

- Who shall I add to my MSN list?

- "Anyone you like so long as it isn't me," he replied.

- While Nasreddin Hodja was playing a card game on the internet, two jokers came into his hand. Just as he was about

to throw down the winning hand the connection was cut. As the people around him began to laugh. He said,
- I would have ended the game, anyway, even if the connection hadn't been cut.

- One night in a dream Nasreddin Hodja was having a conversation with another man. The man had offered him an 80 GB computer but Nasreddin Hodja insisted he wanted one with 160 GB. On waking from his dream Nasreddin Hodja saw that there was no computer in front of him so he immediately closed his eyes, saying:
-O.K. O.K. I'll take the 80 GB one.

The stories above are generally put under the heading, "If there had been computers in Nasreddin Hodja's time." This kind of cautionary tale does not reach a mature level of wit and can't really be called succesful. However, it is too



early to pass judgement on these attempts handed on to us through virtual reality when compared with the mature wit and strong influence gained over the centuries by the Nasreddin Hodja stories handed down orally.

Nasreddin Hodja reminds us of the ability to look at life with a critical eye, something that everyone can easily do but which gets forgotten in the bustle of life. This, together with reminding us to smile, is the main function of the Nasreddin Hodja stories.

Nasreddin Hodja considers in his stories people with an average life style, or the life they develop, from a humorously critical view point. "Cowardice, naivety, cunning, meanness, weakness, shyness, insensitivity, unawareness, opportunism, exploitation and sharp dealing etc. every kind of lie, confrontation, or natural weakness are presented and shown in a natural way to the perpetrators." Lies and confrontations between people are interrogated through the question/answer dialogue technique. The variety in human nature and all the situations humans find themselves in are presented in the stories. Where the individual or society becomes locked in an impasse, the analytical humour of Nasreddin Hodja shows a new way out. It is in times of difficulty, in particular, that the most independent and characteristic humour is created. The creation of a new joke or anecdote, or type of Nasreddin Hodja becomes a new solution or way of escape for either the individual or the society. There is nothing that a Nasreddin Hodja story can not resolve. The Nasreddin Hodja stories hold a giant mirror up to mankind in which to see themselves. Nasreddin Hodja's philosophy is the source from which humanity finds the courage to hold the mirror up unflinchingly. In this way an individual or society creates its own solution. The strength of the humour may be considered as the measure of a society's ability to begin to make new solutions or choices.

E. NASREDDIN HODJA'S HUMOUR:

First of all, the Nasreddin Hodja stories were created through their connection with Turkish oral culture and then became transmitted in different cultural formats such as written or printed (books), visual (caricature), audial (radio programmes, CDs) and audio-visual (cinema, cartoon films, television series) and presented to those interested in the form of consumer goods. The Nasreddin Hodja canon creates and enriches the socio-cultural environment. In response to this, written and printed culture play an important part in its development. Cultural differences in the way this is presented transform the essence of the story and are a source of new creations. When taking written and printed forms into consideration, the number of stories increases, for whatever reason, and a transformation, variety and enrichment is seen. With every cultural connection, new cautionary tales must be created which develop the Nasreddin Hodja canon. In fact, while the original fund of Nasreddin Hodja stories was only 43, the number in the latest publication count has reached 1555. By creating its own Nasreddin Hodja, every cultural connection, community or individual has a hand in this collection of stories.

Metin Ekici stresses that, because the Nasreddin Hodja stories have the particular qualities of being both inclusive and functional in narration, form and creation, they will continue to be told and understood in all ages and in all circumstances. According to Ekici they have no boundaries as to subject matter and are phrased in simple, pleasing words so that everyone can remember and explain the pithy sentence which contains the punch-line; the structural elements in the story (the hero, the situation or event experienced, and the venue) may easily change to suit the times. The stories function of making people laugh and think helps the stories to be told, handed down



and modernized.³¹ For all these many reasons, Nasreddin Hodja and his stories may be resolved through different theories or methods of humour.³²

Folklore give us valuable clues about the creation and development of the Nasreddin Hodja stories. According to one account, if one story is told about Nasreddin Hodja another six are needed to make the number seven, and so it is the custom to tell seven stories. Another says that at one time a sheikh said to Nasreddin Hodja, “If you tell us three hundred stories, we’ll crown you as the king of storytellers.” “I can’t even manage two hundred, so what would I do with three hundred?” he replied, and it is for

³¹ Ekici, Metin, 2009, “Gülme Teorileri ve Nasreddin Hodja Fıkraları”, 21. Yüzyılı Nasreddin Hodja ile Anlamak, Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Pub., Ankara: pp 271-280.

³² Ekici, Metin, 2009, Op.cit.: p 280.; Türkmen, Fikret, 1996, “Mizahta Üstünlük Teorisi ve Nasreddin Hodja Fıkraları”, Türk Kültürü, pp 403: 649-655.; Eker, Gülin Ögüt, 2009, Op.cit.

this reason that the number of Nasreddin Hodja stories remains at 205.³³ These two reports show the attitude of the people towards the creation and development of the Nasreddin Hodja stories and the effect they have.

In the process of creating and enriching the Nasreddin Hodja canon, different types of anecdotes or adaptations may occur both inside and outside the country. For example, a story related by Djuha or Aesop may be handed down and turned into one about Nasreddin Hodja. In the same way, one of the stories in the Nasreddin Hodja canon may be adapted to become a different type of story. Taking into consideration the spread of the Nasreddin Hodja humour over an ever-widening area, one may say that the adoption of Nasreddin Hodja by different nations and the turning of anecdotes into mainstream stories is an important development. Otherwise, it would be necessary to see Nasreddin Hodja as tied to a particular region. The proclamation by UNESCO of 1996 as the year of Nasreddin Hodja is therefore very meaningful. Nasreddin Hodja is taken as the representative of the type of humour that is common in various forms throughout the world. Thus Nasreddin Hodja's historical identity becomes subsumed in that of a universal and philosophical humorist.

It is accepted that the humour of Nasreddin Hodja is enriched and broadened by such variety, amalgamation, separation, adoption and adaptation. Many researchers agree that at the root of these stories lies the influence of Nasreddin Hodja's humour and, at the same time, they stress that he is not simply a narrator such as is found in *meddah* (public story-teller) stories. It is therefore proper to show that the creative force of these Nasreddin Hodja stories comes from the minds of the people. So it is necessary to divide the stories up according to various criteria; at least to show that, from a scientific point of view, they have no originality.

³³ Duman, 2008, Op.cit.: pp 48-49.

The influence of the written and printed word on the Nasreddin Hodja stories is immense. It must be agreed that from the 19th century onwards, these joke-type of anecdotes, which were first collected into books after the 16th century, developed through the printing of Nasreddin Hodja stories derived from oral sources. When put into printed form, it was as if these stories were created anew. While the essence of the joke remained the same, it was re-rolld or re-written each time in accordance with the ideas of the writer. In this process the text, space, even the minor characters, might change. In fact, it can be seen that the older versions of the story become fuller in the later sources. It is of benefit to stress how much these stories were adapted in the process of being written down.

Some of the Nasreddin Hodja stories adapted in this process were turned into rhyme. One of the first people to do this was Ziya Gökalp. It must be emphasized that in his adaptations, Gökalp was careful to keep the last line of the anecdote which contained its essence. This shows the key to success in this matter.³⁴ In fact, later criticism is concentrated on the fact that the punch line is sometimes lost in the rhyming versions. In contrast to this, just as in the fables of La Fontaine, Orhan Veli suuccessfully conveys the meaning of the Nasreddin Hodja stories he put into verse. Controversy over the adaptation into verse of the Nasreddin Hodja stories is concerned with the referential element or the way the stories are versified. In the stories references are made to the poems of Nabi, Everekli Seyranî, Refikî and Hüdayî. Poets such as Taşlıcalı Yahya, Çaylak Tefvik, Orhan Seyfi Orhon, Fazıl Hüsnü Dağlarca and Ceyhun Atuf have all handed down a versified form of one or more Nasreddin Hodja stories: Fuad Köprülü (Nasreddin-manzum Hikayeler; 1334/1918), Orhan

³⁴ Ziya Gökalp, 1972, *Halk Klasikleri I/ Nasreddin Hoca* (put into the new system by: A. Hayati Avşar), Diyarbakır: pp 27-28.; Sakaoğlu ve Alptekin, 2009, *Op.cit.*: p 105.

Veli Kanık (Nasreddin Hikayeleri; 1949), Sami Ergun (Manzum Nasreddin Hoca Fıkraları ve Hikayeleri; 1950), Orhan Yorgancı (Şiir Diliyle Nasreddin Hoca Fıkraları; 1977), Hasan Latif Sarıyüce (Manzum Nasreddin Hoca Hikayeleri; 1978), Nejat Sefercioğlu (Nasreddin Fıkraları/Şiir Dili ile; 1981), Nedim Uçar (Dizelerle Nasreddin Hoca Hikayeleri; 1993), Ali Püsküllüoğlu (Nasreddin; 1993), Aydın Karasüleymanoğlu (Şiirlerle Nasreddin Hoca; 1998), Nüzhet Erman (İpe Un Seren Adam/ Nasreddin Hoca; 2000) and others have published individual books containing versifications of Nasreddin Hodja stories. This kind of book is generally considered to be children's literature. Poets such as Bekir Sıtkı Erdoğan, Vehbi Cem Aşkun, Behçet Kemal Çağlar and Halide Nusret Zorlutuna have also written poems on the subject of Nasreddin Hodja.³⁵

It is obvious that the transformation of a Nasreddin Hodja anecdote into a short story or other forms by different sections, groups and nations both enriches and expands the canon of Nasreddin Hodja stories and is an important process. In this way, Nasreddin Hodja is transformed from a mere story-book character into a wise and philosophical person. It is for this reason that Nasreddin Hodja, from being a type, turns into a representative of every side of human nature. To describe Nasreddin Hodja as the key character in a story is insufficient. The powerful attraction of Nasreddin Hodja is shown by his being a hero on whom the action is focused in stories created at different times and in different places. What is important is the choice of Nasreddin Hodja as the representative of critical humour. In brief, Nasreddin Hodja and his stories emerged from the soil of Anatolia to become a treasury for all mankind. Naturally the transformations of the Nasreddin Hodja stories reflect this.

³⁵ Bozyiğit, A. Esat, 1990, "Nasreddin Fıkralarının Şiir Diliyle Anlatımı", Ist. International Nasreddin Hodja Symposium Information, Kültür Bakanlığı Pub., Ankara: 41- 56; Sakaoğlu ve Alptekin, 2009, Op.cit.: pp 105-119.

In the Nasreddin Hodja stories “pessimism, despair, malevolence, obstinacy, self pride, superstition, sophistry, hypocrisy, insincerity, effrontery, cheating, pedantry, flattery, bribery, avarice, injustice, dishonesty, empty talk, chattering, bad manners, deceit, arrogance, violence, ignorance, thieving, and impudence” are criticized. On the other hand, “diligence, honesty, wisdom and tolerance, wise speaking, modesty and truth, etc.” are praised and recommended. Some of the principle philosophies of life in the Nasreddin Hodja stories are these: “in order to know the truth about something you must consider the opposite; don’t say you’re an expert on something you know nothing about; before making a decision, a person ought to consider whether the result would be bad or good; never lose despair as hope gives life; a person must think of and take care for the future as the present gives way to the future; choices must be made at the right time and in the right place; don’t turn your back on beauty; be neither mischievous nor silly, choose to be human and wise; remember that progression and change is the basic rule of life; a thing is either always shameful in every place and every time or is not shameful at all; there is a balance in the relationship of nature, the universe and man; every question has an answer; that there is a logical explanation for everything is immediately recognised by those who can see it; treat a person according to how well you know them; share with others lessons learned from life; give work to the experts; the greatest asset and guide is a clever mind; life is the greatest gift and most sacred right-use it to the full; respect wisdom and the wise; keep close to wit and humour all your life.”³⁶ Finally, each Nasreddin Hodja story is a reminder to adopt one of these principles and make life better.

³⁶ Çotuksöken, Yusuf, 1996, “Bir Anadolu ve Dünya Bilgesi Nasreddin Hoca”, Nasreddin Hoca’ya Armağan, (Ed. M. Sabri Koz), Oğlak Pub., İstanbul: pp 117-122.



In Turkish culture the Nasreddin Hodja stories are the source of renewal of one of the most important features of the Turkish culture and, by extension, the Turkish language, which is that of proverbs and sayings. In other words, the creation of new proverbs or sayings from the nucleus of a Nasreddin Hodja anecdote has a hand in the enrichment and development of the Turkish language. Some of the Nasreddin Hodja stories are the source and life force for the proverbial sayings which are the distilled essence of Turkish culture. The punch line of these anecdotes which contains the essence of the humour becomes transformed into a saying or proverb as seen in the lines below.³⁷

³⁷ Ziya Gökalp, 1972, Op.cit.: pp 41-44; Tan, Nail, 2007a, Derlemeler Makaleler 2/ Anonim Edebiyat, Ankara: pp 56-69; Tan, Nail, 2007 b, Derlemeler Makaleler 4/ Halk Gülmecesi (Mizah) Halk Tiyatrosu, Ankara: pp 26-27; Hacızade, Naile, 2005, "Hoca Nasreddin Hoca Fıkraları ve Deyimlerimiz", I. Uluslararası Akşehir Nasreddin Hoca Symposium, Ankara: p 214; Sakaoglu ve Alptekin, 2009, Op.cit.: pp 131- 137; Seratlı, Tahir Galip, 2004, Mizahın Üç Ustası: Nasreddin Hoca, İncili Çavuş, Bekri Mustafa, Selis Kitaplar, İstanbul: pp 67-68.

Give me my shoes and perform your ablutions.

God sends winter in accordance with the mountain. (God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb)

Is it Allah who separates, or his slave?

Keep your feet warm and your head cool/Keep your heart light and your thoughts deep.

Don't cut the branch you're sitting on.

Don't act like a bird.

Welcome to the funeral.

To look at the price of the pot.

If you're not walking up a mountain, walk with measured steps.

Only the person who has fallen off a roof knows what it feels like.

Where does the water from the mill go?

If you believe in birth, why can't you believe in death?

Friends show themselves in giving and receiving.

The clapping of hands calls for a tune.

A mouth isn't a bag that should be tied.

The pot-seller made the donkey afraid.

Pass, young man, pass.

To perceive what you see is a blessing from God.

Spin fine, weave stout.

To spread flour on a rope.

To wrap up the deal.

The man who grinds the coffee must be able to groan like a man who cuts wood.

A goose foot doesn't look like that.

To beat blindly.

To distribute blue beads.

Whoever has a blue bead has my heart.

He/She/It stops at every step like a molla's pony.

Don't ask and I won't answer.

If the ox doesn't teach it, what can the calf know?

Don't die, donkey, don't die (summer's coming and the clover will be gone).

He who pays the piper calls the tune.

How you laugh when you find cash.

When the owner dies, the wolf takes the donkey.

To put your money on a cat.

To raise the stakes.

The water of the gravy from the rabbit stew.

A beating's no good after the pitcher's been broken.

Eat the grapes. Don't ask about the vine.

Either you've never been beaten or you don't know how to count.

Eat, my coat, eat.

No head on the camel.

The bed-cover has gone and the quarrel is over.

The following examples are the phrases which, embedded in the daily speech of the Turkish people, have their source in the stories of Nasreddin Hodja. The number of such phrases may be increased. It is possible to consider all the key-words or phrases in the stories in the Nasreddin Hodja

canon in this framework. The relationship between the story and the proverb/saying can be explained through the punchline which contains the joke. The punchline/witty expression, just like a proverb or saying, has been distilled into an unchangeable item. In the end, the relationship between the proverb and the saying, or rather the working relationship between these and the influence of their having been handed down and protected in Turkish folk memory from they have made their way into the Turkish language, is and continues to be viable.

An inexperienced nightingale will sing only so well.

Passed on by word of mouth Eyup becomes ip.

If you have a brain, run to the lake.

Look where you like but don't look at me.

When I was healthy I used to pass by that place.

Five handspans away from me.

Let those who know, tell those who don't.

If you don't know the opposite of something, you can't know what the thing is like.

There's hope behind the hill.

Let us die a little.

Are we migrating to your house?

Here they'll feed a man helva to his heart's content.

A farmer is greater than a sultan.

Shall I go on?

If you can believe the words of a donkey, why can't you believe my words ?

I'll cut up the kilim/sack at home to make a pannier.

The daily squabbles of a married couple turn into snores at night.

A bull calf before its eyes have opened.

If every day were a holiday.

Isn't a thief ever guilty?

Both feet in a hole.

When a man's married, his troubles begin.

When the wolf loses its tail, just look at the dust.

There'll be no trouble if the pot-seller doesn't frighten the donkeys.



Don't ask me for money because I don't give it away. If you want a loan for a fixed time, I'll give you as much time as you want.

Those who eat yellow ochre enter the bridal chamber.

You, too, are right.

My left leg hasn't undergone ritual ablution.

I haven't sold the moon these days.

That was touched but not this.

It's me who has the recipe.

You have flour, sugar and oil... why don't you make helva and eat it?

If only it should take!

The one who sells the secret of the recipe will hear the clink of money.

When talking about the efforts made to turn Nasreddin Hodja into a storybook hero, that of turning the stories into poetry was mentioned. In one of the stories a poem was criticized for the way in which Nasreddin Hodja was made to use words from Arabic or Persian indiscriminately: a poem was censured for drawing out the syllables to an unnecessary length in order to make the words fit the meter, while it was shown that those who know their abc and can read a lyric beautifully make good poets; the moral in some of the story-poems was conveyed in the form of quatrains, ballad form, tongue twisters or proverbs; it was said that in some cases the poems weakened the meaning.³⁸ All of these interpretations given in the dialect of Nasreddin Hodja show the Turkish folk's understanding of poetry and their preferences.

³⁸ Sakaoglu ve Alptekin, 2009, Op.cit.: 39- 43.

Humour, as found in the stories of Nasreddin Hodja, has the lateral function of teaching as well as of entertaining, socializing, culturalization, identification, transmitting cultural memory, decreasing stress, manifesting critical reaction and developing defensive and curative mechanisms, and of problem solving. The educational function is shown not only in epic, fable and folkstory but also in many examples of humorous anecdote in many works in the field. In short, the cautionary tales of Nasreddin Hodja evoke consideration of the value of being optimistic, tolerant, cautious, effectively critical, and of having a harmonious marriage, and warn against arranged marriages, polygamous unions and bad habits. These considerations have been passed down the generations and continue to shed light on the problems of the present generation. In the stories of Nasreddin Hodja, the benefits of being bilingual in education, administration and leadership are clearly seen.

The subjects taken up in the Nasreddin Hodja stories are the human condition (well-being, cunning, cheating, naivety, awareness etc) and every side of life (justice, bribery, administration, unnatural desires, jargon, food, trade, traditions and customs, literature etc.) is probed. The stories take place in the public space. In other words, domestic and public space intermingle in the stories and the distinction between these is not always clear. In reality, there is no division between the private and the public sphere. A large part of the action takes place in the street or the marketplace, in short, in open spaces. For Nasreddin Hodja the house is part of the public space. In this way, the stories can easily be adapted to every kind of space. The same is true when considering time. In the Nasreddin Hodja canon, a story about Tamburlaine, apart from details concerning historical verity, can be adapted to every period of time. As a result, there is a flexibility in the understanding of time and place in the Nasreddin Hodja

stories. In the conversation club of Nasreddin Hodja, Tamburlaine and a young internet surfer from the 21st century sit side by side, thus over-riding time and place. Nasreddin Hodja lives in his own time and space, regardless of the actual external differences. It is the Turkish people who have taken Nasreddin Hodja out of historical time and space and given him eight hundred years of life. It is this which has given Nasreddin Hodja the strength to exist and adapt over these eight hundred years. It is from this strength that Nasreddin Hodja's historical existence and witty character gain meaning. And it is in this way that Nasreddin Hodja becomes a philosopher for all sections of society. Through Nasreddin Hodja the Turkish people have carried their critical way of thinking and innate wit from the past into the present. Gülin Ögüt Eker, who has succeeded in resolving the relationship between cultural knowledge and humour, describes Nasreddin Hodja as the search engine and shared site of Turkish humour. As a result, it is through the Nasreddin Hodja canon that Turkish culture and humanism are transmitted from the past to the present.

F. NASREDDIN HODJA PUBLICATIONS:

As in the age when the Nasreddin Hodja stories were first written down, so his fame continues today. The source documents of that time throw light on Nasreddin Hodja's life. The first printed edition called *Letâif* (Humour) was published in Istanbul in 1837. Later, under the name of "The Amusing Stories of Nasreddin Hodja Efendi" (*Letâif-i Nasreddin Hodja*) three editions were printed in Egypt, in 1838, 1840 and 1841, by the Bulak Printing Press. From 1850 onwards, lithography was used to print the Nasreddin Hodja books. Mustafa Duman, who did profitable research on the subject of Nasreddin Hodja, verified 46 lithographed Nasreddin Hodja books and gave detailed information about them. The first illustrated edition of Nasreddin Hodja was printed in 1864 in Istanbul. The first complete editions of the early period to attract attention were Mehmet Tevfik's *Letâif-i Nasreddin Hodja* (1883) and the manuscript/printed *Letâif-i Nasreddin Hodja* collected by Bahaî (Veled Çelebi) which contains 380 anecdotes. At the beginning of the 20th century (1918), Fuat Köprülü published a book bearing the title "Nasreddin Hodja." İbrahim Hakkı Konyalı's "Nasreddin Hodja's City: Akşehir" printed in 1945 is important as it is concerned with establishing Nasreddin Hodja as a historical person. In the last century the name of Pertev Naili Boratav comes at the head of those conducting scientific research on Nasreddin Hodja. Boratav's work called "Nasreddin Hodja" contains 594 stories taken from articles and from the 4th edition of the work *Bahaî* written in the old script which preserves the original dialect.³⁹ In recent years, important work by the latest researchers on Nasreddin Hodja, İlhan Başgöz, Saim

³⁹ Boratav, 1996, Op.cit.

Sakaoglu ve A. Berat Alptekin, Dursun Yıldırım, Sabri Koz⁴⁰ and Mustafa Duman, has been published.

At the head of sources in Turkey where basic data on Nasreddin Hodja and his stories can be found is the National Library where around 1,000 (presently 943 but the number may have changed) works can be found.⁴¹ These include the texts of several conferences. The rest are books printed at various times by different publishing houses. These facts show the Turkish publishing sector is an important source of information on Nasreddin Hodja and his stories. The sources may be categorized as follows:

a. Selections from the Nasreddin Hodja Canon:

Nasreddin Hoca Fıkraları, Nasreddin Hoca'nın Fıkraları/ Lâtifeleri, *Letâif-i Nasreddin* (Burhaniye Tercümesi), *Letâifat-ı Nasreddin Hoca*, *Büyük Nasreddin Hoca Lâtifeleri*, *Nasreddin Hoca Lâtifeleri Külliyyatı*, “Nasreddin Hoca’dan Fıkralar”, “Nasreddin Hoca’dan Güldüren Fıkralar”, “Hikâyat-ı Nasreddin Hoca’dan Seçmeler”, “Nasreddin Hoca’dan Seçme Fıkralar”, “Nasreddin Hoca’dan Seçilmiş Fıkralar”, “Nasreddin Hoca Fıkralarından Seçmeler”, “En Güzel Nasreddin Hoca Fıkraları”, “Sevimli Adam Nasreddin Hoca’dan Fıkralar”, “Sevdiklerinizle Paylaşabileceğiniz En Güzel Nasreddin Hoca Fıkraları”, “Meşhur Nasreddin Hoca Merhumdan Seçilmiş Hikâyeler”, “Nasreddin Hoca’nın Güzel, Küçük Fıkraları”, “Kendi Dilinde Nasreddin Hoca Fıkraları”, “Nasreddin Hoca Bir Gün”, “Nasreddin Hoca’dan Düşündürücü Öyküler”, “Nasreddin Hoca’dan Seçme Öyküler”, “Nasreddin Hoca’dan Tatlı Bir Gülüş”, “Nasreddin Hoca Diyor ki”, “Eğlendiren, Düşündüren, Eğiten Nasreddin Hoca Fıkraları”, “Nasreddin Hoca’dan Hikâyeler ve Öğütler”, “Bir Gün Nasreddin Hoca”,

⁴⁰ Koz, M. Sabri, 1996, *Nasreddin Hoca’ya Armağan*, Oğlak Pub., İstanbul; Koz, M. Sabri (Ed.), 2005, *Nasreddin Hoca Kitabı*, Kitabevi Pub., İstanbul.

⁴¹ <http://mksun.mkutup.gov.tr>

“Nasreddin Hocalardan Biri”, “Nasreddin Hoca’nın Nükte Menşurundan Işıklar”, “Nasreddin Hoca Antolojisi”, “Nasreddin Hoca’dan Tatlı Bir Söz” etc.

b. Publications Containing One Nasreddin Hodja

Story: Ya Tutarsa, Parayı Veren Düdüğü Çalar, Eşeğe mi İnanırsın Bana mı?, Ye Kürküm Ye, İpe Un Serdim, Hırsızın Hiç mi Suçu Yok?, Suyunun Suyu, Uçan Eşek, Düşünen Hindi, Doğuran Kazan, Ben Böyle Atarım, Damdan Düşen Halden Anlar, Fincancı Katırlarını Ürkütmezsen, Ziyafet, Yalan Olduktan Sonra, Yorgan Gitti Kavga Bitti, Eni Boyuna Uymadı, Yerlisine Sor, Doksan Dokuz Olsun, Devenin Başı, Bindiği Dalı Kesmiş, Et Nerede?, Sen de Haklısın, Zaten İnecektim, Allah’ın Evi, Kuyuya Düşen Ay, Bahara Söz Yok, İnanmazsan Say, Ben Sağken, Kandil ve Kazan, Kazın Ayağı, Kul Borcu, Dünyanın Dengesi, Kitap Okuyan Eşek, Gökte Kaç Yıldız Var?, Nasreddin Hoca Demiştir ki: Her Söylenene Uyma, Nasreddin Hoca’nın Kar Helvası, Nasreddin Hoca ve Doğuran Kazan/Serdar etc.

c. Anthologies Containing Nasreddin Hodja: Tarihin Işığında Nasreddin Hoca ve Ahi Evren, Nasreddin Hoca ile Keloğlan, Karagöz ve Nasreddin Hoca, Mizahın Üç Ustası (Nasreddin, İncili Çavuş, Bekri Mustafa), En Güzel Nasreddin Hoca- Bektaşî Fıkraları etc.

d. Illustrated Books about Nasreddin Hodja: Resimli ve Seçilmiş Nasreddin Hoca Fıkraları, Resimli Tam Nasreddin Hoca Fıkraları, Resimlerle Nasreddin Hoca, Resimlerle Büyük Nasreddin Hodja, Çizgileriyle Cafe Zolu’dan Nasreddin Hoca Şov etc.

e. Cartoon Books and Cartoon-strips of Nasreddin

Hodja: Children’s books such as “Nasreddin Hodja” (Mim Mustafa Uykusuz; 1959; cartoon books) and the Nasreddin Hodja Cartoon Strip (Drawn by: Surûri-Gümen-, text in verse: Rakım Çalapala; 1944-1947; pp 79-242: among the best, the reprint of 1964) were the first published. Later, magazines such as Yavrutürk, Doğan Kardeş, Kumbara, Tercüman Çocuk, Başak Çocuk, Can Kardeş, Miki, Keloğlan, and Bonanza published cartoon strips about

Nasreddin Hodja. Among foreign countries, France was the first country to publish a Nasreddin Hodja story when in 1955 the children's magazine Vaillant published one, and this was followed in 1962 by a joint publication with Pierre Leguen of the book *Les Adventure des Nasreddin Hodjae, "Les Génie aux Six Têtes"*.⁴² (Duman, M.; Nasreddin Hodja Çizgi Romanları ve Çizgi-Bant Hikayeleri: Açıklamalı Seçme Bibliyografya, Oğlak Pub., İst. 2005; Duman 2008: 135-138). These publications were mainly in the form of cartoon books and may be considered as proof of the enduring tradition of Turkish humour.

f. Collections of Cartoon Books based on Nasreddin Hodja: International Festival of Nasreddin Hodja Caricatures etc.

g. Publications about Nasreddin Hodja's Characteristics and Activities: Nasreddin Hoca'nın Kurnazlıkları/ Öğütleri/ Marifetleri/ Gezileri/ Telaşı, Nasreddin Hoca Akşehir Kadılığı/ Saz Çalıyor/ Alışverişte/ Mahkemede/ At Yarışlarında/ Dünyayı Dolaşıyor/ Aya Gidiyor/ Spor Yapıyor/ İstanbul'da/ Düğünde/ Kırk Yaşında/ Eğlence Köyü, Nasreddin Hoca'nın Çocukluğu/ Kadılığı/ Hastalığı/ Gençliği/ Yolculuğu/ İşleri Heybesi, Nasreddin Hoca ile Dostları/Karısı/ Hırsızlar/ Komşuları/ Çocuklar/ Eşeği/ Timurlenk, Küçük Nasreddin Hoca, Nasraddin, Dünyayı Güldüren Adam/Türk Nasreddin Hoca, Bizim Nasreddin Hoca, Şu Bizim Nasreddin Hocamız, Barışa Maya, Bir Küçük Nasreddin Hoca Varmış, Nasreddin Hocalardan Biri, Neşe Kaynağı Bilge İnsan Nasreddin Hoca'dan Gülen Düşünceler etc.

h. Nasreddin Hodja Stories in Verse: Şiir Diliyle Nasreddin Hoca, Manzum Nasreddin Hoca Hikâyeleri,

⁴² Duman, Mustafa, 2005, Nasreddin Hoca Çizgi Romanları ve Çizgi-Bant Hikayeleri: Açıklamalı Seçme Bibliyografya, Oğlak Pub., İstanbul; Duman 2008: pp 135-138.

Şiirle Nasreddin Hoca Fıkraları, Şiirimsi Nasreddin Hoca Öyküleri, Manzum Nasreddin Hoca Fıkra ve Hikâyeleri, Nasreddin Hoca Şiirleri, Nasreddin Hoca'dan Şakalarla Şiirler vb.

i. Foreign Language Publications of Nasreddin Hodja Stories: Unser Hodscha Nasreddin, der die Türkei und die Welt zum lachen bringt. Nasreddin Hodscha, Witze und Humor aus der Türkei, The Turk who makes the world laugh, Nasreddin Hodja, Jokes from Nasreddin Hodja, One Day The Hodja, Nasreddin Hodja Stories, I don't accept 99 coins, İngilizce Öğrenenler İçin Nasreddin Hodja Hikâyeleri etc.

j. Academic Works Published on Nasreddin Hodja: 1. Milletlerarası Nasreddin Hoca Sempozyumu-Bildirileri, Bütün Yönleriyle Nasreddin Hoca, Nasreddin Hoca ve Her Açıdan Akşehir, Nasreddin Hoca Sineması, Nasreddin Hoca Latifelerinin Şerhi, Anadolu ve Dünya Bilgesi Nasreddin Hoca ve Fıkraları, Nasreddin Hoca "Rahmetullahi aleyh" ve Latifeleri, Terceme-i Nasreddin Hoca Efendi, Nasreddin Hoca'da Gülerken Düşünmek etc.

k. Nasreddin Hodja and Akşehir, Introductory Publications: Nasreddin Hoca ve Turizm Derneği, Nasreddin Hoca Şenlikleri, Geçmişten Günümüze Nasreddin Hoca, Ölümsüz Bilge, Nasreddin Hoca ve Turizm Derneği Dergisi etc.

Works published in Turkey and abroad (New York, Stockholm, London, Moscow, Sarajevo etc.) have their roots in oral culture. Writers and poets evaluate the Nasreddin Hodja stories within their own creative framework. Works intended for children, in particular, consisting of a few stories only are seen to contain illustrations. It has become traditional for this kind of book to have as its cover picture either Nasreddin Hodja by himself or sitting backwards on a donkey, together with epithets such as: loveable, complete, choice, the best, with photographs, illustrated, new, the best choice, with a



smile, our own, laughter-provoking, educational, thought-provoking or a source of fun. The picture published and the stories included may vary according to the targeted audience. Some publications of the stories are in rhyme or come from poems about Nasreddin Hodja.

Various newspapers have published either articles or special editions on Nasreddin Hodja. Among these are: “Akaba, Başarı Yolu (1963), Türk Folklor Araştırmaları (1965), Cumhuriyet Kitap (1966), Çocuk Yuvası (1974), Milliyet Sanat (1974), Türk Edebiyatı (1995), Varlık (1996), Tarih ve Toplum (1996), Toplumbilim (1997), Türk Yurdu (1997), Çınar (1999), Eski Yeni (June 2010)” (Duman 1996: 187-199).

It is possible to say that the academic works about Nasreddin Hodja form a bibliographical source. Together with this, a separate bibliography about Nasreddin Hodja has been published. (Bozyiğit 1987, Duman 2005).⁴³ Nasreddin Hodja and his wit will continue to feed future writers and publishers, as do actors in other fields.

⁴³ Bozyiğit, A. Esat, 1987, Nasreddin Hoca Bibliyografyası Üzerine Bir Deneme, Ankara; Duman, Mustafa, 2005, Nasreddin Hoca Kitapları Açıklamalı Bibliyografyası (1408- 2004), Turkuaz Pub., İstanbul.

G. THE TRADITIONAL HUMOUR OF NASREDDIN HODJA:

Today as in the past, Nasreddin Hodja and his stories continue to nurture the minds of people in many different ways. His traditional humour has become the basis for and source of much creative activity. His school of philosophy has influenced his descendents in the fields of theatre, cinema, radio and television, in caricature, comic magazines, literature, the press, politics economics, and many other fields. His traditional humour engenders further traditions of humour, and is the lifeblood and common usage of his followers in many different areas of life. It is not possible to consider all of these within the scope of this book and so we will try to summarize only a few of them:

a. Humour in the Press and Literature:

The oral-based tradition of Turkish humour is and will continue to be evaluated by the media, particularly the written media. Regular publications in this media have wisely chosen to exploit the flow of oral culture to create and expand their own reading public. This fund of stories is used not only as a source for humorous publications but also for political/satirical writings. As a result, column writers use the style of Nasreddin Hodja in their articles on even the most serious public concerns. (see e.g. Tanzimat press). Beginning in particular from the oral tradition as given in *Letaif-i Asar* and *Diyojen* and going on through *Latife*, *Hayal*, *Kahkaha*, *Meddah*, *Çaylak*, *Ortaoyunu*, *Mizahî Nasreddin Hoca* (a humorous magazine published weekly for five issues in Egypt in 1920), *Curcuna*, *Akbaba*, *İncili Çavuş*, *Cem*, *Karikatür*, *Yeni Nasreddin Hoca* (1936), *Markopaşa* and *Zübük* to the magazines *Gırgır*, *Leman*, and *Penguen* of recent times which put emphasis on cultural life, all of these have revitalized the use of humorous

characters, especially Nasreddin Hodja and his exploits.⁴⁴ Therefore, by giving voice to universal questions in many areas, the Nasreddin Hodja canon has surpassed itself, not only in becoming a nurturing source for Turkish humour but also as a way of dealing with universal problems. Thus, through this connection with the written word, the traditional oral culture, characters, types, motifs and products now openly declare the economic value of being recreated in a different form. Nasreddin Hodja and his stories can be found published in the humorous magazines of the present day. One of the themes/stories most often found -to steal yeast for the lake/to cut the bough you're sitting on/ to get on the donkey backwards-are to be seen in Oburiks (Obelix), that other-ego of Nasreddin Hodja, the philosopher Heraclitus and Father Christmas. A joint article by Berna Olgunsoy and Ceren Temiz states that Nasreddin Hodja is accepted by today's humorists as their philosopher and guide; today's humorists try to follow the path he has trodden for them, using his anecdotes as a spring board for their own inventions; Nasreddin Hodja's tall hat, his prayer-beads, his donkey, and his way of dressing are all brought vividly to life unchanged in today's humorous publications; emphasis is put on his having been transformed into a hero who upholds Turkish humour against that of the West.⁴⁵ Turkish and world humorists, writers or caricaturists, in the special editions, competitions, festivals and entertainments organized in the name of Nasreddin Hodja, and those who assume his way of dress, agree that, as he is the doyen of their profession, he must be kept alive, and therefore continue

⁴⁴ Özdemir, Nebi, 2008, Op.cit.: pp 55-56.; Çetinkaya, Gülnaz, 2006, Gırgır Dergisinin Türk Halkbilimi Açısından İncelenmesi, Hacettepe University, Social Studies Institute, Higher Degree Thesis etc.

⁴⁵ Olgunsoy, Berna and Ceren Temiz, 2009, "Nasreddin Hoca'nın Günümüz Mizah Dergilerindeki Yeri Nedir?" 21. Yüzyılı Nasreddin Hoca ile Anlamak, Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Pub., Ankara: pp 561-569.

to enrich his image in their stories and jokes. In fact, it is Nasreddin Hodja that nurtures, shapes and gives life to them. When such writers and artists run out of ideas, just like others, they turn to Nasreddin Hodja for inspiration. In brief, Turkish humorists are all students of the Nasreddin Hodja school of philosophy and humour and continue to feed on him in their interpretations of seeing life backwards. Domestic and international publications, collections or events based on the Nasreddin Hodja theme, the fact that the name of one Azerbaijan magazine is “Nasreddin Hodja”, and that in the Turkish and world press much use is made of Nasreddin Hodja- all of these show that Nasreddin Hodja has become a staple hero for humorists and caricaturists throughout the world.

b. Theatre:

The wit of Nasreddin Hodja provided material for the theatre as well as other forms of art.⁴⁶ Many Nasreddin Hodja plays are staged in theatres in Turkey and around the world. It is possible to find Nasreddin Hodja stories used in children's theatre. In Turkey, in particular, the Nasreddin Hodja stories, with the satirical view of life they present, had a great influence on the development of comedy. According to Metin And, a play entitled *Nasreddin Hoca'nın Mansibi* was written in Poland by an author called Lippa at the end of the 18th, beginning of 19th century. The play weaves a Nasreddin Hodja story about an event which took place in Konya. This first play to leave its homeland may explain the international influence of Nasreddin Hodja, at the same time as showing that written works were a late development in the traditional theatre of the Ottoman Empire.

According to the records, the first appearance on the stage of the Nasreddin Hodja stories was as a revue

⁴⁶ For data and sources connected with this see. Duman, Mustafa, 2008 pp 139-146.

called “The Nasreddin Hodja Revue” which took place at the Odeon Theatre in Beyoglu, Istanbul in 1910. The signatures of Burhaneddin Tepsi and Reşad Rıdvan are to be found on this show. The next year (1911), another play in two acts called “Nasreddin Hodja” was put on at the Sahne-i Milliye-i Osmaniye in Istanbul. In the same year an operetta called *Nasreddin Hoca’nın Telaşı* (The Worries of Nasreddin Hodja) was put on by the Benliyan Group in Istanbul. In Istanbul in 1914 a three-act play called “Nasreddin Hodja” was staged by the International Ottoman Opera Company (Milli Osmanlı Operet Kumpanyası). In the same year, one of the famous actors of the time, the comedian Naşit (Özcan) appeared in front of an Istanbul audience in a four-act play called *Nasreddin Hoca ile Karagöz Paris’te* (*Nasreddin and Karagöz in Paris*). It is interesting to note that here two heroes of different Turkish traditional oral cultures appear in a different genre on stage together. Similar plays were put on after the founding of the Turkish Republic. One of these was the play ‘Nasreddin Hodja’ written by Naşit and performed on stage in 1925. It may be said that in this play, in which the traditions of oral theatre were joined with those of the western type of theatre, the acting of Naşit, who played the title role, increased the effect of the play. The play *Nasreddin Hoca’nın Dehası* (The Genius of Nasreddin Hodja) written by Baha Tevfil and Ahmet Nebil was performed at the Izmir Thetre in 1914. The Istanbul City Theatre, one of the pillars of traditional Turkish theatre, also staged plays based on Nasreddin Hodja stories. Among the first of these in 1926-1927 was the play called *Hoca’nın Eşegi* (The Hodja’s Donkey) put on by Sadreddin Celal.

In later years in Istanbul, Ankara and İzmir as well as in other cities in Turkey, plays about Nasreddin Hodja were staged and attracted an interested audience. For example in 1947 a play by Mümtaz Uygun attracted an audience at the Izmir City Theatre. In 1962 came the premiere by

the Ankara State Opera and Ballet Company of a four-act comic opera about Nasreddin Hodja. The same opera was performed again in the 1980-1981, 1988-1989 and 1989-1990 opera seasons. In the 1982-1983 season, the group called Bizim Tiyatro put on Zafer Diper's children's musical *Nasreddin Hoca ve Eşği* (Nasreddin Hodja and his Donkey) at the Üsküdar Sunar Theatre. This play continued to be staged to interested audiences up until 1994. The author of the children's play called *Aksak Timur ile Nasreddin Hoca* (Tamburlaine the lame and Nasreddin Hodja) put on by the Anatolian Children's Play Group in Istanbul in 1989 was Ümit Denizer. A similar children's play, *He-Man ile Nasreddin Hoca* (He-man and Nasreddin Hodja), was put on by the Taner Barlas Children's Theatre Group in Istanbul in 1989. The writer and director Özcan Alpar undertook to make Nasreddin Hodja the hero of an animated film, now a popular form of culture, and this shows once more that Nasreddin Hodja is "a man for all seasons."

Nasreddin Hodja and his humour are considered as being within the tradition of puppet theatre. Within recent years Işıl Kasapoğlu had done valuable work on this. In the play called "Nasreddin Hodja" she directed at the Theatre á Venir in Paris in 1985, Kasapoğlu brought actors on stage together with puppets. In 1977 Işıl Kasapoğlu returned to Turkey and continued to stage Nasreddin Hodja plays ("Nasreddin Hodja", "Nasreddin Puppet Plays", "Nasreddin Hodja, Environmentalist"), first at the Greater Izmit Municipality Theatre and the later with the newly founded Semaver Company and also abroad (U.S.A., Bulgaria etc.) Kasapoğlu and her friends participated in the 1999 Istanbul Puppet Festival, and in 2003 in the New York Mayfest, the Sofia Puppet Festival and the 2nd Istanbul Children's Theatre, with plays about Nasreddin Hodja.

Recently Serpil Akıllıoğlu's successful play *Küçük Nasrettin Hoca* (Little Nasreddin Hodja) has been acted at different

times in different places. This play was performed in the period between 1988 and 1990 at the Istanbul State Theatre, in 1997 at the Muhsin Ertuğrul Theatre and at the Üsküdar Musahipzade Celâl Theatre. In 2001 it was performed at the Levent Kırca-Oya Başar Theatre and in 2005 at the Haldun Taner Theatre.

If one considers the play by the Polish writer Lipi, this shows that performances of Nasreddin Hodja plays abroad go back two centuries. Recent independent research into this subject may be briefly covered thus: “*Bizim Nasreddin Hoca* (Our Nasreddin Hodja, 1980; author: İlhami Engin; Skopje People’s Theatre), Nasreddin Hodja (Author: Muhammet Kurbanov; after 1940; Kumuk Music and Dance Theatre; Kazan), *Nasreddin Hodja* (A three-act comedy by Naki İsenbet; 1940- Tatar Academy Theatre, Kazan), *Genç Nasreddin Hoca’nın Sergüzeştleri* (The Adventures of Young Nasreddin Hodja) author: Yusuf Azimzade; Özbekistan Young Audience Theatre), *Nasreddin Hoca Efendi ve Ezrayıl* (Nasreddin Hodja and Azrail), author: S. Aliyev; Taşkent Republic Satirical Theatre; in the 1980s in Özbekistan), *Ya Efendi ya Şah* (Hey Efendi, Hey Shah) (Author: Yusuf Azimzade, 1980s; Taşkent Republic Satirical Theatre are some of the plays which have been acted in the Turkic World. In the same way as in Turkey, plays about Nasreddin Hodja are also performed in European countries where there is a sizeable Turkish population. The first of these performances took place in 1991 in Cologne, Germany at the Arkadaş (Friends) Theatre and was a musical/dance show half in German written by Ali Meriç and called *Nasreddin Hoca ve Eşği/Nasreddin Hodscha* later performed by the Theatre Company in the capital, Berlin.

Nasreddin veya Yetkinsiz Bir İntikam/Doğudan Bir Komedi/Nasreddin or the Revenge of Imperfection: a Comedy from the East written in 1927 by the Czech author Jiri Mahen was staged in the years following WW II. *Merhum Nasreddin Hoca* (Nasreddin Hodja, Deceased)

a play in rhyme by the Czech writer Josef Kainar, put on the stage for the first time in Prague in 1959 at the ABC Theatre; *Nasreddin Hoca'nın Maceraları* (The Adventures of Nasreddin Hodja- a play by Solovyon in which Ferenc Znethe took part), *Nasreddin Hoca Süiti* (The Nasreddin Hodja Suite- a piece composed by György Ránk; Hungary), and *Nasreddin Hoca Bir Gün* (One Day Nasreddin Hodja) written by Andrew Lines, performed In 2004 at the Mercury, Chicago, U.S.A. are examples of Nasreddin Hodja plays performed in different countries of the world.

c. Cinema and Animation:

The Nasreddin Hodja canon is considered to be an important source for Turkish films.⁴⁷ Muhsin Ertuğrul, the acknowledged founder of Turkish theatre and cinema, brought Nasreddin Hodja to stage and screen. The film *Nasreddin Hoca Düğünde* (*Nasreddin Hodja at the Wedding*) produced by Ipek Film in 1940 is one of the first examples. The scenario was written by Burhan Felek, the well-known journalist, and Necdet Mahfi Ayral, a theatre director, but filming was delayed on account of the illness of Hazım Körmükçü who was to play the leading role. The film was only completed in 1943 with Ferdi Tayfur. This film started a tradition of Nasreddin Hodja films in the Turkish film industry in which many other films were made. The film called *Nasreddin Hoca ve Timurlenk* (*Nasreddin Hodja and Tamburlaine*), the scenario for which was written by Zeki Alpan, directed by Faruk Genç with İsmail Dümbüllü in the leading role, was made by Istanbul Film in 1954. In the same year, the main actor and the director of the Nasreddin Hodja film produced by Halk Film was Talat Artemel. In 1965, the film “Nasreddin Hodja” directed by Yavuz Yalınkılıç was presented to the audience. In 1971 the film called “Nasreddin Hodja”

⁴⁷ For these facts and related sources see. Duman, Mustafa, 2008, Op.cit.: pp 146- 148.

produced by Topkapı Film had a scenario written by Erdoğan Tokatlı. The film was directed by Melih Gülgen and the role of Nasreddin Hodja was played by İsmail Dümbüllü.⁴⁸

It is considered proof of the relationship between the traditions of Turkish theatre and cinema that the title role in these films was given to İsmail Dümbüllü, one of the last experts in the oral tradition of Turkish culture in the city. This is important from the point of view that Turkish cinema has its roots in oral culture. The truth is that this explanation clearly shows the continuation of traditional Turkish humour. Dümbüllü, combining traditional Turkish humour with his own personality, successfully brought to the screen the type of Nasreddin Hodja seen in the stories. As well as his interest in films actually about Nasreddin Hodja, İsmail Dümbüllü produced a series of films "*Dümbüllü Sporcu, Dümbüllü Macera Peşinde, Dümbüllü Tarzan*" ("*Dümbüllü the Sportsman, Dümbüllü in Search of Adventure, Dümbüllü Tarzan*") using his own name to create a contemporary Nasreddin Hodja type of character. As a result, the tradition started by Dümbüllü can be seen in the type 'Turist Ömer' created by Celalibo and continued by Feridun Karakaya and Sadri Alışık. Münir Özkul, Erol Günaydın and Nevzat Açıkgöz are also Nasreddin Hodjas of show and cinema.⁴⁹ Independent films with the name of Nasreddin Hodja may be found in recent cinema productions and also many films containing contemporary Nasreddin Hodjas; these may all be considered the film inheritors of the Nasreddin Hodja tradition. The characters brought to life by Metin Akpınar, Zeki Alasya, Kemal Sunal, Levent Kırca, Şener Şen, Kadir Çöpdemir, or Şahan Gökbakar are contemporary Nasreddin Hodja types seen from many different angles.

⁴⁸ Özdemir, Nebi, 2008, Op.cit.: pp 201-206.

⁴⁹ Özdemir, Nebi, 2008, Op.cit.: pp 201-206.

Interesting recent films of the late 1990s are Daver Atasoy's *Hocayla Üç Dakika* (*Three Minutes with th Hodja*) (30 dk.) and *Anadolu'yu Aydınlatanlar: Nasreddin Hoca* (*The Enlightenment of Anatolia: Nasreddin Hodja*) (20 dk.) Nasreddin Hodja and his humorous wit are also subjects for various films in other countries. The film *Kurnaz Peter ve Nasreddin Hoca* (Cunning Peter and Nasreddin Hodja) screened in Bulgaria in the late 1990s and directed by A. Vazov is one of these. The films *Nasreddin Hoca ve Beş Karısı* (Nasreddin Hodja and Five Wives), *Nasreddin Hoca Buhara'da* (Nasreddin In Bokhara), *Nasreddin Hoca'nın Sergüzeştleri* (Nasreddin's Adventures) and *Nasreddin Hoca'nın Oniki Kabri* (Nasreddin's Twelve Tombs) were produced In Uzbekistan previous to 1971, and in 1989 the film called *The Return of Nasreddin Hodja* was made.⁵⁰

In the popular field of animation/cartoon film, in spite of much discussion over the last fifty years, no projects concerning Nasreddin Hodja were realised. In fact, in 1950 a project for a cartoon film about Nasreddin Hodja was presented but never implemented. There was insufficient input from the public or private sector from people in film production, academic circles or the animation sector and a lack of technological infrastructure. Like other memorials of independent culture, the Nasreddin Hodja canon was prevented from being interpreted through the field of contemporary animation in the silver screen industry. Put another way, taking advantage of this record of Turkish culture was not seen as a way to create and develop as well as to solve problems in the cartoon film sector, that is to say, in the Turkish film industry in general. Long and short Nasreddin Hodja cartoon film projects were the first steps to be taken on this subject. The travels of Evliya Çelebi, the plays of Karagöz, and the stories of Keloğlan are a fruitful source from this point of view. A

⁵⁰ For these facts and related sources see, Duman Mustafa, 2008, Op.cit.:pp 146-148.

consideration of these should be brought to the attention of the electronic games sector. These, high in the value-added content of originality, could be utilized as cultural economic productions within the framework of this sector. Thus the grandchildren of these traditional heroes would continue to nurture their image in a different cultural and economic relationship.

Surfing the internet in May, 2008, one could find seven Keloğlan cartoon films as well as four about Nasreddin Hodja sharing space in virtual reality. A well-known shared site brought to life the stories of Nasreddin Hodja in musicals and cartoon films dubbed in Turkish. In other words, the basic stories of Nasreddin Hodja were being revived in the virtual world. "The Moon Fell into the Well," "The Inexperienced Nightingale," "To Steal Yeast for the Lake," "The Tall Hat," "Where is the Centre of the World?," "What's it to You?," "Is There Anyone Who Doesn't love Spring?," "Now you're Acting Like a Bird," "He Who Pays Calls the Tune", "I've lost my Sleep and I'm Looking for It" and "You Can Believe My Donkey, but not Me?" are some of the stories in this series of cartoon films. Again in surfing it is a pleasure to find a 40- minute Nasreddin Hodja cartoon film. So one should stress that the original humour of Nasreddin Hodja is a treasure trove for the Turkish and foreign film directors who wish to make animated films.

d. Radio, Television and Internet:

The media has speeded up the transformation of oral cultural records into different forms. Oral culture is of prime importance as a source for the audial as well as the written sector of the media. Starting with the phonograph and developing through discs, followed by instruments such as the gramophone, records, and the radio, the separation of ownership of the written and the spoken word in electronic recording led to an interactive relationship between the instruments of execution/consumption/distribution. For a short time, in the 1920s

in particular, when radio and broadcasting came to Turkey, oral culture was kept alive primarily through the ordinary people. On the other hand, the influence of the actors of this descriptive and demonstrative oral culture gradually began to recede.

As radio broadcasting increased, intelligent use was made of traditional Turkish music and literature. Nasreddin Hodja and his stories became one of the first sources to be extensively used by broadcasters in this and later periods. Radio plays, sketches, talks, children's hour and other kinds of radio programmes used the Nasreddin Hodja stories as major and auxiliary themes and continued interpreting these in this way. All-day radio developed this kind of implementation in various ways. For example, in 1940, a talk programme called *Dereden Tepeden Saati* (*A Random Hour*) was based on Turkish humour and, in particular, the Nasreddin Hodja stories. The master of Turkish caricature, Cemal Nadir Güler, made good use of the Nasreddin Hodja Stories which he used as a base or point of reference in his series of radio sketches called *Şu Patavatsızın Yaptığına Bak* (Look What this Chatterbox has Done). Again, first in radio and then in television, Özyay Gönülüm found a seat in the hearts of the audience through a synthesis of types such as Dede Korkut and Nasreddin Hodja. At the beginning of the 1990s with the emergence of hours-long programmes on private radio channels, the midwives/ masters of contemporary radio talks were the inheritors of the Nasreddin Hodja tradition.

İTÜ TV which began broadcasting in 1952, and which in 1968 introduced



Turkey to television broadcasting with trial programmes of various kinds (sitcoms, documentaries, advertisements etc.), used and continues to make use of Turkish oral culture and therefore of the Nasreddin Hodja stories. In particular, TRT gives space to Nasreddin Hodja and his stories in children's programmes as well as in educational, musical, entertainment and cultural programmes etc. In the 1990s there was an increase in the various adaptations of this by television broadcasters in the private sector. The advertisement sector, in particular, in its implementation of the Nasreddin Hodja image and cultural heritage for economic reasons is a good example. In the month of Ramadan more advertising space is given to Karagöz and Hacivat as well as to Nasreddin Hodja. It is also possible to meet characters based on Nasreddin Hodja in soap operas. A recent example is the character of Sütçü Ramiz played by Erdal Özyağcılar in the TV soap opera *Elveda Rumeli* (Goodbye, Rumelia).

It is useful here to emphasize the dynamic speed seen in this period in which the media culture has transformed oral culture, and, therefore, the Nasreddin Hodja heritage, into an economic value. It is the aim of this research to explain, exemplify and interpret this period of growth.

The Internet is a network which unites previous methods and instruments in the virtual world. Therefore the dominant features, oral, written and visual, of this period are united under one roof in virtual reality. Just as every period and vehicle rises to the peak on a base previously prepared for it, so does the interlinked internet and visual/digital culture. The strength of the virtual reality network and of the internet arise from being nurtured by many kinds of vehicle, relationship, product and tradition. Therefore the seminal oral/traditional culture, written culture, and later the block culture composed of cinema, radio and television, contain an obvious cultural and characteristic

heritage.⁵¹ In other words, the relationship between virtual reality and these many constructs, including, of course, Nasreddin Hodja, will be given special consideration in the resolution of this investigation.

As emphasized in the previous paragraph, an exploration of Nasreddin Hodja's part in the world of virtual reality is, from one point of view, an examination of the relationship between Nasreddin Hodja and the first oral culture, going on through written culture to a second oral culture. With the internet, culture in every field, and, therefore, including Nasreddin Hodja and his heritage, is transported to virtual reality sites. Previous relationships between the oral culture and the stories of Nasreddin Hodja are taken into sites in the virtual world. Nasreddin Hodja and his heritage are enriched through new creations and adaptations, however slight, in this new world, and the place of Nasreddin Hodja in the world of Turkish humour is similarly enriched.⁵²

Interest in the image of Nasreddin Hodja in the virtual world is being developed through cultural/economic relationships in the virtual world. Different cultural relationships, adaptations and products based on Nasreddin Hodja are all brought together in the virtual world and thus the effect of his image is increased. Nasreddin Hodja books, jigsaws, ornaments, CDs, VCDs, cartoon films, educational materials, and games are all presented there to be shared or sold. In the same way, products in different languages spread Nasreddin Hodja as a global cultural representative through the medium of the virtual network. In this case, interest in and exploration of such multi-functional cultural knowledge and cultural consumerism must be left aside.

⁵¹ Özdemir, Nebi, 2008, Op.cit.: pp 289-317.

⁵² Özdemir, Nebi, 2007, "Sanal Mizah", ICANAS 38, Ankara 10-15 September 2007; Özdemir, Nebi, 2008, Op.cit.: pp 310- 317.

Since April 2011, surfing the Google network has turned up around six million references to the basis of Turkish humour in the virtual world. Around a thousand of these refer to Nasreddin Hodja; in contrast to this, using “Nasreddin Hodja stories” as the key phrase reveals only about 1,000 references. In other words, Nasreddin Hodja attracts more interest than his stories in the virtual world. As a result, this spread of references must be accepted as proof of a constantly changing Nasreddin Hodja in the virtual world. This can be evaluated in the following way:

1. Distinct Nasreddin Hodja Sites: The addresses and names of people belonging to the public or private sector in these sites are given in virtual reality, whereas the name of Nasreddin Hodja is given openly. These sites stress that they are opened and run in order to introduce Nasreddin Hodja and his fund of stories.⁵³ It is enough to be introduced to one of these.

Contrary to expectations, there are several Nasreddin Hodja sites in the internet world of virtual reality. The first of these is the site of the Nasreddin Hodja and Tourism Association, the address of which can be found at “www.aksehir.bel.tr”. Apart from information and details of transportation, it is mainly about Nasreddin Hodja and Akşehir. In the information section descriptions of the 4th Nasreddin Hodja Festival and the 200th Anniversary Competition (a short comedy film), the Nasreddin Hodja Comic Story Competition, the international Strip-Cartoon Competition, the International Akşehir and Nasreddin Hodja Photograph Competition, a Poster Competition, and the conditions and prizes are given. This site could be more effective, the main contents of the opening pages being one of the stories about Nasreddin Hodja and the seven

⁵³ www.nasrettinhoca.org; www.nasrettinhocafikrallari.com; www.aksehir.bel.tr

wonders of Konya, details of the events for the Nasreddin Hodja 800th anniversary celebrations and the Akşehir and Nasreddin Hodja Children's Theatre Festival. It is fleshed out with a few illustrations and some information about Nasreddin Hodja as a historical person as well as the text of nine anecdotes. The main pages are filled in the same way with "Nasreddin Hodja Festivals" a description of the associated organisations and events; Archives, (unnamed historical documents, historical photographs, introductory issues of the Nasreddin Hodja Association magazine) the 48th Festival (the festival programme, with two photographs) and the 49th Festival (no contents). The 800th anniversary includes extracts from the celebrations, conferences in Germany, amateur dramatics and artistic events as well as the joint TÜRKSOY project, "Nasreddin Hodja and Humour". It also introduces the International Symposium on Projects for a Statue, the First International Caricature Convention, the International Folklore Convention, publications about Nasreddin Hodja, an International Festival Poster Competition, the 7th International Comic Strip Cartoon Competition, 27th Nasreddin Hodja Comic Story Competition, 4th Short Comedy Film Competition, 4th International Akşehir Nasreddin Hodja Photograph Competition, Laugh with Nasreddin Hodja (an information clip), Nasreddin Hodja's Birthday, Nasreddin Hodja's Village/Film, the Nasreddin Hodja Golden Donkey Comedy Award (the Oscar of Comedy: the year's best comedy film/soap opera/play/writer/director/female actor/male actor/columnist/stand-up artist etc.) the Akşehir "Nasreddin and Humorists", the subject for the Glass Mosaic Memorial Monument Project, The Laughter Train (Haydarpaşa-Akşehir), preparations for the Frankfurt Book Fair, Children's Education and Nasreddin Hodja, Urban Children, and the Improvement of Historic Areas. The realization of these projects will make the Nasreddin Hodja celebrations more effective and could make Akşehir an active logo in the Nasreddin Hodja memorials by associating it with the

Nasreddin Hodja image (Akşehir-Nasreddin Hodja). Like other Nasreddin Hodja sites, more development in both content and events would help it reach expectations. It would be beneficial for this site to become a centre for the Nasreddin Hodja canon in virtual reality or, under Akşehir, become an independent site devoted to this subject.

2. *General Humour Site*: Humour sites are often visited. Within a short time, sites on Nasreddin Hodja are sure to be found in all virtual reality sites on Turkish humour.

3. *Publishers' and Sales Sites*: In the collections on the sales site of some publishing houses and those which only sell books in the world of virtual reality world, there are many references to Nasreddin Hodja. Marketed as a product of written culture, the Nasreddin Hodja stories can be found in the virtual reality world by those interested. Sites selling virtual reality books can be said to have spread the image of Nasreddin and his stories. Some sites in this group also sell Nasreddin Hodja products which have a cultural and economic dimension (jigsaws, games, illustrated books, educational materials, sets of readers CDs, VCDs, DVDs etc.)

4. *Media Sites*: The change in public life first brought about by newspapers and magazines, has been continued for the past century through the media of radio, cinema, television and finally the internet, all of which now provide a dynamic base for a variety of a socio-cultural changes. The influence of newspapers and magazines and later forms of communication continues its formative effects. In addition, in the private sector, newspaper proprietors, especially, have become owners of television channels, thus turning the media into a monopoly. On the other hand, newspapers have, within a short period of time, begun to revolutionize the press through the virtual reality of the internet. Newspaper archives have for at least the past ten years been available on internet. This is an important development in the area of social research.

A surf of these archives reveals the use of much data concerning Nasreddin Hodja and his fund of stories.

5. *Educational Sites*: Much of the shared data on these sites shows that Nasreddin Hodja has become a staple hero-figure in the Turkish educational system.

6. *Forum Sites*: When face to face dialogue became a feature on the web, the stories of Nasreddin Hodja began to be narrated there. Forums and talk shows are sites which mainly share the stories of Nasreddin Hodja.

7. *Literature Sites*: Poetry, stories, tales and anecdotes are to be found in literature sites on the web. One of the most important components of these sites is the Nasreddin Hodja stories.

8. *General Knowledge*: Names on the web such as encyclopedia, dictionary, biography, anthology, series, library are sites which impart general knowledge. These give space to the Nasreddin Hodja stories, if only briefly and repetitively.

9. *Theatre Sites*: In general, this kind of site conveys information about Nasreddin Hodja and his stories in the form of news articles and announcements of shows.

10. *Academic Sites*: At home and abroad, it is possible to find research papers on Nasreddin Hodja, news of events and projects, announcements in the press and of seminars connected with him and his stories. Sites such as “www.sosyalbil.selcuk.edu.tr, www.princeton.edu, www.bilkent.edu.tr” give reliable, documented information.

11. *Official Publicity Sites*: In Turkey, and under Konya and Akşehir, many official internet sites have been set up to publicize the image of Nasreddin in an effective way. Sites such as www.kultur.gov.tr (Ministry of Culture and Tourism), www.berlin.be.mfa.gov.tr. (Turkish Embassy in Berlin), www.konya.gov.tr (Konya Governor’s Office), www.aksehir.bel.tr (Akşehir Municipality) introduce

Nasreddin Hodja and his stories in a detailed manner under the titles of Culture and Art. A site belonging to Akşehir Municipality is given up to Nasreddin Hodja, even touching on information about the emblem. In fact in the new city information site info is given under “The Hodja’s New Grandsons.”

12. Film, Animation and Electronic Games Sites: With the inception of the internet where visual culture is dominant, graphics began to be better understood. More sites on the web began to give greater space to visual humour as it was a suitable vehicle for international viewers. Products such as “Photographs, caricatures, slide shows, animation, video, gags, films, short films and games” shared in overcoming cultural barriers on a global scale. In this process, Nasreddin Hodja was to be found among the relevant visual products.

13. Other Sites: Facts about Nasreddin Hodja may be accessed on sites concerned with travel, entertainment, children. Human resources, women, men, associations and charitable foundations.

In connection with virtual culture, it is possible to group Nasreddin Hodja and data concerning him as follows:

1. Anecdotes: Sites dealing with humour come as one of the top sites in the virtual world to be accessed and shared. Anecdote, in particular, comes foremost. Whatever form it takes, it is possible to find one or more anecdotes included on almost every site. The treasure trove of Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes is a basic product of these virtual reality sites. High up in this system can be seen interpretations of a great variety of Nasreddin Hodja stories which show how much Nasreddin Hodja is appreciated in this virtual world. Moreover, as well as sites concerned only with Nasreddin Hodja, there are other humour and anecdote sites which give space to him under the title “Nasreddin Hodja” or “A Selection of Nasreddin Hodja Anecdotes.”

The number of stories shared by these sites is about 250. Stories from the given number of the Nasreddin Hodja canon are usually presented as extracts or as a whole on virtual reality sites. The Nasreddin Hodja anecdotes which give scope for mutual and effective sharing are generally contributed by visitors to the site. In the age of best-sellers the Nasreddin Hodja stories have been adapted to the mechanics of the virtual web. "Measured and Cut" (Ölçmüş Biçmiş), "Eat the Root of My Poison" (Zıkkımın Kökünü Yer), "Poisoned Baklava (Zehirli Baklava), I Was Going to Get Down Anyway" (Zaten İnecektim), "Is it the Hat's Business?" (İş Kavukta mı?), "To Spread Flour on a Rope" (İpe Un Sermek), "Mine, I Hope" (İnşallah Benim), "If you Don't Believe Me, Measure It" (İnanmazsanız Ölçün), "Stars are Made" (Yıldız Yaparlar), The New Moon (Yeni Ay), "We'll Get a New One" (Yenisini Alırız), "The Enchantment of Food is the Sound of Money" (Yemeğin Buğusuna Akçenin Sesi) and "The Boast" (İddia), are favourites in the virtual world, together with "The Cauldron Which Gave Birth" (Doğuran Kazan) "Tall Hat" (Kavuk), "I've Caught a Cold" (Nezleyim de), "Nasreddin Hodja and the Fish" (Nasreddin Hoca ve Balık), "The Gift of Tamburlaine" (Timurlenk'in Hediyesi), "The Fortypenny Axe" (Kırk Akçelik Balta), "If You've a Mind, Run to the Lake" (Aklın Varsa Göle Koş), "Backwards on the Donkey" (Eşeğe Ters Binmek), "Where's the Funeral?" (Cenazenin Neresinden?), "Ring, What's it to do with you" (Yüzük, Sana Ne?), "Whose heart(h) is on Fire? (Kimin İçi(n) Yanıyor?), "Five Fingers" (Beş Parmak), "Dirtier than Us" (O Bizden Daha Kirli), "Ritual Prostration" (Secdeye Varırsa), "He'll Take You in Place of Me" (Benim Yerime Seni de Götürür), "The Unwashed" (Abdestsiz).

In general the anecdotes, which conceal emotion through brevity, are contained in memorable judicial or thematic phrases or sentences (He Who Pays the Piper) in which male is opposed to female. Although the stories do not usually have titles, this custom is reversed in the virtual

world. Titles may have begun to be used when the stories were written down. In the virtual world the longer sentences of written culture are usually abbreviated. A story sent to a forum/talk show does not usually have a title, a practice which is seen to have been carried over to and continued in the virtual world.

2. *Cartoon Film, Animation and Electronic Games:* The Nasreddin Hodja Stories in both Turkey and the world in general have not been used to their full capacity in animation, a form to which they are eminently suited. Surfing the net in May 2008 resulted in finding seven Keloğlan cartoon films as against 4 of Nasreddin Hodja, which shows the measure to which they are globally shared. These cartoon films, dubbed in Turkish and set to music, and available on a well-known shared site, are based on anecdotes about Nasreddin Hodja's daily life. "The Moon Fell into a Well (Ay Kuyuya Düştü), The Inexperienced Nightingale (Acemi Bülbül), To Steal Yeast for the Lake (Göle Maya Çalmak), The Tall Hat (Kavuk), Where's the Centre of the World? (Dünyanın Ortası Neresi?), What is it to You? (Sana Ne?), Is there Anyone who doesn't Love Spring? (Bahardan Memnun Olmayanınız Var mı?), Acting like a Bird (Şimdi Bir Kuşa Benzedin), He Who pays the Piper (Parayı Veren Düdüğü Çalar), I've Lost My Sleep (Uykumu Kaybettim de Onu Arıyorum), You believe My Donkey not Me (Bana İnanmıyorsun da Eşeğe mi İnanıyorsun?)" are some of the stories brought to life in this series of films. In addition, surfing revealed a 40-minute cartoon film about Nasreddin Hodja.

3. *Pictures, Graphics, Caricatures and Photographs:* When surfing the web much visual material about Nasreddin Hodja was found. Much of this is similar and shows Nasreddin Hodja on a donkey seated facing either the right or the wrong way. Some of this material is in the form of caricature. In fact, some of the sites make use of a Nasreddin Hodja caricature on their opening page. Others

give news or announcements of caricature competitions on some theme from the collected stories. Thus the store of Nasreddin Hodja caricatures is extended by new caricatures in the virtual world, while in Turkish humour publications references to the treasure trove of his stories are never ending. Virtual participators choose their own sites through which to peddle their wares. In the virtual world, photographs connected with Nasreddin Hodja, mainly of Akşehir, are related to remains, events or newly created works.

4. *Poems*: The essence of the verbal cultural product of the Nasreddin Hodja stories is given in a style chosen to suit Turkish story-telling and traditional performances. In order to evaluate the image of Nasreddin Hodja as created within the various forms, it is naturally right to know and spread his image as seen in the stories. The impression given in these is made use of in creating “pictures, gifts, postcards, figurines, jigsaws, colouring books, educational material, leadership seminars, dance shows, cartoon films, commemorative stamps, songs, cinema or television films, printed dress-material, toys, plays, symphonies, ceramic panels, and sometimes poems.” In fact, these may influence the way in which the stories are told, The image and stories of Nasreddin Hodja as the inspiration for different kinds of original creations have a national and global implication. In written culture, verse has been used to tell about him and his stories as explained in examples above. These have a place on humour and literature sites in the virtual world. Poets such as Orhan Veli (Nasreddin Hikâyeleri) and others who have successfully put his stories into verse may be accessed on the web. In the same way, under the title “Nasreddin Poems” space has been found for many poems connected with the Nasreddin Hodja stories. Some of these are in the form of a eulogy for Nasreddin Hodja.

5. *Gifts*: The tradition and practice of gift-giving is accepted as being a basic cultural area of the economy. Participators

in this try to turn every moment in life into a reason for celebration and therefore of gift-giving. In the process new pretexts are created, in addition to the traditional times of New Year, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentine's Day. The creation of cultural remembrances, meaningful moments and excuses for giving are a never-ending source of profit for the gifts sector. Moreover, it has become the custom for travellers and sightseers to bring back commemorative gifts. The most important source of income in settled areas and national cultural tourism, and therefore of the culture economy in general, is the gifts sector. Apart from journeys of necessity, people travel in order to gain a realization of the differences which influence the main image of a certain area. Naturally this includes Nasreddin Hodja.

Various gift items stemming from Nasreddin Hodja or his stories are marketed today. The internet has become a virtual market for the advertising and selling of these gift items. Included in these are teaplates, mirrors, spoons, ashtrays, plates, cases, wall and table ornaments which bear the image of Nasreddin Hodja and so help to publicize him as well as to participate in the cultural economy through value-added tax. In the same way, small figurines of Nasreddin Hodja imitating an antique style are produced and sold on the virtual market.

Most of the Nasreddin Hodja products presented and sold on the virtual market and aimed at children arouse interest. These items are puppets, plastic toys, cardboard or wooden jigsaws, VCDs and CDs in Turkish of Nasreddin Hodja's adventures or funny stories, illustrated story books with pop-ups, and reading sets. It is true that Turkish and global toy designers have made good use of the image of Nasreddin Hodja and his stories.

Visual reality sites give news of the Commemorative Stamp to be issued for the 800th anniversary of Nasreddin



Hodja's birth. The 250,000 stamps printed in four blocks as a series of four stamps picture Nasreddin Hodja riding bakwards on the donkey, stealing yeast for the lake, saying "Eat, my fur coat, eat" and "The cauldron gave birth." The basic aim of this project is to publicize Nasreddin Hodja, his philosophy and his stories.

6. *Information and Publication:* In the virtual word many references are made to Nasreddin Hodja's life and to his tomb, character, and portraiture which are key to the stories. The stories are interwoven with details form the Hodja's life. Data in virtual reality relating to his life all seem to have come from the same hand. Nasreddin Hodja lives through his stories. While there are only a few lines about his life on virtual reality sites, the stories of Nasreddin Hodja occupy many pages. It is possible to access details of the Hodja, his life and stories in academic publications and serial magazines. The web has made it possible to track the publications of Nasreddin Hodja stories and established a base for these. As stated above, publishers and book-sale sites have an important input on this subject. In the multi-lingual world, the first virtual library was established by Gutenberg where four

publications concerning Turkey and Turkish culture may be found (since 2008). One of these is Nasreddin Hodja (*The Turkish Jester or The Pleasantries of Cogia Nasr Eddin Effendi*).

7. *Others*: The Internet has removed the concepts of time and space in the information world. This has speeded up the flow of information about Nasreddin Hodja and his stories and made sharing them easier. The opportunities of the virtual world has made it possible to broadcast facts, news and programmes of events and competitions as well as publications and other news and services and, in fact, to gain access to these.

Nasreddin Hodja is a participator in every kind of culture and is an informed fount of wit. Generally described as a cult hero of humour, Nasreddin Hodja lives and will continue to live in a digital virtual medium. Perhaps this immortality has occurred because of his ability to be flexible and adapt in the face of socio-cultural revolution. Nasreddin Hodja has information for every age and every society. For this reason, if we set aside the extent of his participation in verbal culture, it can be seen that he can not be limited to a specific period of culture. He is the master of associations and the communicator of all these. It is true that it is Nasreddin Hodja who created a different socio-cultural relationship within the context of his witty inferences. In every period of time he was able to take on new functions and enriching characteristics. Therefore he is able to speak to all generations. Nasreddin Hodja is the product of people and society in different contexts, Nasreddin Hodja has the ability and strength to adapt and recreate himself and this is the source of his endurance and memorability, that is, of his influence. Just as he did in the past, so in the future he will continue to enlighten society.

As a result, Nasreddin Hodja represents a store of 800 years of the culture/humor of the Turkish people and, by

extension, of peoples of different cultures and ages. This store created around the image of Nasreddin Hodja has been enriched and handed down over the generations and is in existence now, to be carried forward into the future. One should stress here Nasreddin Hodja's function as a standard bearer for future civilizations. Whereas Mevlana, Yunus Emre and Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli are the pioneering heart of Turkish critical thought, it is Nasreddin Hodja who carries forward the humorous wit of Anatolia.

Turkish society developed its character through the store of memories handed down by Nasreddin Hodja and gained a socio-cultural and historical depth. The perception and evaluations of space and the system of critical thought created by Nasreddin Hodja is the basic source of this. Through the Nasreddin Hodja canon, informed reasoning and problem solving within the required framework (boundaries, partitions, divisions and limitations) has become possible. Every kind of contemporary, new or original creation stems from the Nasreddin Hodja canon.

Nasreddin Hodja stories are today shared on the internet. Examples of the Nasreddin Hodja type of stories disseminated there are enough to prove this. At the same time, Nasreddin Hodja and his stories are the cultural storehouse and inheritance of the Turkic world and peoples. This heritage of wit continues to be kept alive after almost eight centuries of time in harmony with different types, ways of life, elements, motifs, thoughts, protagonists, and traditions. The Nasreddin Hodja type of humour is able to exist in harmony within its own country as well as with the people and societies of different times and geographical space by creating a different perception of time. The real strength of Nasreddin Hodja comes from the humour he created around himself through time, association and communication, more importantly, from the collective human memory. The phrase, "One day Nasreddin Hodja met a man on the street," shows the

anonymity of Nasreddin Hodja's time, space and society. It sets the scene for his universality. Through this flexibility, Nasreddin Hodja can easily be transported to different societies throughout the world. The central Nasreddin Hodja is the creator of a mutual store of humour. In this world of humour Nasreddin Hodja can talk with Tamburlaine on the one hand and surf the net on the other. The complete works have been transferred from the original oral to written culture and today this is being brought to life in virtual/ digital culture. Having succeeded in establishing communications and relationships with every kind of culture, and through existing in every age/ time, Nasreddin Hodja has become immortal. Hackers using a CD disc as a coaster, people chatting on MSN or surfing the web, all share a passion for the many new "Stories about Nasreddin Hodja" circulating on the web, the media's Nasreddin Hodja, "Humour is the offering of the pure mind," say artists like Kadir Çöpdemir, together with medical professors, and the Nasreddin Hodja projected by the media is a contemporary one and one who will continue to appear.



H. SELECTIONS FROM THE NASREDDIN CANON:

The following selection of stories has been chosen on the basic principle of “Taking a look at life and evaluating life from a different angle through the medium of Nasreddin Hodja.” These stories, which present a new angle on life, are a proof of the humorously critical approach to life inherent in Nasreddin Hodja’s character. Even in the simplest story life is seen from a different angle, life is viewed from the other way around. It is clear that Nasreddin Hodja and his approach to life are represented in these stories. Stress is placed on the witty sentence which creates the main point of the joke. So the source explanation has been shortened or changed. This is in keeping with the first period in which they were written down. If a summary is required, a Nasreddin Hodja story may be contained in a small picture-book, a page, or a paragraph. In fact, the most distinctive particularity of such stories is that they contain no unnecessary words or sentences. A joke is effective when it is short and pithy. Jokes hate verbiage or long explanations. On the other hand, in keeping with the principles of oral culture, each time a story is told it is re-created. The only thing that does not change is its essence. There may be different approaches to this and it may be given in a few words, a sentence or a dialogue. In choosing these stories, the works of many researchers, in particular, articles and books by Pertev Naili Boratav, Mustafa Duman, Saim Sakaoğlu and Ali Berat Alptekin, Dursun Yıldırım, Tahir Galip Seratlı, and Oraz Yağmur have been consulted:



One day Nasreddin Hodja exclaimed, “What a blessing God didn’t give camels wings. If he had, they’d have come to sit on our roofs and chimneys and wrecked the house over our heads.”



In a dream he had one night Nasreddin Hodja was offered nine akcas (coins) but he refused them, saying he wanted ten, As he was saying "Ten", he woke up, looked at his empty hands and immediately closed his eyes again, saying, "Well, what can I do, I'll take nine."



One day Nasreddin Hodja was asked, "What becomes of the old moon when the new moon is born?" It's cut up to make the stars," he replied.



One day while the Hodja was walking round the marketplace, a man asked him, "Hodja, what's the moon at today?" "I don't know. I've never bought or sold the moon," he replied.



One day Nasreddin Hodja made a will, saying "When I die, bury me in an old grave." Those around him asked why. "When the recording angel comes to examine me, I'll say, "You've already done that. Can't you see this is an old grave?"



One day when Nasreddin Hodja went out dressed in dark clothes; those who saw him asked why. The Hodja replied: "The father of my son has died and I'm in mourning for him."



Nasreddin had a very fat lamb which his friends wanted to take and make into shish kebab. They came to the Hodja and said, "Hodja, tomorrow will be the Day of Judgement. Let's kill your lamb and have a feast." In the face of such an argument the Hodja had to give them the lamb. They killed the lamb and took the Hodja with them to the picnic area where they made a fire and began to grill the kebabs. When they were done, his friends took off their clothes and plunged into the nearby river, The Hodja then threw their clothes into the fire. When his friends returned, they looked around anxiously for their clothes but the Hodja said to them, "What are you making such a fuss



about? Tomorrow is Judgement Day and you won't be needing clothes."



A thief broke into Nasreddin Hodja's house one day and after loading everything there onto his back left the house. The Hodja, after loading the few things remaining onto his own back, began to follow the thief. When the thief arrived at his house, the Hodja went in, too. "What are you doing here?" asked the thief. "Isn't this the house we're moving to?" inquired the Hodja.



One day Nasreddin Hodja borrowed a cauldron from his neighbour. A few days later, when he had finished with it, he sent it back with a pot inside it. "What's this?" asked the neighbour, pointing to the pot. "Your cauldron gave birth", replied the Hodja. Without making any demur, the neighbour took the pot. A few days later, Nasreddin Hodja needed the cauldron again and asked his neighbour to loan him his once more. The neighbour gladly gave it to him. Some time passed and the cauldron did not return. The neighbour went to Nasreddin Hodja's house and asked, "Hodja, what happened to our cauldron?" "Your cauldron died," said the Hodja. When the neighbour protested, saying, "Sir, how can a cauldron die?" the Hodja retorted, "You believed a cauldron could give birth so why don't you believe it could die?"



One day Nasreddin Hodja saw several ducks enjoying themselves on the lake; running up to them he tried to catch one. When they saw him, all the ducks flew away. He then dunked the bread he was holding into the lake and began to eat it. When those who saw him asked what he was doing, he said, "I'm eating duck soup."



A man once asked Nasreddin Hodja for a rope. "It's spread with flour, I can't give it to you," he said. When the man remonstrated saying, "Whoever spreads flour on a rope?" the Hodja replied, "The person who doesn't want to lend it."



Nasreddin and Imad went on a wolf-hunt. When they got to the cave where the wolf was hiding, Nasreddin Hodja went in and Imad waited outside. A little while later, Imad caught hold of the tail of the wolf which had gone into the cave. The wolf was covered all over with dust. When Imad asked, "Hodja, what's all this dust?" the Hodja replied from inside the cave, "If the wolf's tail falls off, then you'll see dust!"



Nasreddin Hodja one day climbed a tree and started cutting off the branch he was sitting on. Someone saw him and called to warn him, "What are you doing? You're cutting the branch you're sitting on; you'll fall." Without replying, the Hodja went on cutting away and in a short while fell down together with the branch. Picking himself up, he immediately ran after the man who had warned him, collared him and said, "See here, my man, you knew I'd fall down, so you must know how I can die." Seeing he couldn't escape, the man replied, "Well, load up your donkey and whip it up that hill; you'll not survive." The Hodja tried this out and the second time the donkey farted, he lay down on the ground screaming, "I'm dead." His neighbours came and put him in a coffin. As they were carrying him to his house, they came to a muddy patch and while they were arguing about how to cross it, the Hodja popped his head out of the coffin and said, "When I was alive, I used to go that way,"



Nasreddin Hodja was invited to a wedding and went off to it wearing his old clothes. Noone there took any notice of him so he went home and put on his fur coat. Then the bridegroom's father met him at the door and invited him to sit in the best seat at the top table. As he was seating himself, the Hodja took the sleeve of his fur coat and dipped it into the food, saying, "Eat, my fur coat, eat." On seeing this, those standing by asked, "What are you doing?" to which the Hodja replied, "These days, it's the fur coat that's invited to the feast, so let it eat the food."



One day some one came to the Hodja's house and asked for the loan of his donkey. "The donkey's not at home," replied the Hiodja. Just then the donkey on the roof started braying. "Oh, said the man," you say the donkey's not at home but what is that braying then?" "What a strange man you are!" exclaimed the Hodja. "Are you going to believe the donkey's words or mine?"



Late one night Nasreddin Hodja was woken up by noises in the street. In spite of all his wife's insistent pleas, he wrapped the bedcover around

him and went out into the street. One of the people who had been quarrelling escaped, making off with the Hodja's bedcover. He went back into the house, shivering. When his wife asked him what had happened, he replied, "The cover's gone, the quarrel's done."



One cold day, the Hodja's wife washed the Hodja's kaftan and hung it in the yard to dry. That night the Hodja went into the yard and, mistaking the kaftan for a man, asked his wife to bring him his bow and arrows. He shot the kaftan full of holes with the arrows. When morning came and he realized what had happened, the Hodja sat down and wailed over the kaftan, exclaiming at same time, "Thank God, I wasn't wearing it."



When Nasreddin Hodja was asked why he mounted the donkey on the wrong side, he replied, "If I got on the right way, you'd be behind me. If you went in front, you'd have your backs to me. It's better this way."



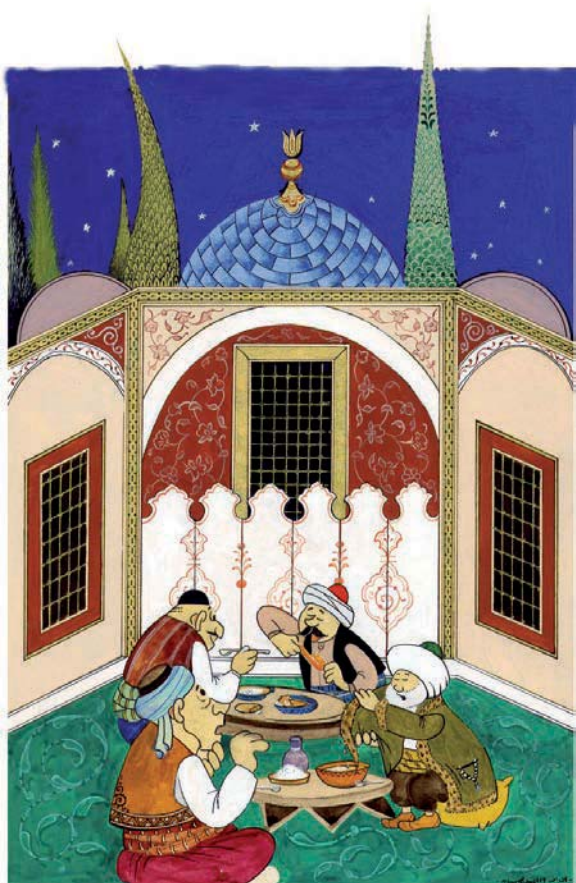
One night a thief was walking around on Nasreddin Hodja's roof. Hearing this, Nasreddin Hodja spoke to his wife in a loud voice, saying, "Oh, wife, when I come sliding down the moon beam, say a prayer for my safety." As soon as heard the prayer, the thief threw himself into space and fell to the ground. The Hodja lit a candle and took hold of the thief by the collar. Then the thief exclaimed, "Please, sir! I'd be in prison a long time while I have this mind and and you have that prayer."



One day when the Hodja was in bed with his wife, she said to him, "Oh! Move further away." The Hodja at once got up, put on his clothes and went out into the street, sending someone he met there to ask his wife if he was to go any further.



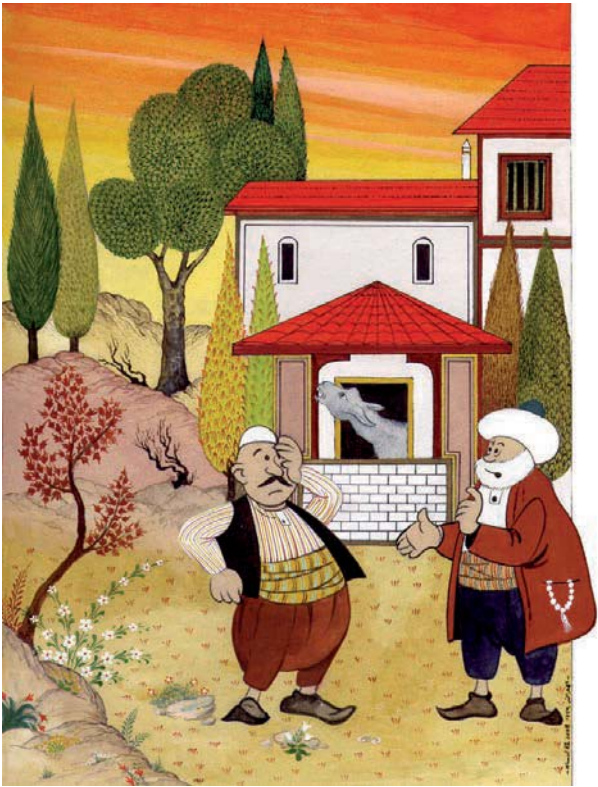
Nasreddin took some liver home with him one day: his wife cooked it but and ate it all herself. She told the Hodja that the cat had eaten it. The



next day the Hodja took his axe and locked it up in a safe place. Seeing him do this, his wife asked, “What are you doing?” He said, “I’m hiding it from the cat.” “What’s the cat going to do with an axe?” asked his wife. “If the cat can polish off three akças’ worth of liver, it can steal an axe worth forty akça, can’t it?” he retorted.



While Nasreddin Hodja’s wife was washing the clothes, a crow flew off with the soap. When she screamed after it, the Hodja said, “Oh, let it go. Can’t you see it’s dirtier than we are!”



One day Nasreddin Hodja put his right foot into the stirrup and mounted his horse so that he was facing its rump. "Hodja, why did you mount your horse the wrong way?" they asked. The Hodja answered, "It's not that I mounted the wrong way, it's that this horse is left-handed."



One day the Hodja went up into the pulpit and said, "Muslims, I have a piece of advice for you. If you have a son, please don't call him 'Eyup'. When the congregation asked why, he answered, "In time, people will shorten his name to 'ip'."



One day when the Hodja was performing his ritual ablutions, the water was cut off. So when the prayers began, he started to pray standing on one leg. "Hodja Efendi, what are you doing they asked. "This leg hasn't been ritually washed," he replied.



One day the Hodja spent the night as the guest of a friend. That night the candle burnt down as he was getting into bed. When the host said, "Give me the candle on your right and I'll light it," the Hodja protested, "Are you crazy? How can I tell in the dark which my right side is?"



One day the Hodja was asked what his sign of the Zodiac was. "An old goat," he replied. "Can an old goat be a zodiac sign?" they protested. "That's my sign but when my mother bore me it was a kid. Forty years have passed since then so I guess by now the kid has become an old goat," was his answer.



When Nasreddin Hodja was a preacher in Sivrihisar he had a quarrel with the police superintendant. A little while later, the police superintendant died. The Hodja was asked to give the address at the funeral. "Go and find someone else," he said. "I'm only a bird, he won't listen to me."



One day the Hodja was sitting at home when the bell rang. The Hodja shouted from upstairs, "What do you want?" "Sir, please come down," was the answer. The Hodja got up and came down, opened the door and asked the man what he wanted. "I want alms," said the man. Then the Hodja said "Come upstairs." When the man did so, the Hodja said, "May God give you alms."



One day while walking down the street Nasreddin Hodja met some friends of his who said, "Come, let's go to your house," When they got to the door, the Hodja said, "Just wait here a minute while I see if the

house is fit to enter or not.” The Hodja then told his wife to get rid of the men at the door. His wife went to the door and told the men that this was not the Hodja’s house. The men at the door expostulated saying, “How’s that? We came here together and we saw the Hodja enter the house.” The argument dragged on, until the Hodja stuck his head out of the window and said, “Hey there, why are you going on about it? Maybe this house has two doors and the Hodja left by the other one.”



One day, while the Hodja was lying as if dead by the side of a stream, a man came along and murmured to himself, “I wonder where I can ford this stream.” Hearing this, the Hodja said, “When I was alive, I used to cross over there, But I don’t know where the ford is now.”



One day Nasreddin Hodja was being shaved by an inexperienced barber. With each stroke of the razor, he drew blood and then stuck a piece of cotton wool over the wound. When the Hodja saw what his face looked like, he could not restrain himself and exclaimed, “My good man, you’ve sown half of my face with cotton; let me plant hemp in the other half.”



One evening Nasreddin Hodja went to the well, looked down into it and saw the moon shining in the water. He called to his friends, saying, “Run! The moon has fallen into the water! Bring a cloth. Rescuing the moon will bring us a blessing.” The Hodja dangled the cloth with two hooks on it into the water. When one of the hooks caught on something, the Hodja heaved with all his might. The cloth tore and the Hodja landed on his back. Looking up into the sky, the Hodja said, “Thank God! It took a lot of effort but I put the moon back in its place.”



One day some one came to the Hodja and said to him, “Please do me a favour. Ask so-and-so for their daughter’s hand in marriage.” The Hodja

went and did as he had been asked. Later when the man asked how things had gone, the Hodja replied, "Well, brother, it was difficult for them to betrothe her to anyone, even to me."



Nasreddin once found an akça as he was walking round the marketplace. He went up to a high place and exclaimed. "The finder found the akça; I wonder where the rest of them are."



One day a mountain wolf ate Nasreddin Hodja's donkey. When he returned to the town, he asked the children playing in the street, "Children, does anyone say that a mountain wolf ate Nasreddin Hodja's donkey?" When they answered, "No", he said, "Well, I hope that's the truth."



One day Nasreddin Hodja's wife said to him, "Oh, Hodja, I want you to buy me some material." The Hodja opened his arms wide and asked, "Is that enough?" "That will be enough," she replied. Keeping his arms stretched wide, the Hodja went to market when someone blocked his path, he said irritably, "Get out of the way, you're spoiling the measurement."



Nasreddin Hodja planted some garlic in his garden one morning and in the evening dug it up and took it home. "What did you do that for?" asked his wife, "Need you ask? We must put it by for winter."



One day Nasreddin Hodja was asked, "Why does everyone go a different way?" "So the balance of the earth won't be upset," replied the Hodja.



One day the Hodja climbed a tree, taking his shoes with him. Those around said, "Hodja, leave your shoes on the ground. What good are they to you up there?" "Maybe I'll go on somewhere from here. Do you want me to go barefoot?" replied the Hodja.



It seems that Nasreddin Hodja was addicted to eating salt. Those who saw this remarked, "It's said that eating salt dries up the brain. Why do you eat so much of it?" "So that my brain becomes the same as others," replied the Hodja.



One day they said to Nasreddin Hodja. "Your wife goes out visiting lot." "If that were true," said the Hodja, "she'd have visited our house, too."



One day Nasreddin Hodja was asked: "Hodja, what happens to the old moon?" "Is there anyone who doesn't know that? The stars eat it," he replied.



One day Nasreddin Hodja mislaid a ring in his house. He went out and started searching for it in the yard. When his wife asked him why he was looking there, the Hodja replied, "It's dark inside the house."



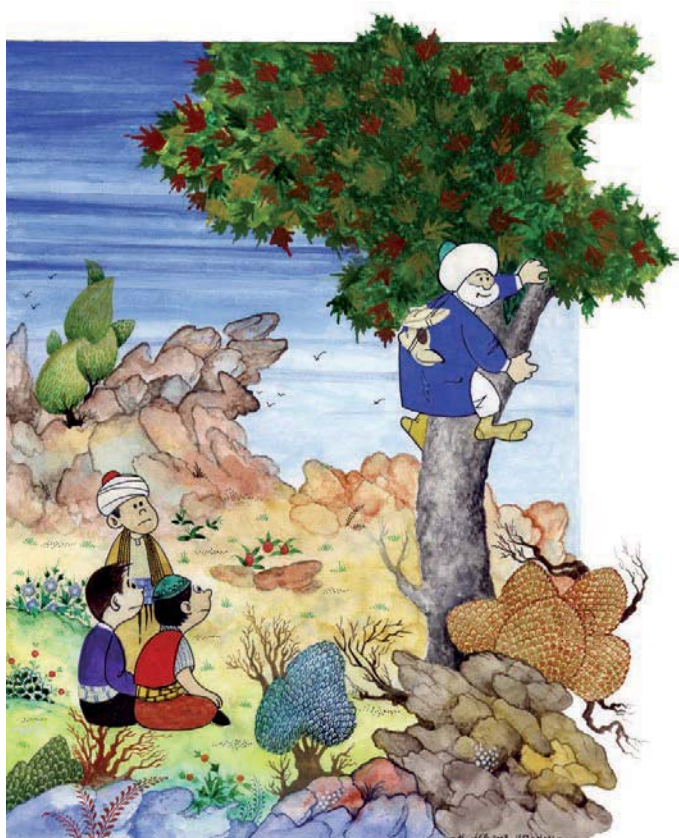
One day, Nasreddin Hodja's salted cheese was stolen. The Hodja ran and sat down by the fountain. When asked why he did this, he replied, "Whoever ate my cheese will surely come to the fountain."



Nasreddin loved playing chess and telling chess players what moves to make. A friend of his who knew his habit of interfering made him promise to divorce his wife if he interrupted anyone again while he was playing. One day, while Nasreddin Hodja was watching a brilliant game, he interrupted to give advice to one of the players. He then got up and, when asked where he was going, he said, "You play the way I told you and I'll go and renew my marriage vows."



One day Nasreddin Hodja placed such a heavy load on his donkey's back that the donkey buckled under its weight and fell to the ground. Then the Hodja took some of the weight off the donkey's back and loaded it on to his own before mounting the donkey. Again the donkey collapsed. "See here," said the Hodja, "I'm carrying half your load and you still don't budge."



One day Nasreddin Hodja dropped a sacking needle into the water. He took a sack, dunked it in the water and began to call the needle, saying, "Come to mother, come to mother!"



One day Nasreddin Hodja went to court in order to divorce his wife. When the judge asked him what his wife's name was, he said he didn't know. "How can you not know the name of your wife after forty years?" asked the Judge. "Since I didn't intend to get on with her, I never thought to ask her name," was the Hodja's reply.



One day Nasreddin Hodja was asked, "Should I walk on the right or the left side of the coffin?" "So long as you're not inside it, it doesn't matter which side you walk on" was the answer.



Nasreddin Hodja one day spread the shirt he had washed on a bush to dry. When the breeze blew it off on to the ground, he said to his wife, "A sheep must be sacrificed in my name." When his wife asked why, the Hodja said, "I got off lightly. What if I'd been inside the shirt? I'd have been smashed into a thousand pieces."



Another day, while Nasreddin Hodja was getting on his donkey, he fell down. On seeing this, the children began to laugh. "What are you laughing at?" asked the Hodja. "I was on the ground before and now I'm there again."



One day when Nasreddin Hodja was sitting at the base of the minaret, a man came along and, pointing to the minaret, asked. "What's that?" The Hodja replied. "Actually, it's a well that's been turned inside out and put in the sun to dry."



One day when Nasreddin Hodja had climbed a tree in his garden and was busy picking the fruit, he saw a camel caravan approaching. "Stop!" he commanded the camel drivers. "Take your camels some other way." "Hey! Are you afraid of camels?" jeered the camel drivers. "No," said the Hodja, "but this tree I've climbed is one that's never seen a camel. If it suddenly catches sight of you, it might be startled and throw me down."



One dry summer the farmers came together to pray for rain. One of them said to Nasreddin Hodja, "You're a praying man. Pray that God, may His Name be Exalted, will send rain". No sooner had the Hodja said the prayer than thunder roared, lightning flashed, and the heavens opened. Not knowing which way to run, the Hodja took refuge in a hole in the rock.

Suddenly a bolt of lightning flashed near the Hodja and he exclaimed, "Oh, God, your slave said the wrong prayer. You can light a torch to search for a cave in the rocks."



When Nasreddin Hodja was building his house, he told the carpenters, "Nail the parquet to the ceiling and the rafters to the floor." When the carpenters queried this, the Hodja said, "I'm getting married soon. When a man marries, his house is turned upside down, they say. I don't want to have to pay twice."



One day, Nasreddin Hodja was preaching from the pulpit, "Oh, my friends, Give thanks to Almighty God that he made the sky without it's needing any support. Otherwise all the trees in the world would not be enough to hold it up."



Nasreddin Hodja went to the market to sell his cow which no longer gave any milk. When the broker he had commissioned to sell the cow started calling out, "This cow gives so much milk that a kitten could walk on the the cream from it without sinking," the Hodja said. "I've given up the idea of selling it," and set off home.



One day when Nasreddin Hodja was on his way to market, some children playing in the street stopped in front of him. They asked the Hodja to bring them penny whistles. One of them gave him a penny. On his way home from the market, the Hodja gave this child a whistle. When the others asked for theirs, he said, "He who pays, plays the whistle."



One day, when Nasreddin Hodja was talking with his friends, he said, "An afternoon on a summer's day is worth three days of winter." When asked why, Nasreddin Hodja replied, "I've tested it. It takes three days for my kaftan to dry when I wash it in winter, but only one afternoon in summer."



One day, while Nasreddin Hodja was having a conversation, he said "There's no difference between being young and being old." When he was asked, "How do you work that out?" he said, "There's a stone in front of my house, When I was young I couldn't lift it and I still can't."



Nasreddin Hodja was preaching a sermon one day and he asked the congregation this question, "My friends, when I am dead, you will be asked how you knew me in my body. What will you say?" The congregation said "We'll say we knew him to be a good man," "In that case," said the Hodja, "don't wait till I'm dead. Say it now and let me hear it."



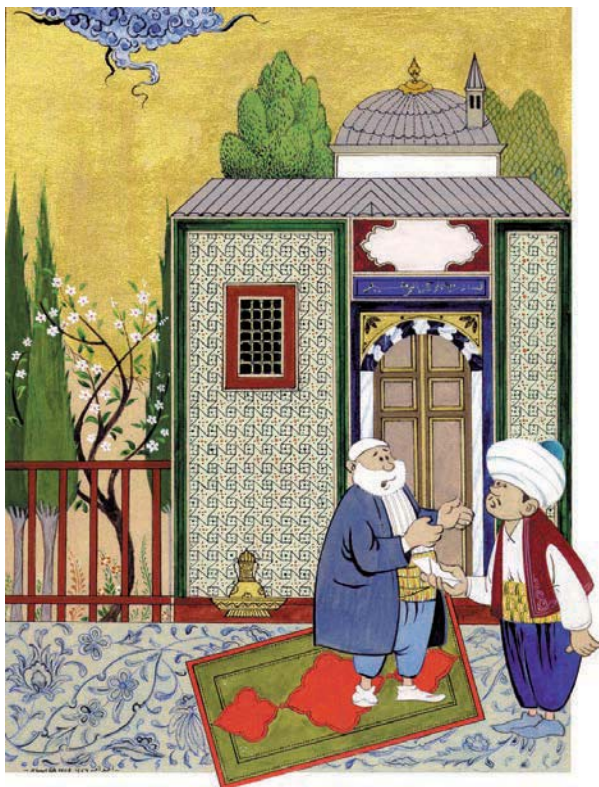
Nasreddin was a guest in someone's house. His host said to him, "I have Walnut Baklava. Would you like some?" In answer, the Hodja told a story, saying, "Once upon a time a fox was staying in someone's house". His host said, "I have a plucked chicken, would you like some?" The fox said, "I'm laughing too hard to give you a reply."



One day a rich man arranged a feast to which he invited all the well-to-do people in his neighbourhood. Nasreddin Hodja was included among the guests. Afterwards, when the host was bidding the guests goodbye, he asked him, "Have you any recommendations?" The Hodja said, "Keep in mind that a fountain shouldn't be built beside a river."



When Nasreddin Hodja was on a sea voyage, a storm arose and the captain was swept overboard. The ship's passengers asked Nasreddin Hodja to take his place. Unable to refuse, the Hodja accepted, saying "Bring me a compass," The crew searched hard but couldn't find one. This time the Hodja said, "Bring me a chart." The crew couldn't find a chart either. "In that case," said the Hodja, "let everyone bring themselves to confess their sins."



Mounted on his donkey, Nasreddin Hodja was one day passing along one of the streets in Akşehir. Two three-legged stools trailed behind the donkey. On seeing him, the judge jokingly asked, "Where are you going with your children?" "I'm going to register them at the religious school so that when they grow up they can become judges," replied the Hodja.



An honest friend of Nasreddin Hodja once asked him for a loan. The Hodja said, "Come tomorrow and I'll give you the money." The next day he came to the Hodja with an IOU for the money in his hand. The Hodja first gave him the money and then returned the

IOU he was offering, saying “Keep the IOU.” When he remonstrated, the Hodja said, “Let it stay with you so that each time you see it, you will be reminded of what you owe.”



Once during a time of dearth, the Hodja was in difficulties and could not buy himself any shoes. When his wife complained, saying, “Your shoes are all worn-out. What are you going to do about it?” the Hodja replied, “I have shoes and, even if I hadn’t, my feet are sound enough.”



An inexperienced preacher climbed into the pulpit one day and addressed the congregation, saying, “Every evening the sun goes into a huge well on its left side, spends the night there, and every morning comes up out of it on the right side.” Nasreddin Hodja couldn’t refrain from saying, “Sir, give up letting the sun down the well, talk about what you know, ablutions and prayers.”



Nasreddin was asked the well-known question, “Did the chicken come from the egg or did the egg come from the chicken?” The Hodja replied: “Neither. Whatever comes, comes from Almighty God.”



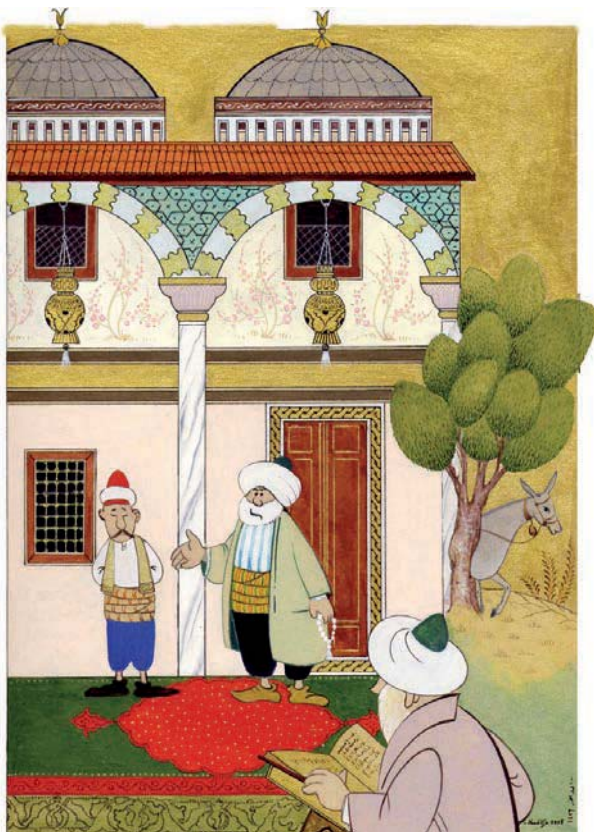
A greedy man once came to the Hodja and said, “No-one is perfect. My fault is that I eat too much. People scold me as if it was a really great sin. What can I do about it?” The Hodja replied, “Take no notice. Those who know how to eat should know how to swallow.”



One day Nasreddin Hodja was asked, “Oh! Which would you prefer- a horse, a fine house or a hundred gold coins?” “None of them,” replied the Hodja. “All I want is good health.”



One day Nasreddin Hodja fell ill. Trying to reassure him, his visitors said, “Don’t be anxious or afraid. In this world, death comes only once.” “That’s what I’m afraid of,” said the Hodja, feebly lifting his head. “If it came more often, I wouldn’t be worrying.”



One day when Nasreddin Hodja was having a discussion about beating, someone said in support of beating "The stick came from heaven, didn't it?" In reply the Hodja said, "If the stick had been a blessed thing, it would have stayed in heaven, not left it."



One day a traveller who had an answer for everything arrived in Akşehir. Noone could get the better of him so they called Nasreddin Hodja, saying, "You're the only person who can best this man." The traveller began to interrogate Nasreddin Hodja. He

answered all his questions. Feeling aggrieved, the traveller jokingly pointed to a huge ox passing by them and asked what it was. "That's an ox", the Hodja said. "Really?" said the traveler, raising his eyebrows. "Why man, our donkeys are bigger than that." The Hodja could not contain himself and snapped, "Well, not only are our donkeys smaller but they don't talk like yours do," thus stopping the man's mouth.



One day as the Hodja was riding along on his donkey, he met a man on a horse who had a great opinion of himself. In order to tease the Hodja, the man said, "How's your donkey getting along, Sir?" "The donkey? Oh, donkeys get along on horses," returned the Hodja.



One day Nasreddin Hodja was asked, "Hodja, you're the only person who can answer this. What's the most valuable thing in this world?" "Advice" replied the Hodja. When asked why, he replied, "When advice is taken, it's worth everything, when not taken, nothing."



A man who had wasted his inheritance within a very short time came to the Hodja and said, "Oh dear, I've spent everything I laid my hands on. Please help me put things to rights." The Hodja replied, "Five years from now, you'll be free of care." "Will I be rich in five years time?" the man asked. "No," replied the Hodja, "You'll have got used to being poor."



One day Nasreddin Hodja was asked what the most dangerous creature in the world was. "Human-kind," replied the Hodja, and when asked why, said, "A dog is faithful to the one who feeds it. A wolf won't travel the path a human has trod. The snake doesn't do harm if it's left alone. But is this what man is like? "If you don't believe me, do someone a good turn and see what happens."



One day Nasreddin Hodja was asked by a well-wisher, "Hodja, how are you?" "If you're asking me as enemy, the answer is I'm fine; if as a friend, it's a long story."



Every year Nasreddin Hodja would give the required tithes and alms to the richest person in Akşehir. When asked why, he would reply, "Who ever God gives to, I do, too."



One day Nasreddin Hodja mounted a frisky horse which began to gallop away. Somehow or other, the Hodja fell off. Someone in the crowd which collected asked, "Hodja, what happened?" "When the horse got rid of its burden, I got off, too," he replied.



The people of the area needed help from the State. Nasreddin Hodja was chosen as their representative to visit the chief of police. Before setting off, he collected money from the people of the area. After completing the business, the Hodja came back and returned the money he had been given. On being asked why, he said, "A man with money makes a compelling sound. That's why I wanted to have money in my pockets."



One of the village councillors complained to the Hodja, "These days one snatches bread from the lion's jaw." "No, it's not from the lion's mouth but from the human's. If it were from the lion's, it would be easier to get," the Hodja returned.



Nasreddin Hodja once got on his horse backwards way round. "Hey," he said, "run to the stable. This horse has lost it's head."



One day as Nasreddin Hodja was working in the fields, a passer-by asked him, "How long will it take me to to reach such-and-such a village by this road?" The Hodja made no reply. Even after the question had been repeated several times, the Hodja said nothing,



so the man continued on his way. When he was a little way off, the Hodja called after him, “It’ll take you three hours to get to that village.” “Why didn’t you say so before?” the man exclaimed. “How could I know how long it would take until I’d seen how fast you walk?” replied the Hodja.



One day a talkative neighbor asked Nasreddin Hodja: “Hodja, just minute ago I saw someone carrying a big pot of turkey with stuffing.” “That’s got nothing to do with me,” said the Hodja. The man said in an eager manner, “Oh, but it was to your house they were taking it.” “In that case, then, said the Hodja, “it’s got nothing to do with you.”



One day a neighbor came to the Hodja to ask for some of his 40-year old vinegar. The Hodja said, "I can't give you any." "What, aren't we neighbors? Why can't you give me any?" "If I'd given it to everyone who asked, would the vinegar be forty years old now?" asked the Hodja.



Nasreddin Hodja once bought a bad-tempered mule and, however hard he tried, he could not train it to do anything. One day he got on the mule. The mule started to gallop away at full speed. When the people around saw this, they asked, "Hodja, where are you going to in such a hurry?" The Hodja holding the bridle in one hand and his hat in the other, replied, "Wherever the mule is going!"



Nasreddin Hodja didn't give back the object he had borrowed until the next day. When asked why, he replied, "Let him learn the value of what he is lending," he said.



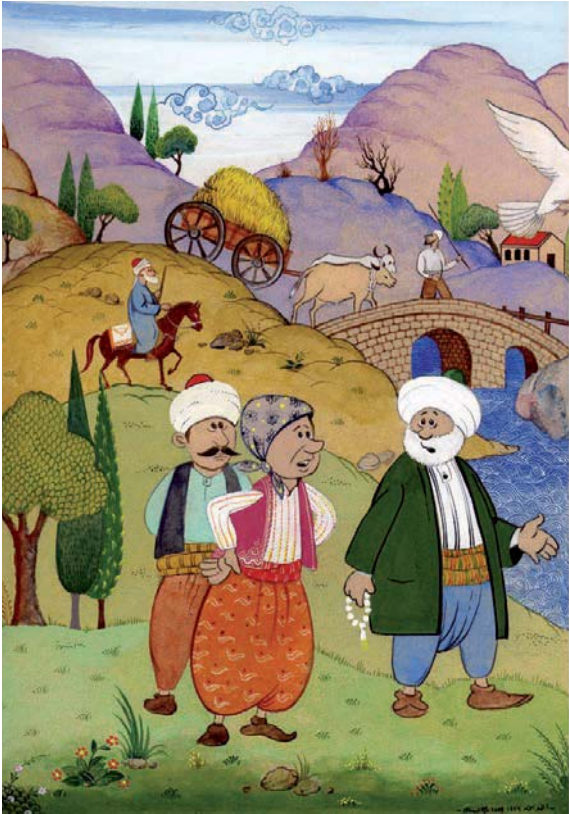
Nasreddin was asked one day, "How long are we going to go on being born and then dying?" "Until both Heaven and Hell are full," replied the Hodja.



One day the Hodja was talking with a group of friends. Some of them were complaining about winter; others about summer. One of them said, "How undecided we humans are. Some don't like winter, others don't like summer." The Hodja asked, "Does anyone have anything to say about spring?"



A rich but miserly man once said to the Hodja, "You're said to be worse than I am. They say you, too, are very fond of money." The Hodja replied, "They told the truth. Yes, I do love money. But I love money because it keeps me from being dependent on hard-hearted people such as you. Not because I want to store it up by the sackful."



One day when Nasreddin Hodja was sitting by the window looking at the rain, a man started running in order not to get wet. The Hodja asked the man, "Is it right to run from God's gifts?" The man slowed down and got thoroughly soaked. Another day when the Hodja was running in order not to get soaked by the rain, he encountered the same man. "Well, well, aren't you the one who spoke to me the other day. So why are you running from God's gift?" "In order not to tread on God's gift," replied the Hodja.



One day Nasreddin Hodja was asked, "On which side of the face is the nose?" The Hodja pointed to the back of his neck. "How's that? Isn't that just the opposite?" asked the man. "You're right," said the Hodja. "But unless you show someone first what's wrong, they won't learn what's right," One day Nasreddin Hodja was asked about a road which didn't exist. The Hodja said, "When speaking with those who know things, one should listen carefully. When speaking with those who don't know, one should learn to hold one's tongue."



In the time of his greatness, Tamburlaine put on the robe of a dervish and began to walk around Akşehir. The town had not yet been conquered and the people in the market place were talking about Tamburlaine's cruel ways. Tamburlaine went up to the Hodja, who was speaking against him, and said, "Hodja, take back those words; Tamburlaine might be listening." Suspicious of the dervish, Nasreddin Hodja asked, "Oh, saintly man, from which sphere are you a rose? From where do you come?" "I am the scourges of God," he replied. When he heard this, the Hodja recognized him. Turning to the crowd, he held out his hands, palms upwards, and said, "Oh, followers of Mohammed, let me invite you to my funeral which is about to take place."



One day the donkey belonging to the chief of the city watch went missing. Everyone scattered this way and that. As requested the Hodja went into a garden and began to sing a folk song. When asked what he was doing, he said, "The best way to find a donkey is to sing its song."



One day Nasreddin Hodja went to the marketplace and saw a small bird on sale for the sum of ten akca. When he queried this, he was told, "This bird can speak." Following this, the Hodja immediately went home, snatched up a turkey and brought it back to the market to sell. When he said the price was twenty akca, the people complained that it was too much. "Oh, is that

so?" replied the Hodja. "See that bird over there? They want ten akca for that thing no bigger than my hand." "But that bird can talk" they argued. "Well," said the Hodja, "if that bird can talk, this bird can think."



Once upon a time, when Nasreddin Hodja was on a sea voyage, a storm blew up. The ship pitched from side to side, one of the masts broke, and the sails were torn to shreds. The crew were running hither and thither trying to reef the sails. Then the Hodja said, "This ship is heeling over from the bottom and you're busy trying to tie it down from above. If you want it to stop pitching, you should tie it down from below."



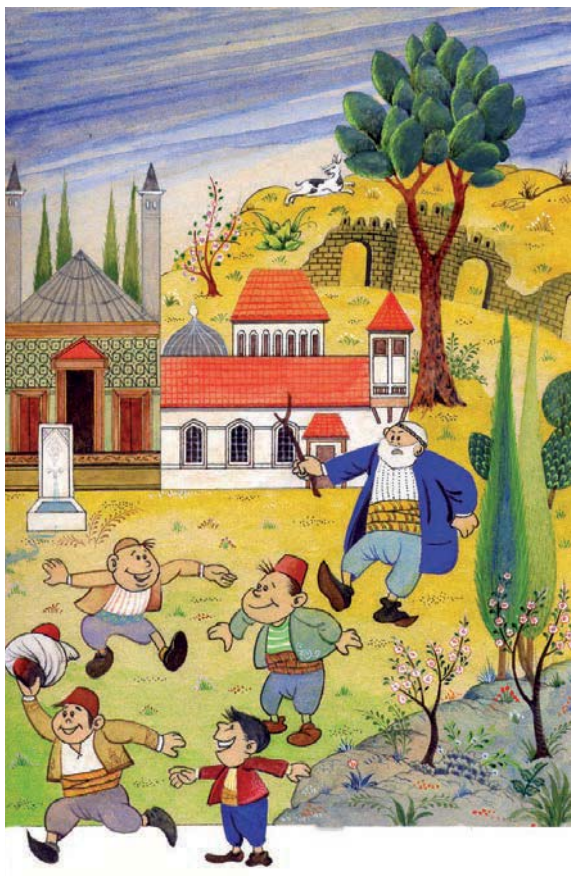
One day when the Hodja was wandening around Konya he saw a large mansion. He went towards it and asked the gatekeeper "What is this place?" The gatekeeper said, with a teasing smile, "It's a windmill." Understanding the situation, the Hodja replied, "It's a strange thing to have such large animals working at a windmill."



One winter's day, Nasreddin Hodja's wife complained that their blanket was too thin and asked him to go and buy some cotton. Although the Hodja said that cotton was very expensive, his wife insisted. So he took a sack and went outside. He filled the sack with snow and brought it back. When his wife complained, "Goodness me, can snow take the place of cotton, can snow keep you warm?" "Of course, it can," replied the Hodja. "If snow didn't keep you warm, would our ancestors have slept comfortably under it for so many years?"



One day Nasreddin Hodja's donkey was stolen. When they heard this, the village people all came to the Hodja and began to ask questions such as, "Oh, why didn't you bolt the stable door?" "Why didn't you build the walls higher?" "Can anyone sleep so soundly?" In reply the Hodja said, "Yes, you're right. It's my fault, of course, not the thief's."



One summer night, sleepless from the heat, Nasreddin Hodja was walking the streets. When a curious busybody asked him what he was doing, the Hodja said, "My sleep has left me and I'm looking for it."



One day when Nasreddin Hodja was returning on his donkey from his garden, there was an earthquake. The Hodja immediately jumped off his donkey and fell on his knees in prayer. When asked what he was doing, the Hodja said, "I'm sure this

earthquake has destroyed my house. What if I'd been at home? I'm thanking God I wasn't."



One day Nasreddin Hodja was asked whether he could show them a miracle. "Of course, I can," he said, "You see that mountain over there? I can make it come here." "Well, then, make it come," they said. Nasreddin Hodja stretched out his arms and cried, "Come here, oh great one." But the mountain did not move. Then the Hodja started to walk towards the mountain. When asked what he was doing, the Hodja said, "I'm not conceited. If the mountain won't come to me, I'll go to the mountain."



A self-satisfied, rich landowner once asked Nasreddin Hodja why he sat in front of him when he was saying his prayers. The Hodja realized that he was up against a cantankerous person and replied gently, "Don't worry, sir. When the prayers are over, you'll be in front of me."



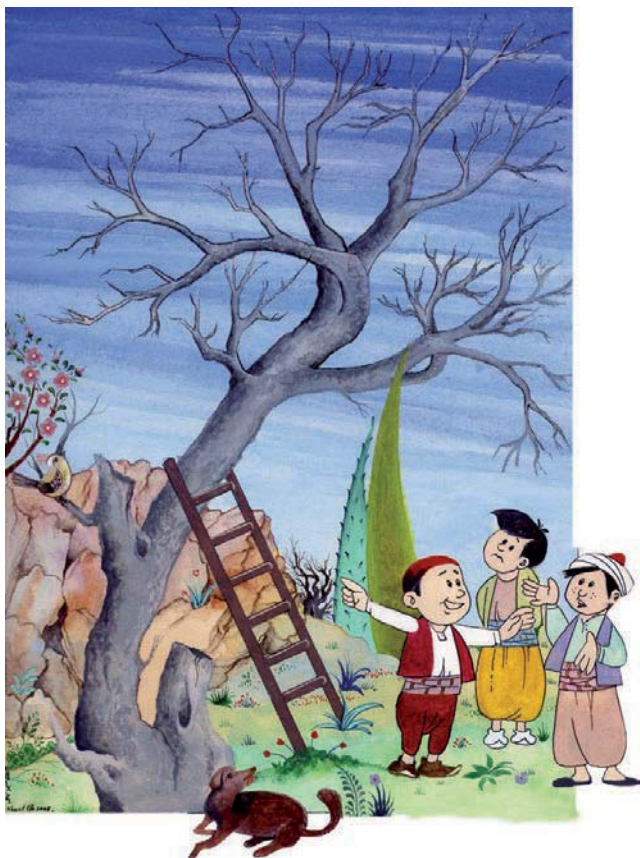
One day an insolent and greedy guest arrived at Nasreddin Hodja's house. The Hodja tried to satisfy him with what he had in the house. Just as they were about to go to bed, the guest said to the Hodja, "In my house, in my home, We eat grapes when bedtimes come." The Hodja countered this, saying, "No such custom have we here, We keep grapes for autumn sere."



One day all the richest people in Akşehir invited Tamburlaine to have sherbet with them. As was the custom, the sherbet was offered to Tamburlaine first. When he saw that Tamburlaine had finished it all, one of the toadies involuntarily said "Hello" instead of, "Your good health." When Tamburlaine looked angrily at him, Nasreddin Hodja stepped in, saying, "My lord, in our region, our "Hello" means "Sweet to the tongue."



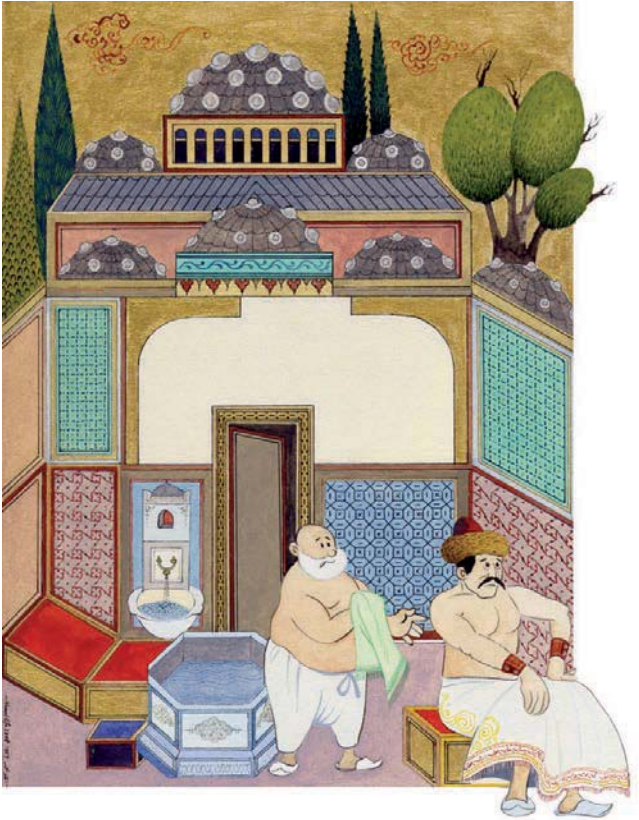
A merchant in Akşehir used to invite Nasreddin Hodja to visit him whenever he saw him. One day the Hodja had a mind to take him up on this and went to the merchant's house. Looking out of the



window, the merchant saw the Hodja coming and said to his wife, "The Hodja's come. Tell him I'm not at home, I've gone out." Greeting the Hodja at the door, the wife explained the situation. Angrily the Hodja exclaimed. "Next time he goes out, tell him not to leave his head behind at the window!"



Nasreddin Hodja went away on a long journey during which he stayed with an acquaintance of his. When the host asked him, "Are you thirsty, are you sleepy?" the Hodja said, "As I was coming here, I slept for a little by a stream."



Nasreddin Hodja was not very fond of egg-plant. One day, his neighbour asked the Hodja to the evening meal to break the Ramadan fast. First came soup, followed by eggplants cooked in oil, then moussaka, then eggplant kebab, meat stew with eggplant puree, and, finally, stuffed eggplant. After reluctantly taking a little of each, the Hodja asked the servant for a glass of water, adding, “but without eggplant, please.”



Nasreddin Hodja was taking a trip when he came across someone he knew. In the, course of conversation, the man asked, “What would you do

if a bear came out of there?" The Hodja said, "I'd throw a stone at it," "What if there were no stones?" "Then I'd climb a tree." "If there were no trees?" he persisted, The Hodja then exclaimed, "My friend, are you on my side or the bear's?"



Once, on a journey, Nasreddin Hodja was spending the night at a han with a friend when he nodded off. Just as he was about to fall asleep, his friend asked, "Are you asleep?" The Hodja asked, "What's the matter, is there something you want to say?" "Yes, I wanted to ask you for a loan." The Hodja began to snore and said, "I'm asleep, ask me tomorrow."



Nasreddin Hodja was asked, "Hodja, why doesn't money stick to the hands of the generous but does to those of the miserly?" The Hodja replied, "The generous man is like a mountain, the miserly one like a plain. Money is like water. It runs off the mountain and collects on the plain."



One day Nasreddin Hodja's donkey was stolen. Hearing this, his neighbours began to ask questions such as, "How was it stolen?" "Where was it taken from?" to which the Hodja replied, "I don't know, I wasn't there."



One day while Tamburlaine was in conversation with Nasreddin Hodja, a hole on the Hodja's robe became apparent. Enjoying his talk, Tamburlaine did not realize that he had put his finger into the hole. Just then Tamburlaine asked the Hodja, "When does one realize that someone has gone mad?" to which the Hodja replied, "When his finger makes the hole in the robe of the man sitting next to him bigger."



In the course of conversation, one of the speakers said that a certain man was said to be very clever. Another of them asked the Hodja, "So-and-so is really very clever, isn't he?" "He must be," said the Hodja. "I've never seen him pay for anything."



Nasreddin was asked, "What is the most valuable thing a man can possess in this world?" The Hodja replied, "The body, but that's in the hands of the doctor."



Once the Hodja was jokingly asked, "Say something that's really great," Realising he was being teased, the Hodja replied, "The elephant".



Nasreddin Hodja was going through bad times and losing his donkey was the last straw. Spreading his arms wide, he prayed, saying, "Oh, God, if I find my donkey, I'll be the happiest man alive." A

little while later the Hodja found his donkey and exclaimed, "This means that in order to make a poor man like me happy, you first make him lose his donkey and then find it again."



One day Nasreddin Hodja was walking along the street eating a piece of bread. Those who saw him asked, "Isn't it wrong to walk along the street eating a piece of bread?" "When you do something in secret and it isn't wrong, how can it be wrong to do it openly?" he replied.



Once upon a time Nasreddin Hodja took up the habit of chewing gum. When asked why, the Hodja said, "When a man's chewing gum, he's too busy for idle talk."



When Nasreddin Hodja was passing in front of the palace one day, he asked, "Well, brother, and how do you serve the King of Kings. 'I'm his chief madman,'" the man replied mockingly. "May God in his mercy give you brains," rejoined the Hodja.



One day Nasreddin Hodja was on a voyage when the captain became ill and there was no first mate on board. In this situation, the Hodja said, "I've sailed a boat on the lake at Akşehir" and took the wheel. A little while later, the ship grounded with a great deal of noise. The other passengers turned on the Hodja saying, "What kind of a captain are you?" The Hodja said, "It's not the fault of my steering. The sea just came to an end."



Once when the Hodja was running a grocery store, a woman came in and said, "I'm the wife of one of the Catsons. I want to buy this. Please put it down on your accounts." The Hodja answered, "I'm sorry, lady. I know your husband but I can't deliberately burden a cat with my accounts."



One day Nasreddin Hodja was asked, "Hodja what's the hardest thing in the world?" The Hodja replied, "The hardest thing in the world is a word, hard to explain and hard to understand."



A foolish merchant from Akşehir once mounted his donkey and, as he was going along the road, he met Nasreddin Hodja. Wanting to make fun of him, he said, "Hello! Everybody is talking of your wonderful deeds. Come, breathe on this donkey under me and turn it into a two-legged creature like yourself." The Hodja replied, "I can't turn the four-legged donkey under you into a two-legged donkey, but I can turn the one on top of it into a four-legged one."



Nasreddin went to a new city. As he was walking around, one of the people in the street asked him, "Sir, what day is it?" The Hodja replied, "I've only just arrived. I haven't yet learned what day it is here."



"When I die", Nasreddin Hodja said to his children, "don't build a splendid tomb for me." When asked why, the Hodja replied, "So that the angels won't think I'm a rich man and squeeze the life out of me."



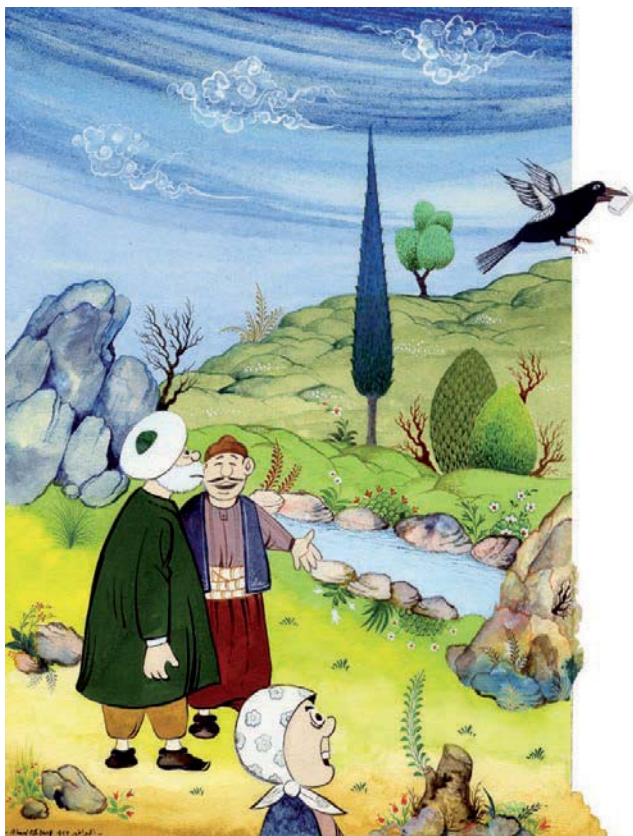
Nasreddin at one time had a metal worker's shop. A man who had brought a cauldron to him to be repaired, took it home and found it still leaked. Very angry, he came back to the Hodja. The Hodja asked him what he had filled the cauldron with. When he said, "Water," the Hodja exclaimed, "Oh, brother, you should have told me that. I thought you were going to fill it with walnuts."



The landowner's mischievous son invited his friends home to eat a dish of stewed raisins. "You can only eat this if you tell me the name of a fruit beginning with 'G', he declared. "Gooseberries," said one, and sat down at the table. "And blackberries," said the Hodja, as he dipped the ladle into the dish.



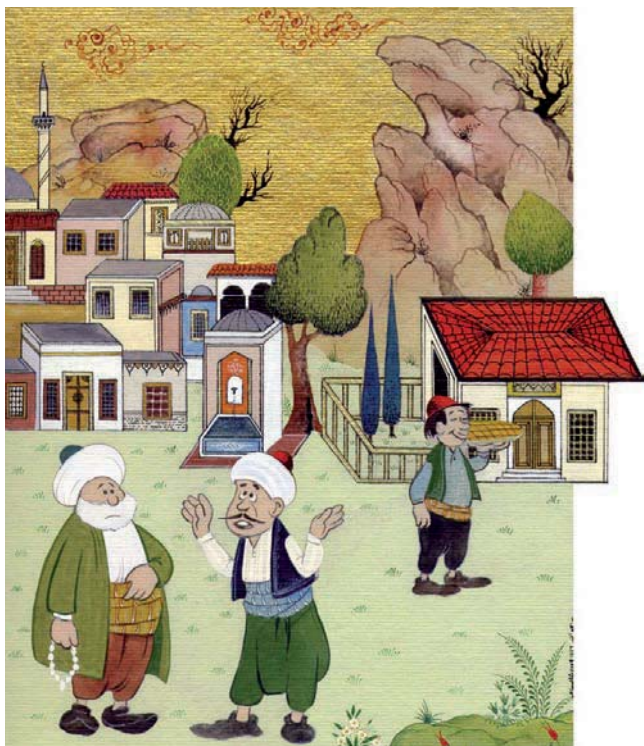
One day when Nasreddin Hodja was at the madrasa performing his duties, he was explaining to the children what a lie was. "Pay attention,



children, I'm going to tell you a lie." Pointing to the window, he said, "Look there's an apple." When all the children looked at the window, he said, "I told you I was going to tell you a lie. Now you can see how easy it is to trick people."



One day Nasreddin Hodja was giving his students some advice. "Whatever you do," he said, "always tell the truth." But one of the students interrupted him, saying, "But, my father says that if you tell the truth you'll be thrown out of nine villages." "Take no notice," said the Hodja. "There's always a tenth village to be found."



One day as Nasreddin Hodja was getting ready to take his mangy donkey to the marketplace to sell, he began to polish the donkey's hoofs with his shoe polish. When asked why he was doing that, he said, "So people like the look of my donkey. Then his spotty patches will seem like decoration."



Nasreddin saw an empty shop one day as he was going round the marketplace square. Curious, he went inside and asked the man sitting there smoking a hubble-bubble pipe, "What do you sell here?" The man said in a mocking tone, "Donkeys are bought and sold here." "Well, O.K. you're here, but where's the man who sells the donkeys?" returned the Hodja.



One day Nasreddin Hodja went to the cemetery and lay down in an empty grave. In response to those who asked him what he was doing, he said, "I am waiting for the recording angels. If I can learn what they're going to ask before I die, I won't have problems later."



One day a man came to Nasreddin Hodja and showed him a horseshoe. "Hodja," he said, "I found this horse shoe in the road. They say it brings good luck. Would it be a sin to hang it on my door?" "No," said the Hodja. "But if it was going to bring good luck, it would have brought it to its owner. The poor creature wouldn't have had to suffer all day long under such a heavy load."



Some of his friends criticized Nasreddin Hodja, saying, "Oh! You're a man of knowledge and culture. Other people have written so many books. But you haven't written any." To which the Hodja replied, "Why are you comparing me with them? They write things down because their memories are poor. I don't have such a problem so I don't need to write things down."



One day when Nasreddin Hodja was delivering a sermon at the mosque, he realized that the congregation were falling asleep. Seeing that, he raised his voice and said, "Oh, people gathered here, yesterday I saw four-legged ducks on Akşehir Lake!" As soon as they heard the words, "four-legged ducks," the drowsy congregation opened their eyes. Then the Hodja exclaimed, "What kind of people are you? I've been speaking of the words of God all this time and you were all falling asleep. When I told you a whopping big lie, you all opened your eyes."



One day Nasreddin Hodja was sitting on the banks of Akşehir Lake with a friend of his. "Hodja," said his friend, "how many pails of water do you think this lake holds?" The Hodja replied, "That depends on the pail. If you have a pail big enough, only one."



One day when sitting in one of Tamburlaine's councils, Nasreddin Hodja fell into deep discussion with the man sitting next to him. Seeing this, Tamburlaine asked jokingly, "What lies are you telling now?" "We are talking about the way you dispense justice," replied the Hodja.



One day, Tamburlaine gave the Hodja a basket of peaches and asked him to take them to his home. The Hodja took the basket of peaches and left it in the cemetery. When Tamburlaine returned to his palace and did not find the peaches there, he asked the Hodja where they were. The Hodja asked Tamburlaine to come with him and took him to the cemetery. "See," he said. "There are the peaches. You asked me to take them to your home. You're not going to be in this world forever. Your fame and palace will pass away, This is your eternal home."



When Nasreddin Hodja was walking around the market place one day with his friend they saw two people arguing. When they came nearer, they heard one of the men say to the other, "I don't want to know you. You're nothing but a donkey!" The other man retorted, "You're just the son of a donkey." Then the Hodja took hold of his friend's arm and said, "Let's go. They turn out to be related to each other."



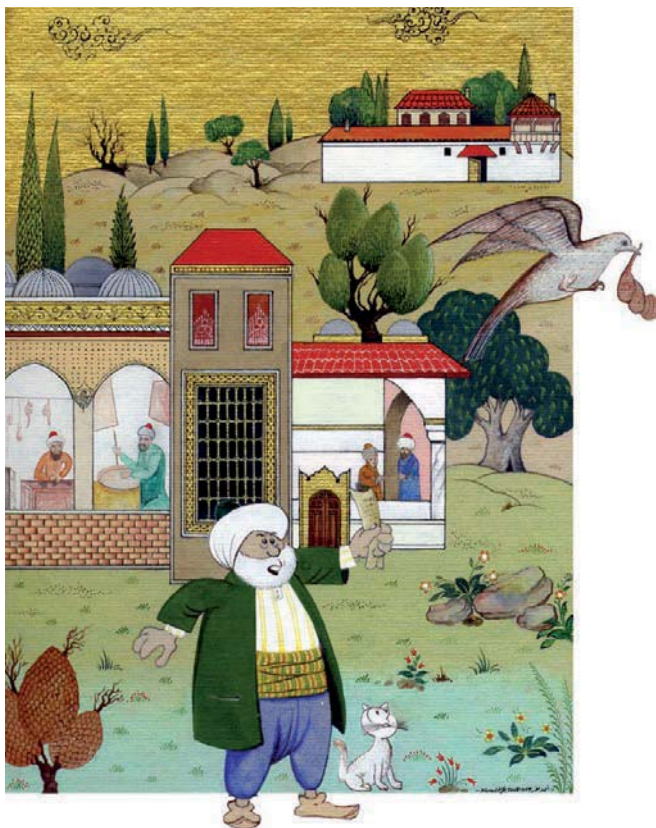
On a certain day the Hodja went out dressed in dark clothes. When the people saw him dressed like this, they asked whom he was in mourning for. "I'm in mourning for myself," said the Hodja. "I can't mourn for myself after I'm dead so I'm doing it now."



One day Nasreddin Hodja approached a stall and asked the price of some cloth there. Finding the price too high, the Hodja remonstrated, "Friend, have you no conscience?" to which the shopkeeper replied, "Sir, that's not something that's sold in this marketplace."



One day Nasreddin Hodja fell off his donkey. When those around asked, "Shall we call a doctor?" the Hodja replied, "No, call someone



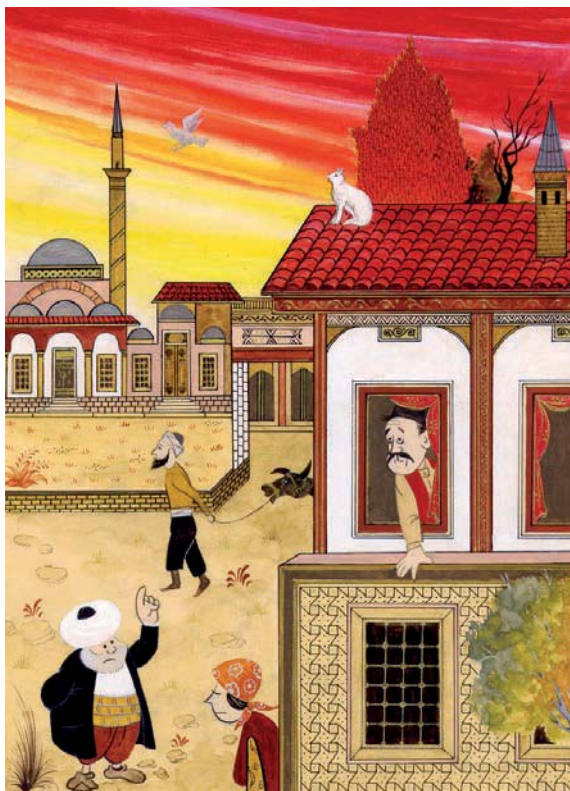
who's fallen off a donkey. He's the only person who will understand my condition."



A neighbour was complaining to Nasreddin Hodja. "Don't ask," he said. "The other day as I was walking along, I pricked my foot on a thorn. I couldn't move for the pain." "Sleep with your shoes on in future," advised the Hodja.



One day a neighbour said to the Hodja, "Don't ask. I'm in trouble. For an hour after I wake up in the morning, I can't see a thing. What should I do?" The Hodja said. "Wake up an hour later than usual."



One day the Hodja had a visitor. The Hodja set a plate of steaming ravioli on the table. The visitor couldn't wait and, digging in, put a spoonful in his mouth. Of course, he burned his mouth, but in order not to show this, he raised his head and looked at the ceiling. "When did you have this ceiling put in?" he asked. "At the same time that you burned your mouth," replied the Hodja.



The idea of writing a poem once came into Tamburlaine's mind. He read the poem he wrote to the Hodja and asked his opinion. When the Hodja said he thought it was a bad poem, Tamburlaine

had him shut up in the hay-barn. The next day he called Nasreddin Hodja and read him the poem again. Before Tamburlaine had time to ask him what he thought, Nasreddin Hodja got up and started walking away. When Tamburlaine asked him where he was going, he replied. "To the hay-barn."



One day Tamburlaine called all the viziers to him and said that he would give half of his wealth to the person who could embarrass Nasreddin Hodja. After thinking for a long time, the viziers invited Nasreddin Hodja to the palace and, in Tamburlaine's presence, asked him to make half a cough. The Hodja calmly took up a knife from the table, put it in his mouth, and coughed. "There," he said. "I've halved the cough. Take whichever half you like."



One day, the sultan announced that he would give one hundred pieces of gold a month to whoever could teach his beloved donkey to read and write within the space of ten years. If the person were unsuccessful, however, he would be beheaded. No one apart from Nasreddin Hodja accepted this task. When they asked Nasreddin Hodja why he was willing to do it, he replied, "Every month I'll get one hundred gold coins. In ten years' time, either the sultan, or me, or the donkey will be dead."



One day Nasreddin Hodja met a man in the street. The man said to him, "Sir, you seem to be a very fussy person." "How do you make that out?" asked the Hodja. "From the way you dress," said the man. This time the Hodja said, "You seem to be a very stupid person." When the man asked him why he thought that, the Hodja answered, "From the way you talk."



Nasreddin Hodja once had two wives. The wives pressed the Hodja to tell him which one he loved most. Seeing there was no way out, the Hodja secretly gave each of them a blue bead. When they were all

sitting down together, the wives asked the Hodja the same question. "Whichever I gave a blue bead to," replied the Hodja, evading the issue.



One day Nasreddin Hodja put a cloth over the mouth of the bellows he was using to light a fire with. When his wife asked him why he had done that, he said, "You know how I hate waste. If I don't cover the mouth of the bellows, the air inside it will escape and be blown away."



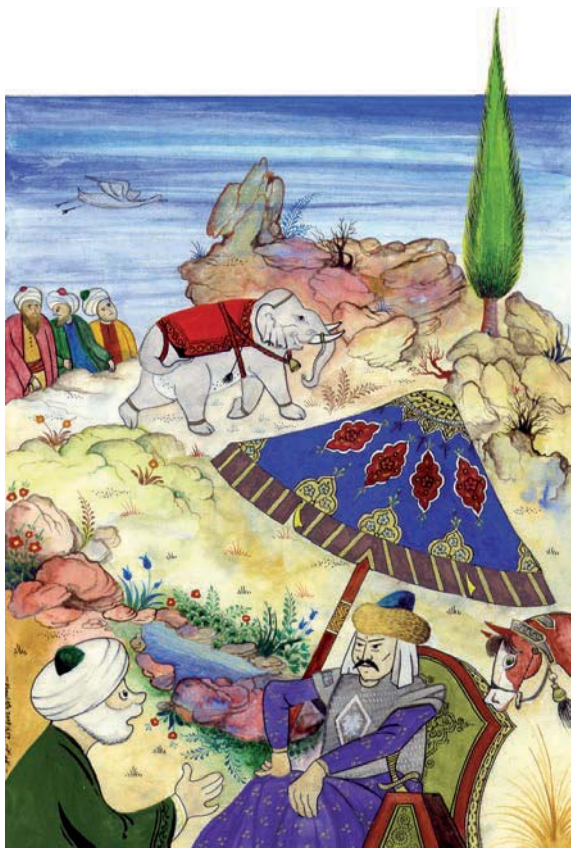
One day Nasreddin Hodja went to marketplace with his son riding on the donkey and he himself walking beside it. One of the passers-by turned to the child on the donkey and scolded him, saying, "Aren't you ashamed of yourself, letting your elderly father walk?" The Hodja took the child down and mounted the donkey himself. The next man they met scolded Nasreddin Hodja saying, "You're a grown man. Aren't you ashamed of yourself, making the child walk?" This time the Hodja got off the donkey and continued on his way, walking together with his son. Another man, seeing them like this, said, "What a strange man you are! Noone's riding the donkey and yet you two are on foot." At that, the Hodja turned to his son and said, "Look, son, we can't please anyone and people keep on scolding us. There's only one thing left to do and that's to let the donkey ride on our backs."



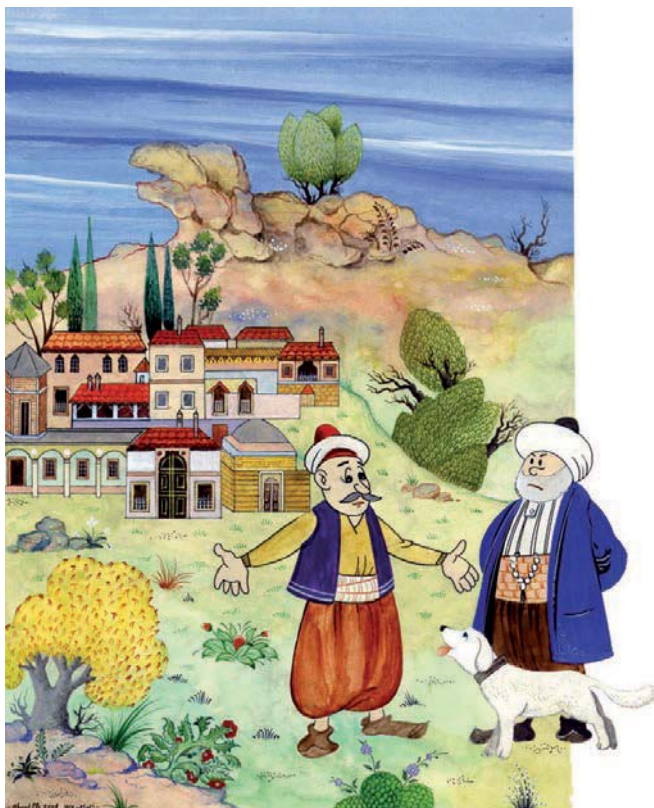
Nasreddin Hodja one day fell down as he was climbing the stairs in a hurry. Hearing the noise, everyone rushed to ask the Hodja what had happened. "My robe fell down," said the Hodja "Would a robe make all that noise?" they asked. "Don't ask so many questions. The robe had me inside of it," he returned.



A neighbour who never paid his debts on time came to Nasreddin Hodja one day and said, "I need a bit of money. Will you give me a time-loan?" "Look here, neighbour," said the Hodja, "you want not only a loan but time as well. I can't give you both at once. But I can give you as much time as you want."



Once Nasreddin Hodja lent someone some money but never got it back. He went to the debtor's door and asked for a loan, saying, "Look here, neighbour. I promise to pay you back the money in a little while." When the neighbour asked, "When will you pay me back?" the Hodja said, "I've planted a bush by your doorstep. In spring the bush will grow green and become woody. The wool of the sheep that pass by your door will get caught on the bush. Later, together with the wife, we'll collect the wool, spin it and sell it. The I'll come and pay you back your money." The rogue began to smile a wry smile. "You are happy when you see ready money, aren't you?" asked the Hodja.



Nasreddin had a neighbour who was always borrowing money but seldom paid it back. One day he came to Nasreddin Hodja and said, "I've a favour to ask." Realizing what he wanted, the Hodja interrupted him, saying, "I've a favour to ask you, neighbour." "What's that?" the neighbour asked. "Please don't ask me for a loan," said the Hodja.



One day Nasreddin Hodja was asked how old he was. When the Hodja replied, "I'm fifty," his friends protested, saying, "Is that right,? That's

what you said ten years ago.” Without turning a hair, the Hodja replied, “Is that right? I gave my word on this ten years ago. Am I going to go back on it, just to please you?”



One day as the Hodja was riding along on his donkey, he met an acquaintance of his who was a great tease. “Hodja,” said the man, “where are you two friends going?” Seeing himself classed with a donkey, the Hodja replied, “We were coming to meet you, my friend.”



Nasreddin Hodja bought some liver one day and as he was going home met a friend of his who said to him, “I’ll give you such a good recipe for liver that you’ll lick your fingers when you eat it.” Writing the recipe down, he gave it to the Hodja. The Hodja was reading it in the street when a black kite swooped down and snatched the liver out of his hands. The Hodja called after the kite, “I’ve got the recipe, I’ve got the recipe.”



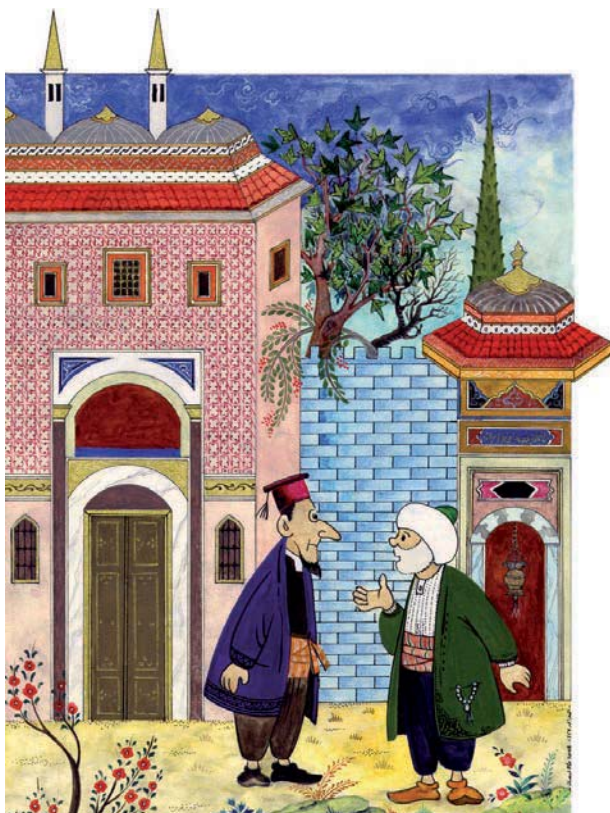
One day three knowledgeable priests came to Akşehir. Nasreddin Hodja was called for immediately as it was thought only he could outwit them. In order to test the priests asked, “Hodja, where is the centre of the world?” Pointing to the ground with his stick, “It’s here,” said the Hodja. “How do you know that?” asked the priests. “If you don’t believe me, measure it,” was the Hodja’s answer. Next, trying to confound the Hodja, the priests asked, “How many stars are there in the sky?” “As many as the hairs in the tail of my donkey,” replied the Hodja. “Can you prove that?” they asked. “If you want to, you can count them and see,” he said. The priests were silenced.



One day Nasreddin Hodja was asked, “What’s the secret of living a long and healthy life?” “Keep your feet warm and your head cool; be relaxed and don’t think deeply,” he replied.



One day Nasreddin Hodja was brought a letter written in Farsi and asked to read it. As the Hodja didn’t know Farsi, he said he couldn’t read the



letter. Then the owner of the letter turned on him, saying, "Shame on you. Aren't you embarrassed to be wearing those robes of office?" Thereupon the Hodja took off his turban and his robe and held them out to the man, saying, "If that skill belongs to a turban and a robe, here you are!"



One day Nasreddin Hodja was talking with his friends, one of whom was a chatterbox who never stopped talking and never gave anyone else the chance to speak. Seeing there was no stopping him, the Hodja had a little snooze. Then the chatterbox turned to Nasreddin Hodja and said, "Hodja, you haven't once opened your mouth." Unable to restrain himself, the Hodja replied, "Is that possible, brother? My jaw has almost split in two with yawning in appreciation of your talk."



One day Nasreddin Hodja was asked, "Hodja, how many furlongs does the earth, contain?"

Pointing to a funeral procession which was passing, the Hodja said, "Look, there's someone who's taken the measure of it. Go and ask him. He's the only one who can give you an answer."



Nasreddin Hodja was at the barber's one day when a customer said to him, "It's wonderful, although your hair is grey, your beard is still black,

Why is that?" In answer the Hodja said, "My hair began to grow before my beard so it's older, that's why."



One day an impudent man said to Nasreddin Hodja in order to cause him trouble, "Hodja, when performing one's ablutions, which way

should one face?" The Hodja replied, "Whichever way your clothes are facing."



When Nasreddin Hodja was carrying out his duties as a judge, two men came to him. One of them said, "Hodja, the other day I dreamed that I

gave a purse of jingling coins to this man and he doesn't pay it back. I want to file a complaint." The other man protested that he hadn't been given any such loan. Seeing there was nothing to be done, the Hodja put twenty akça which he had taken from the debtor, put them in a bag, jingled them in the ear of the complainant and said, "Here's your loan," and gave the money back to its owner.



Nasreddin Hodja's donkey went missing one day and he went to the judge to ask him to find it. The judge asked stupid questions such as, "When was

your donkey stolen? How was it stolen?" to which the Hodja replied, "Judge! Sir! If i'd known these things would I have come to you?"



Nasreddin Hodja was praised for being a man who hit the mark. One day in order to test him, he was given a bow and arrow and asked to shoot at

a target. The first shot went wide and the Hodja remarked,

“That’s the way the chief of police shoots.” His next shot also missed and the Hodja again commented, saying, “That’s the way his Honour the Judge shoots.” When the next shot hit the bull’s eye, the Hodja, puffing his chest out, said, “That’s the way Nasreddin Hodja shoots.”



In a dream Nasreddin Hodja was one day offered a loan of 99 akça. The Hodja said, “Unless it’s a hundred, I really can’t accept it.” When the argument got heated, the Hodja woke up, and realizing he was awake, shut his eyes again and said, “O.K., O.K. I accept. Let it be 99 akça you give me. God who gives 99 will certainly give one more.”



One day Nasreddin Hodja went the marketplace in another village and was walking around when someone asked him what day of the week it was. “Oh,” said the Hodja. “I’m a stranger here, you’d better ask a local.”



A guest who came to Nasreddin Hodja from a neighbouring village brought him a rabbit he had snared on the way to his house. The Hodja presented his guest with a stew he had made from the rabbit he had brought. The next week another person from that village came and saying, “I’m a relative of the guest you had last week,” stayed with Nasreddin Hodja. This time the Hodja made a pilaff to serve with the left-over meat from the rabbit. A week later another of the same man’s relatives came. This time the Hodja made a soup from the remains of the rabbit and served it to him. When, in the same way, another man came, the Hodja, who had been patient up to then, could contain himself no longer and burst out, asking, “Excuse me, friend, but I can only give you the water from the pot the rabbit was cooked in. Tell your friend, if there is another one, that the rabbit is finished.”



In the course of a feast, Nasreddin Hodja was asked whether he could play the saz or not. “I can,” he said and took the saz in his hand. Putting a

plectrum on his finger, he began to pluck a single string. "What kind of saz playing is this?" they asked. "Shouldn't you play it with your fingers at a higher pitch?" "This is the way I play," replied the Hodja. "Others strum their fingers over the strings in order to find the pitch I am playing."



One day Nasreddin Hodja went to Akşehir Lake and began to do something with the ladle in his hand. When asked what he was doing, he said, "I'm trying to turn the lake into yoghurt," he said. "Hodja, can the lake be turned into yoghurt?" they asked incredulously. "But what if it could..." replied the Hodja.



Nasreddin Hodja was forced one winter's day to take refuge in an old inn. That night, when the northwest wind began to blow, the inn began to creak increasingly loudly. Fearing that the inn would collapse, the Hodja said to the inn keeper, "Sir, I hope to God this han doesn't collapse as it seems about to do." The Inn keeper replied, "Don't be afraid, nothing will happen. Don't worry. The noises you hear are the inn giving thanks to God." "That's what I'm afraid of," said the Hodja. "If the building becomes overcome by its prayers or picks up its prayer mat, what will we do then?"



Tamburlaine once gave every village an elephant to feed. He sent one to Nasreddin Hodja's village also. The villagers fed it on whatever they had in hand. Within a little while there was nothing left to give it. It was an impossible situation so they decided to send a delegation to Tamburlaine under the leadership of Nasreddin Hodja to explain things and ask Tamburlaine to take back the elephant. On the day appointed, the villagers fell in behind the Hodja and set off. A little while later, in fear of Tamburlaine, one by one they began to drop off. When they got to Tamburlaine's place the Hodja began, "My Sultan, I and my companions..." when he realised that there was no-one behind him and started again, "Don't ask why, my lord, but my companions are so happy to have a male elephant that now they want a female one as well."

Tamburlaine was delighted to hear this and sent the Hoidja away, promising to carry out his suggestion. When the Hodja got home, the villagers were curious and asked the Hodja what had happened. "The good news is a female elephant is arriving," the Hodja told them.



One day a shepherd asked Nasreddin Hodja, "Hodja, what happens to the moons when they grow old?" "They are stretched and made into streaks of lightning," replied the Hodja.



Şeyyat Hamza, who was the miracle worker of Nasreddin Hodja's congregation, began to describe how he often went up into the sky and wandered around the spheres. The Hodja could not prevent himself from asking, "Sir, did your face ever touch anything soft on your journeys through the sky?" In order not to lose face, Şeyyat Hamza said, "Yes, it did," whereupon the Hodja exclaimed. "That was the tail of my ass."



One day the Hodja was faint from hunger and a little while later collapsed on the ground, crying, "I'm a dead man." After he had remained there for some time, he got up and went home where he said to his wife, "I'm a dead man," before going back to the place where he had been lying. His wife called the neighbours and told them the situation. One of them asked, "Well, who told you the Hodja was dead?" "He came and told me himself," replied the wife. "Which of us poor people could do that?"



Nasreddin Hodja one day got on his donkey and as he was going to market met a rich man riding a horse. In a disdainful tone, the man asked the Hodja, "Hey, what's it like to ride a donkey? Good, eh?" The Hodja answered, "It's better to be man riding a donkey than a donkey riding a horse."



A man came rushing up to the Hodja and panted, "Your house is on fire, run quickly!" Unruffled, the Hodja said, "Go and tell the wife that. I take care

of things outside the house and she takes care of things inside so it's none of my business."



Nasreddin Hodja at one time used to carry a scimitar stuck in his cummerbund. Seeing this, his neighbours said, "Hodja, you are a learned man. What business do you have carrying a sword?" In answer the Hodja replied, "I cut out the mistakes I find in books." "When" they asked, "Hodja, wouldn't a knife be enough?" he replied, "Enough? There are so many mistakes that sometimes an axe is needed rather than a sword."



One day the Hodja stepped up on a stone in order to mount his donkey but no sooner had he done so than he fell to the ground. "Ah, youth! youth!", he muttered to himself as he picked himself up. Looking around to see if anyone was near and seeing there was no-one, he murmured, "Give up the wisecracks, I know what you were like in your youth."



One day thieves stole Nasreddin Hodja's bag of salted cheese. The Hodja quickly went to the fountain and sat down to wait. When asked why he was sitting there, the Hodja replied, "Don't ask, thieves stole my cheese. Whatever happens, they'll get thirsty and have to come to the fountain. I'm waiting here for them."



One day Nasreddin Hodja brought two okkas of liver home and asked his wife to cook it. While the Hodja was out his wife cooked and ate all the liver. When the Hodja came home and sat down expectantly at the table, he saw that instead of liver there was a pilaff of cracked wheat. He asked his wife, "Where's the liver?" "Oh," she said, "the cat ran off with it." Immediately the Hodja picked up the cat and, putting it on the scales, weighed it. It weighed exactly two okkas. On seeing that, the Hodja turned to his wife and inquired, "If this is what the cat weighs, where's the liver?"



Nasreddin Hodja fell ill and the neighbouring goodwives came to visit him. In the course of the conversation, the Hodja was asked, "May God

give you a good life, but what should we mourn for when you're dead?" "He loved talking to women," said the Hodja. "Say that and weep."



Nasreddin Hodja was asked, "Hodja, which is more effective, the moon or the sun?" The Hodja replied, "The moon, of course. The sun rises in the daytime when it's light anyway. But the moon gives birth to darkness and makes everywhere dark".



One day when Nasreddin Hodja had mounted his donkey backwards and was going on his way, someone asked him, "Why do you get on your donkey backwards?" "I got on the right way round. It's the donkey that's back to front," replied the Hodja.



One day Nasreddin Hodja loaded his donkey with watermelons to sell as he walked along the streets calling, "Water Melo-o-o-ns" Suddenly the donkey began to bray in unison with the Hodja's call. "Either you sell the watermelons or I do," the Hodja remonstrated.



One day Nasreddin Hodja's donkey went missing. In the face of this, the Hodja continuously gave thanks to God. When asked why he did this, the Hodja answered. "What If I had been riding the donkey and got lost too? What could I have done?"



One day Nasreddin Hodja and Tamburlaine were engaged in conversation. Tamburlaine asked the Hodja, "Hodja, how much am I worth?" "Fifty akça, the Hodja replied. Tamburlaine, annoyed, said, "See here, be more respectful. I'm a sultan. Even the robe I am wearing is worth many times more than 50 akça." Then the Hodja replied, "That's what I would give for your robe."



Nasreddin Hodja was once visiting his neighbour. Honey and clotted cream had been set out on the table. When the Hodja started to eat these without any bread, the neighbour remonstrated, saying, "Won't the honey give you heartburn?" "God only knows what makes my heart burn," replied the Hodja.



When Nasreddin Hodja was a child he was asked, "Nasreddin, are you the elder or is it your brother?" Nasreddin Hodja replied, "Last year my mother told me my brother was a year older than me. This year we're both the same age."



Nasreddin had two wives. The two wives put him on a spot when they asked, "Which of us do you love best?" The Hodja declared he loved both of them. One day one of them asked him, "If we were boating on the lake at Akşehir and the boat capsized, which one of us would you save?" The Hodja turned to the elder one and said, "You know how to swim, don't you?"



One day Nasreddin Hodja was asked, "You're a learned man. Have you ever invented anything?" "Yes," answered the Hodja. "I invented snow helva." When they asked him, "Is there such a kind of helva?" he replied, "Well, anyway, even I didn't like it much."



Nasreddin Hodja was one day walking around the marketplace when a man asked him, "In which direction should I turn to face Mecca?" The Hodja, noticing that the market was full of thieves, said, "The direction in which your bags are."



Nasreddin Hodja was once performing his ritual ablutions by the riverside. Just as he was finishing, his shoe floated away down the river. Then the Hodja ran swiftly along the bank, crying, "Take my ablutions but give me back my shoe."



One night thieves broke into Nasreddin Hodja's house. Poking him, his wife told him to get up and see what was happening. He took no notice, simply saying, "Go to sleep, wife. If they find anything in the house, I'll take it from them."



Nasreddin Hodja was asked when the Day of Judgement would come. "When the wife dies, the Lesser Day of Judgment will come; when I die, the lesser Day of Judgement will also come," he replied.



One day at a discussion on music, Nasreddin Hodja was asked, "Hodja, which kind of saz sounds best to you?" He replied, "I love the saz which sounds like pots and pans."



One day Nasreddin Hodja came across a windmill he had never seen before and asked the watchman. "What do they call this?" "A water-mill" the watchman mischievously replied. "Oh," said the Hodja. "Where does the water come from?"



Nasreddin Hodja, in the days when he was very poor, was going along the road when he saw strangers in the distance. He immediately got off his donkey and lay down on his back in the dust, pretending to be dead. The strangers clustered round him and said to each other, "Three hundred akça will be enough to have this one washed and provide for a shroud. But if only we could find a person to believe this and send him home." As they were talking in this way, the Hodja lifted his head and said, "Don't trouble yourselves. I'm not so dead I can't carry someone for three hundred akça. Give me the money and I'll take him."



One day as Nasreddin Hodja was walking around the marketplace saying he wanted to taste the produce, he ate handful after handful of the fruit such as plums and peaches set out for sale. When they saw what he was doing, one of the salesmen said, "This kind of fruit should be eaten one by one," "That's what you think," retorted the Hodja. "It's melons and watermelons that should be eaten one by one."



In Nasreddin Hodja's village there was a huge stone. Noone could budge it from its place. One day it was announced that whoever could carry the stone away would be given its weight in akça. Noone accepted the challenge until the Hodja said, "I'll do it but I want the money in advance." The money was collected and given to him and Nasreddin Hodja sat down by the stone and began to wait. "What are you waiting for?" they asked?

"Put it on my back so I can carry it away. That was the bargain, wasn't it?" was his answer.



One day Tamburlaine said he would give its weight in gold to anyone who could teach his donkey to read and write. If unsuccessful, the person would be executed. When noone came forward, the Hodja said, "I'll do it." They brought the donkey to him. Within a short time, saying he had taught the donkey to read and write, the Hodja asked Tamburlaine for an audience. Tamburlaine said, "Go ahead, Show us," and put a book in front of the donkey. The donkey, seeming to turn the pages with its tongue, began to eat the barley hidden between the pages. When it came to the page to be read, there was no corn left between the pages and the donkey began to bray. Surprised, Tamburlaine asked why the donkey had begun to bray. "It has begun to pray," was the answer.



One night Nasreddin Hodja heard a knock on the door at a very inconvenient hour. When the Hodja called out, "Who's there?" a voice replied, "A guest of God." Whereupon Nasreddin Hodja went outside and, taking the troublesome man by the arm, led him to the door of the mosque, saying, "You came to the wrong house. Here you are, this is the house of God."



One day as Nasreddin Hodja was walking around the marketplace, someone said to him, "People with long beards are short of common-sense." Taking this remark to heart, the Hodja went home and, while trying to shorten his beard with the help of a candle-flame, not only lost his whole beard but also singed his face. The next week the Hodja ran across the same man and said to him, "You were right, brother, I proved it. People with long beards really are short of common-sense."



Nasreddin Hodja, who had lost his donkey, came to the square and began to shout, "I'll give the saddle and bridle to whoever finds my donkey."

Someone who heard this asked, "Hodja, what's the good of doing that? if you've given away the saddle and bridle what does it matter if the donkey is found or not?" "Finding it would be a good thing, wouldn't it?" asked the Hodja.



One day Nasreddin Hodja went to the Turkish bath wearing his old clothes. The bath attendants paid him no notice. The Hodja was forced to use an old tattered barh towel and wrapper. On leaving, he left them a tip of ten akça. The next day, he went again to the Turkish bath. The bath attendants showed him great respect and gave him a new bath towel and wrapper. On leaving the baths, the Hodja this time gave a tip of one akça. When the bath attendants looked displeased, the Hodja said, "The tip I gave today is for last week; the one I gave last week is for today."



One day Nasreddin Hodja made known his will: "When I die, bury me upside down." When asked why, he replied, "On the Day of Judgment, everything will be turned upside down. I just want to save trouble."



Nasreddin Hodja's wife one day made a tray of baklava. That evening the Hodja ate half of this. On going to bed, unable to get to sleep, he asked his wife to bring the tray of baklava and ate what was left of it. On being asked why he had done this, the Hodja said to his wife, "Why do you ask? The problems of the poor are those of the stomach. Now let's go to sleep."



A miserly man once fell into the river. Someone on the shore stretched out a hand to him. "Give me your hand," he shouted, but even though the other man was drowning, he did not take it. Realizing the situation, the Hodja said, "Out of the way, my friend! He doesn't know the meaning of give, only of take." "Take my hand," he called to the drowning man. The man took it and climbed out of the river.



Another day Nasreddin Hodja had once again lost his donkey. He began to look for his donkey, singing a folk song as he did so. "Hodja, is that the way to

look for a donkey?" "they remonstrated but the Hodja said, Don't worry about that. There's hope behind that mountain. If the donkey isn't there, you will see how I can cry."



Half of Nasreddin Hodja's head was bald. One day he went to the barber, had his hair cut and left a payment of one akça. Some time passed and the Hodja went to the same barber and had his hair cut again. This time he walked out without leaving anything. When the barber complained, the Hodja said, "My friend, half of my head is bald. Half of the money I gave last time is for today's haircut. One akça pays for both."



Nasreddin Hodja was walking round the marketplace one day. It was very crowded so, in order not to lose himself, he tied a string to his back with a watermelon on the end of it. A joker seeing this untied the string and tied it to another person without the Hodja's noticing. When the Hodja saw the man with the watermelon behind him, he asked himself, "Well, if that's me, who am I?"



One day Nasreddin Hodja had a yearning for curd soup and began to dream of a steaming plateful. Just at that minute the son of a neighbour entered with a bowl in his hands. "Hoca," he said, "my father sent me to ask if you had any hot curd soup to give him." Then the Hodja exclaimed, "Oh, my God! The neighbours have begun to get wind of even my imaginary soup."



Tamburlaine one day for a joke cut off the top lip of Nasreddin Hodja's horse. Noticing this, the Hodja secretly cut off the tail of Tamburlaine's horse. When Tamburlaine asked the Hodja what his horse was smiling about, the Hodja replied, "Your horse's tail."



One day when the Hodja's companions were sitting on the ground, they began to whispered among themselves. "When the Hodja greets us, let's pretend not to notice and let's see what he does." The Hodja came and greeted them but his friends, just as if he

wasn't there, made no reply. Seeing this the Hodja spread open his hands and said, "In the name of Almighty God, let us pray for the spirits of the dead."



In the course of conversation one day Nasreddin Hodja remarked, "The sky at Akşehir is the same as that at Sivrihisar." When asked what he meant, he said, "The moon and the stars are the same in both places."



When Nasreddin Hodja was a child, someone pointed to his father who was passing by and asked who he was. "The husband of my maternal uncle's sister," he replied.



One day when Nasreddin Hodja was walking round the cemetery, his foot slipped and he fell into an empty tomb. As he was stretching himself out trying to imagine what it would be like to be a corpse, he heard a noise from the road and raised his head. The donkeys belonging to some potters who were passing by were started by his sudden appearance and the cups they were carrying were shattered to pieces. This was the potters' wealth so they collared Nasreddin Hodja and asked him what he thought he was doing. When the Hodja replied, "I'm an alien from another world and I'm on my travels round this one," the potters gave him a good beating. The Hodja returned home in a woeful condition. When his wife asked what had happened, he said, "Be quiet, woman. I've come from the other world." "The wife wittily asked him," "Oh, what is there and what's not there in the other world?" The Hodja answered, "If you don't startle the potters' donkeys there's nothing to be afraid of."



One day, when Nasreddin Hodja was planting his field, he said, "This half is for me and that half is for God." A little while later, the half belonging to God was beautified with huge watermelons and bright yellow melons, whereas in his half nothing had come up. The Hodja picked two melons from the part sown for God. No sooner had he done so than thunder rolled and lightning flashed. The Hodja let the melons in his hand fall

to the ground and exclaimed. "Oh God, was there a need for all that? It was only two melons."



The Hodja's mischievous friends came to him one day and said, "Your donkey has become the judge of such-and-such a place." "It was obvious that would happen. Whenever I gave a sermon, it used to prick up its ears and shake its head," he said.



Nasreddin Hodja was asked why he always had a smiling face. The Hodja replied, "Other people came into the world crying, I came laughing. And anyway, we're all visitors to this world. Do people ever cry when they come to visit? We should smile, shouldn't we?"



Nasreddin was asked, "Nasreddin Hodja, why did God create you?" "Because if he hadn't, the world would have drowned in tears," he answered.



A teacher was describing how developed technology had become, saying that there was even a machine which could make spicy sausages as long as the road from one end of the village to the other. Little Nasreddin Hodja, curious, asked, "That's very good, sir. If we put sausage in the machine at one end would it come out as a sheep at the other?"



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