

You downloaded 'A Collection of Nasruddin Stories ver 1v00.pdf' from nobody dot wordpress dot com and got this. This text is what happened when nobody collected 'Nasruddin' stories and decided which are worth the re-telling--a sort of story-sifting service.

Nasruddin seemed to be born, live, and/or die in many different cities and countries at the same time. Other famous people have also managed to do that, but very few have had so many stories told about them.

Nasruddin entered a formal reception area and seated himself at the foremost elegant chair.

The Chief of the Guard approached and said: "Sir, those places are reserved for guests of honor."

"I am more than a mere guest," replied Nasruddin confidently.

"So are you a diplomat?"

"Far more than that!"

"So you are a minister, perhaps?"

"No, bigger than that too."

"So you must be the King himself," said the Chief sarcastically.

"Higher than that!"

"What?! Are you higher than the King?! Nobody is higher than the King!"

"Now you have guessed. I am nobody!" said Nasruddin.

One day some supposed scholars traveled from town to town, pretending to try to find answers to some of the great questions of their time. Mulla Nasruddin was put forward as a wise man by some wag, and the motion carried... the townspeople told the scholars that Nasruddin was their wisest man even if some laughed when they heard those words.

The first scholar asked Nasruddin "Where is the exact center of the world?"

"It is under my right heel," answered Nasruddin.

"How can you confirm it?"

"If you don't believe me, measure and see."

The supposed scholar could not respond to that.

The second wise guy asked "How many stars are there in the sky?"

"As many as there are hairs on my donkey," answered Nasruddin.

"What evidence have you got of that?" asked the wise guy.

"If you don't believe me, count the hairs on my donkey and you will see."

"That's stupid talk. How can one calculate the hairs on a donkey?"

"Then how can one count the stars in the sky? If one is stupid talk, so is the other."

The wise guy was silent.

The last supposed scholar said, "You seem to know a lot about your donkey... can you tell me how many hairs there are in its tail?"

"Surely. There are exactly as many hairs in its tail as there are in your beard."

"How can you prove that?" asked the last supposed scholar.

"Easily," answered Nasruddin. "You can pull one hair out of my donkey's tail for every one I pull out of your beard. If the hairs on my donkey's tail do not come to an end at exactly the same time as the hairs in your beard, I will admit that I was wrong."

Of course, the third supposed scholar wasn't willing to be plucked, so the crowd declared Mulla Nasruddin the winner.

Nasruddin was visiting a far-away city when a man slapped him in the face, then said, "I beg your pardon. I thought that you were someone else."

This explanation did not satisfy Nasruddin, so he brought the stranger before the qadi and demanded compensation. Nasruddin soon perceived that the qadi and the defendant were friends.

The judge pronounced the sentence: "The settlement for this offense is one dirham, to be paid to the plaintiff. If you do not have any money with you, then you may bring it here to the plaintiff at your convenience."

The defendant went on his way. Nasruddin waited for him to return... and he waited... and he waited.

Nasruddin asked the qadi, "Do I understand correctly that one dirham is sufficient payment for a slap?"

"Yes," answered the corrupt qadi.

Nasruddin slapped the judge in the face and said, "You may keep my money when the defendant returns with it."

Nasruddin and a friend were discussing their wives, when it occurred to the friend that Nasreddin had never mentioned his wife's name.

"I do not know her name." admitted Nasruddin.

"What?" asked the friend in disbelief. "How long have you been married?"

"Twenty years," he answered. "At first I did not think that the marriage would last, so I did not take the effort to learn my bride's name."

Nasruddin was invited to a banquet. Not wanting to be pretentious, he wore his everyday clothes... but everyone ignored him, including the host. Nasruddin leaves the party, but soon returns wearing a fancy coat. Now Nasruddin is greeted and shown to the dining table.

Soup was served. Nasruddin dunked the sleeve of his coat into the bowl. "Eat, my coat, eat!"

The startled host asked him to explain.

"When I was wearing my other clothes, no one offered me anything. When I returned wearing this fine coat, I was immediately offered the best of everything... I can only assume that it was the coat that was invited to your banquet."

One night Nasruddin awoke... he had heard a strange noise outside his window. When he looked, he saw a suspicious white figure.

Nasreddin strung his bow, set an arrow to the string, and shouted at the white figure, which didn't seem to be scared. Nasruddin sent an arrow at it. The white figure seems to shrink, so Nasruddin returned to bed and slept until dawn.

By morning's light he examined the scene outside his window. His own white shirt that was hanging on the clothesline is now on the ground and pierced with an arrow.

"That was a close call," murmured Nasruddin. "My own shirt, shot through by an arrow! What if I had been wearing it at the time!"

One night Nasruddin looked into his well and saw the reflection of the full moon.

"The moon has fallen from the sky and into my well!" shouted Nasruddin.

He ran into his house and returned with a hook attached to a rope. He then threw the hook into the water and, when it caught onto the side of the well, he thought he'd hooked the moon. He tried to pull it up... Nasruddin pulled, then rested, then decided to pull as hard as he could. The hook came loose and he fell over backwards. The full moon was too bright for him to ignore.

"It was a lot of trouble," Nasruddin said, "but at least I got the moon back into the sky where it belongs."

Nasruddin purchased a piece of meat at the market, and on his way home he met a friend.

Seeing this meat, the friend told him about an excellent recipe for stew.

"I'll forget it unless you write it down for me."

The friend obliged, and Nasruddin continued on his way. He had not walked far when a large hawk swooped down from the sky. It snatched the meat from Nasruddin and flew away.

"It will do you no good!" he shouted at the disappearing hawk. "I still have the recipe!"

One day Mulla Nasruddin was in the market and saw birds for sale at five hundred dinars each. "My bird," he thought, "which is larger than any of these is worth far more." The next day, he took his pet hen to market, but nobody wanted to pay fifty dinars for it. Nasruddin changed his sales pitch. "O people! Yesterday you were selling birds not half my hen's size at ten times the price!"

Someone explained. "Nasruddin, those were parrots... talking birds. They are worth more because they talk."

"Fool!" said Nasruddin; "those birds you value only because they can talk. This one, which has wonderful thoughts and yet does not annoy people with chatter, you reject."

One day Nasruddin saw a crowd gathered around a pond, watching a priest flailing in the water and calling for help. Of course some people were attempting to rescue--reaching towards the drowning priest and saying "Give me your hand!" The priest kept wrestling with the water and shouting for help.

Finally Nasruddin stepped forward: "Let me handle this."

He stretched out his hand toward the priest and shouted, "Take my hand!"

The priest grabbed Nasruddin's hand so quickly that he nearly fell in. Soon the priest was extracted from the pond... and someone asked Nasruddin what just happened.

"It is very simple," he replied. "I know this miser never gave anything to anyone. Instead of saying 'Give me your hand,' I said, 'Take my hand,' and sure enough he took it."

Once, someone requested of Mulla Nasruddin: "Give me your ring as a memento, so that whenever I look at it I will remember you."

The Mulla replied: "You cannot have the ring. But whenever you want to remember me, just look at your finger and remember that I did not give you the ring!"

One day Mullah Nasruddin entered his favorite teahouse and said, "The moon is more useful than the sun."

An old man asked, "Why?"

Nasruddin replied, "We need the light more during the night than during the day."

"How old are you, Mullah?"

"Forty."

"But you said that two years ago when I asked."

"That's right. I always stand by my word!"

One day, Mullah and his son went on a journey. Mullah preferred to let his son ride the donkey while he walked. Along the way, they passed some travelers.

"Look at that healthy young boy on the donkey! No respect for his elders! He rides while his poor father walks!"

The words made the lad feel very ashamed, and he insisted that his father ride while he walked. So Mullah climbed on the donkey and the boy walked by his side. Soon they met another group.

"Well, look at that! That poor little boy has to walk while his father rides the donkey," they exclaimed.

This time, Mullah climbed onto the donkey behind his son.

Soon they met another group, who said, "Look at that poor donkey! He has to carry the weight of two people."

Mullah then told his son, "The best thing is for both of us to walk. Then no one can complain."

So they continued their journey on foot. Again they met some travelers.

"Just look at those fools. Both of them are walking under this hot sun and neither of them is riding the donkey!"

Nasruddin lifted the donkey onto his shoulders. "If I don't do this, these people will criticize and complain."

One day a neighbor called on Nasruddin.

"I want to borrow your donkey."

"I'm sorry," Nasruddin said, "but I lent it to the miller."

The sound of a donkey braying came from behind Nasruddin's house.

"But... I can *hear* your donkey."

"Shame on you," Nasruddin said indignantly. "You'd believe the word of a donkey rather than mine!"

One day the Mullah went to have a hot bath. Because he was dressed in dirty clothes, neither attendant paid much attention to him. Nasruddin got a scrap of soap and an old towel.

When Mullah left, he gave each of the two attendants a gold coin. The attendants were surprised... and perhaps regret treating him so shabbily.

But the next week Nasruddin visited again. This time, The attendants treated him like royalty and gave him embroidered towels and a loose robe of silk. After being massaged and perfumed, he left the bath, handing each attendant the smallest copper coin possible. "These are for the last visit, and the gold I gave you then was for today."

One day Nasruddin repaired tiles on the roof of his house. While Nasruddin was working on the roof, a stranger knocked on the door.

"What do you want?" Nasruddin shouted out.

"Come down," replied the stranger, "so I can tell it."

Nasruddin unwillingly and slowly climbed down the ladder.

"Well!" replied Nasruddin, "What was the important thing?"

"Could you give a little money to this poor old man?" begged the stranger.

Tired, Nasruddin started to climb up the ladder and said, "Follow me up to the roof."

When both Nasruddin and the beggar were up on the roof, Nasruddin said, "The answer is no!"

Nasruddin used to beg on market-days. Sometimes the local villagers would crowd around him and someone would offer Nasruddin a large silver coin or a smaller copper coin. Nasruddin always chose the copper.

One day a kindly man said "Nasruddin, you should take the silver coins. You could dress better and the people will respect you."

"That may be true," said Nasruddin, "But if I take the silver, people will stop offering me money and I would have no income at all."

One hot day, Nasruddin was not quite napping in the shade of a walnut tree when he should have been weeding the pumpkin patch. He thought of the huge pumpkins growing on vines and of small walnuts growing on a tree above him supported by strong wood.

"Sometimes I just can't understand the ways of Allah!" he mused, "Just fancy letting tiny walnuts grow on so majestic a tree and huge pumpkins on the delicate vines!"

Just then a walnut fell on Mullah Nasreddin's head. "Allah is all-wise and all knowing! Where would I be now if pumpkins grew on trees?"

At a gathering where Mullah Nasruddin was present, people were discussing the merits of youth and old age. They had all agreed that, a man's strength decreases as years go by, but Mullah Nasruddin dissented.

He said. "In my old age I have the same strength as I had in the prime of my youth."

"How do you mean, Mullah Nasruddin?" asked a man.

"In my courtyard," explained Mullah Nasruddin, "there is a massive stone. In my youth I used to try and lift it and never succeeded. Neither can I lift it now."

One day an illiterate man came to Mullah Nasruddin with a letter he had received. "Mullah Nasruddin, please read this letter to me."

Mullah Nasruddin looked at the letter, but could not make out a single word. So he told the man. "I am sorry, but I cannot read this."

The man cried, "For shame, Mullah Nasruddin ! You must be ashamed before the turban you wear [a signal that the wearer is educated]."

Mullah Nasruddin removed the turban from his own head and placed it on the head of the illiterate man, and said, "There, now you wear the turban. If it gives some knowledge, read the letter yourself."

On a frigid and snowy winter day Mullah Nasruddin was having a chat with some of his friends in the local coffee house. Mullah Nasruddin claimed cold weather did not bother him, and he could, if necessary,

survive all night without any heat.

"We'll take you up on that, Mullah Nasruddin," they said. "If you stand all night in the village square without warming yourself by any external means, each of us will treat you to a sumptuous meal. But if you fail to do so, you will treat us all to dinner."

"All right, it's a bet," Mullah Nasruddin said.

That very night, Mullah Nasruddin stood in the village square until morning despite the bitter cold. In the morning, he ran triumphantly to his friends and told them that they should be ready to fulfill their promise.

"But as a matter of fact you lost the bet, Mullah Nasruddin," said one of them. At about midnight, just before I went to sleep, I saw a candle burning in a window about three hundred paces away from where you were standing. That certainly means that you warmed yourself by it.

"That's ridiculous," Mullah Nasruddin argued. "How can a candle behind a window warm a person three hundred yards away?"

All of Nasruddin's friends decided that he had lost the bet--so Nasruddin accepted the verdict and invited all of them to a dinner that night at his home. They all arrived anticipating the delicious meal that Nasruddin would supply--but dinner was not ready. Nasruddin told them dinner would be ready in a short time, but a long time passed with no dinner.

Finally Nasruddin's friends went into the kitchen. Nasruddin was stirring a huge cauldron dangling from an iron tripod but the only fire was a lighted candle underneath.

"Be patient my friends," Nasruddin advised. "Dinner will be ready soon."

"Are you out of your mind, Mullah Nasruddin? With such a tiny flame..."

"If the flame of a candle behind a far-away window can warm a person, surely the same flame will boil a pot it can touch."

Nasruddin was cutting a branch off a tree. While he was sawing, a man passing by said, "Pardon, but if you sit on the branch you're sawing, you will fall down when it does."

Nasruddin said nothing. He thought perhaps this was some foolish person who won't work but will tell others how to work. He soon resumed sawing.

Of course, when the branch fell, Nasruddin fell with it.

"Merciful Allah! That man knows the future!" concluded Nasruddin. He wanted to ask how long he was going to live, but he'd waited too long and

the man was gone.

Nasruddin loaded a barrel of cherries on his donkey, and went off to the bazaar to sell them. On his way, a group of a half-dozen children noticed Nasruddin's barrel of cherries.

"Mulla," they said, "please give us some."

Now, Nasruddin was in a dilemma. On one hand, he adored children and did not want to disappoint them; but on the other hand, he loved profits and did not want to sacrifice them either.

After thinking the matter over, he took six cherries out of the barrel and gave one to each child.

"Can we have more?" the children asked.

"It will do no good," Nasruddin replied. "These cherries all taste the same."

Friend: "Nasruddin, I heard that you have a barrel of thirty-year-old vinegar. Is it true?"

Nasruddin: "Yes."

Friend: "Can I have some?"

Nasruddin: "No."

Friend: "Why not?"

Nasruddin: "Well, it's just the principal of the matter."

Friend: "What do you mean? What principle?"

Nasruddin: "The principle that if I had given some vinegar to everyone who asked me for some, I would not have any thirty-year-old vinegar."

Nasruddin and a friend were drinking tea when Nasruddin's young son bumbled by.

The friend asked, "What is a dilettante?"

The son replied, "That is an herb used for seasoning."

A delighted Nasruddin said, "Did you hear that? What a fine boy I have. He made up an answer all by himself!"

Friend: "Nasruddin, you should get up early in the mornings."

Nasruddin: "Why?"

"Well, as they say, 'the early bird gets the worm.'"

"Well, I still don't know if getting up early has any merit to me. After all, I am not hunting for worms."

"I thought you might say that. But... a few days ago, I woke up at sunrise and went for a walk, and on my way, I came across a gold ring lying right on the ground!"

"Well how do you know it wasn't lost the night before that?"

"I'm sure it wasn't. I was on the same road the night before and did not see it."

"Well, then, that shows that it isn't always so great to get up early."

"Why is that?"

"Because the person who lost that gold must have gotten up earlier than you did!"

Nasruddin decided to try smuggling, and his donkey had bundles of straw on its back. A border inspector saw Nasruddin approach.

"What is your business here?"

"I am an honest smuggler!" declared Nasruddin.

"Oh, really?" said the inspector. "Well, let me search those straw bundles. If I find something, you will be required to pay a large fine!"

"Do as you wish," Nasruddin replied. "You will not find anything you can't see already."

The inspector searched the bundles, but found nothing.

"Well, honest smuggler, I suppose you have managed to get one by me today. You may pass the border."

The next day Nasruddin once again came to the border with a straw-carrying donkey. The inspector thought, "I'll get him for sure this time."

He checked the bundles of straw, and also searched Nasruddin's clothing, and closely inspected the donkey's rope and harness. Despite this searching, Nasruddin was eventually allowed to pass.

Another day, and another day, and one day the honest smuggler was

wearing expensive clothing and gold rings.

The inspector noticed this. One day, when he was off-duty, he visited Nasruddin's country and went into a tea-house.

The inspector immediately saw (and then sat near) Nasruddin. "I know you! You're the honest smuggler. How's your donkey doing?"

"I don't own a donkey, sir."

"But what about that straw-carrying donkey that you always bring across the border?"

"Those donkeys cross the border only once--I sell them with the straw they carry."

The village mayor wrote a poem and read it to Nasruddin.

"Did you like the poem?" he asked.

"No, not really," Nasruddin replied.

The mayor was enraged, and he sentenced Nasruddin to three days in jail. The next week, the mayor called Nasruddin in his office and inflicted another poem upon him. Then he asked "What do you think of this one?"

Nasruddin did not say anything, and immediately began walking away. The mayor sputtered "Just where do you think you're going?"

"To jail!" Nasruddin replied.

Nasruddin brought his donkey to sell at the bazaar.

The donkey, however, would not cooperate, and bit every single person who tried to inspect it.

A nearby seller noticed all of this, and said, "Do you really expect to sell a donkey that behaves like that?"

"No," Nasruddin replied, "not really. I just brought him here so other people would experience what I have to put up with every day!"

Nasruddin's wife heard a loud noise in the next room. She went to inspect it, and saw her husband sitting on the floor.

"What was that?" she cried.

"It was just my clothes," replied Nasruddin. "They fell down."

"But how could your clothes make such a loud noise?" she asked.

"Because I was in them," replied Nasruddin.

Nasruddin was inspecting a house he wanted to buy. The home's next-door neighbor noticed, walked over, and began telling him how great of a house it was.

When he finished talking, Nasruddin remarked, "Well, what you're saying might be true, but there is one drawback to living here that you neglected to tell me about."

"What's that?"

"A nosey neighbor!"

Judge Nasruddin was listening to a case. After hearing the plaintiff present his side, Nasruddin remarked, "You're right."

After the defendant had presented his case, Nasruddin again remarked, "Yes, you're right."

Nasruddin's wife had been listening to the case, and remarked, "that doesn't make any sense--how can both the defendant and palintiff be right?"

"Precisely!" Nasruddin responded. "You're right, too!"

Nasruddin was walking through the desert, and spotted a foreign holy man. Nasruddin went and introduced himself, and the holy man said, "I am a mystic devoted to the appreciation of all life forms--especially birds."

"Oh, wonderful," Nasruddin replied. "I am a Mulla, and I would like to stay with you for a while so we can share teachings. And... a bird saved my life once!"

Delighted to hear this, the mystic agreed to share company with Nasruddin. As they shared their teachings, sometimes the mystic asked to hear how a bird once saved Nasruddin's life--but Nasruddin always refused.

But one day Nasruddin finally agreed. He said, "I got separated from the caravan, and I had not eaten for a long time and was about to starve to death in the desert. Then I caught a bird and ate it."

Nasruddin went to the mayor's palace one day wearing a fancy turban.
"What a magnificent turban! I've never seen anything like it. How much will you sell it for?"

"A thousand dinars," Nasruddin calmly replied.

A local merchant was waiting on another court case and spontaneously advised the mayor "That price definitely exceeds the market value of comparable items."

"Your price sounds very expensive," the mayor remarked to Nasruddin.

"The price is based on how much I bought it for--and I paid a lot for it because I knew that there is only one mayor in the entire universe with taste exquisite enough to buy such a turban."

Upon hearing this compliment, the mayor immediately ordered that Nasruddin be paid full price for the turban.

Before he left (with exactly one thousand dinars in his possession, Nasruddin told the merchant, "You might know the market values of turbans, but I know the market value of flattering the mayor."

An illiterate man asked Nasruddin to write a letter for him.

Nasruddin, however, refused, saying, "Unfortunately, I can't do it right now--my foot hurts too much."

"Your foot?" the man said. "What does that have to do with writing a letter?"

"Well," explained Nasruddin, "since nobody else can read my handwriting, I have to go wherever the letter goes so that I can read it to the recipient."

Neighbor: "Nasruddin, can I borrow your clothesline?"

Nasruddin: "I need it right now. I'm drying flour on it."

"What? Whoever heard of someone hanging flour on a clothesline?"

"You'll hear such things from those who don't want to lend!"

One day, Nasruddin sang in a bathhouse, and was very pleased with the sound of it. The tile walls amplified his voice, and sounded almost good to his ears.

Later that day, Nasruddin went to the village center with his wife, and while she shopped he began singing. The people looked at him in wonder, and finally Nasruddin's wife asked him "What are you doing? Your voice is no good!"

"Just build a bathhouse here, and then you'll find out how great my voice is!"

A man showed a compass to Nasruddin and asked him what it was. Nasruddin immediately began laughing--then, seconds later, he began crying.

The man noticed his bizarre behavior, and asked, "What is with the laughing and crying?"

"At first," Nasruddin responded, ""I laughed because you didn't know what that simple object was; but then I realized that I didn't know what it was either, so I cried."

The village mayor was very superstitious. One day, he was preparing for a hunt and caught a glimpse of Nasruddin. He immediately shouted to his men, "Mullahs are bad luck on a Tuesday. Throw him out!" ...and Nasruddin was ejected from the public square.

The mayor had a successful hunt with much killing. The next day, the Mayor saw Nasruddin again and said, "Sorry about yesterday. It's just that I thought you were bad luck."

"I'm bad luck!" Nasruddin replied. "You saw me yesterday, and ended up having a great hunt. I saw you, and your guards pushed me halfway home!"

Nasruddin brought a small container to the milkman and said, "Give me one liter of cow's milk."

The milkman said, "A liter of cow's milk won't fit into your container."

"OK--give me one liter of goat's milk."

A visiting Emperor was in Nasruddin's village, and visited the much-mythologized mullah's restaurant. After the Emperor finished his quail-egg omelet, an attendant asked Nasruddin how much to pay.

"Fifty dinars," Nasruddin responded.

Surprised to hear such a high figure, the Emperor said, "Wow, that is very expensive. Are quail eggs rare here?"

"No, not really," Nasruddin replied. "A visit from the Emperor is what is rare!"

One night his wife woke him up. "Nasruddin, there are burglars in the house!"

"Are you certain?" Nasruddin replied.

"Yes," she replied. "They left bundles of other people's stolen possessions outside our door, and they are in our house right now taking our stuff."

"OK, I will handle this," Nasruddin said, as he got out of bed and began climbing out the window.

"Where are you going?" his wife asked.

"While the robbers are in our house stealing our junk, I am going to steal the bundles they left outside."

Friend: "Nasruddin, which is wiser: camels or men?"

Nasruddin: "Camels."

"Why?"

"Because a camel carries loads but does not ask for more, whereas man, even if he is overwhelmed by responsibility, often chooses to add more."

One day, as Nasruddin rode his donkey, he spotted ripe peaches on a branch. It was partly hanging over the wall around an orchard.

He positioned his donkey underneath it, stood on the beast's back and grabbed the branch. An insect caused his donkey to run and bray, leaving Nasruddin hanging from the tree.

Because of the noise, the orchard-owner noticed Nasruddin and yelled, "Thief!"

"What are you talking about? replied Nasruddin. "I am not stealing anything. Can't you tell by the way I'm hanging here that I have simply fallen off of my donkey?"

Nasruddin was in a rush one day, and when he was in the Mosque for an evening prayer session, he said a rushed prayer. One of the religious dignitaries was offended and angrily spoke. "That was not right. Start over again."

So Nasruddin complied. When he finished, the religious leader said "Do you think God appreciated this second round of prayers more than your first rushed prayer?"

"Not really," Nasruddin replied. "Although the first ones were hurried, they were done for God. The second prayers you made me do were done for you."

A well-known wag challenged Nasruddin one day--how to offend in a way that the explanation will be a thousand times worse?"

Nasruddin kissed the would-be king of wagging tongues right on the lips. The wag was surprised into speechlessness.

"Oh," Nasruddin replied, "excuse me. I got you confused with your wife."

Once, Nasruddin was talking to the village cobbler who told the following riddle: "There is a person who is my father's son, but he is not my brother. Who is he?"

After a while, Nasruddin gave up guessing.

"Me," the cobbler replied.

Greatly amused, Nasruddin found some friends and told them the riddle. "There is a person who is my father's son, but he is not my brother. Who is he?"

After thinking for a while, they said, "Who?"

"Believe it or not, he is the village's cobbler."

Nasruddin heard a knock at his door one night. The man standing outside said, "Mullah, can you help a brother out and provided me with some shelter for the night? I am God's nephew."

"For an exalted guest such as yourself, I must offer only the best place to spend the night."

Nasruddin stepped outside and closed his door, and said, "Follow me."

The man curiously followed Nasruddin.

Five hundred steps later, Nasruddin stops outside the village's Mosque.

Nasruddin said, "And what better place could I offer you to stay the night than here at your own uncle's house!"

Nasruddin borrowed a pot from his friend. The next day, he gave the friend back the pot, plus an additional smaller pot.

The friend looked at the small pot,

"Your pot gave birth while I had it," said Nasruddin, "so I am giving you its child."

The friend, happy to receive the bonus, did not ask another question.

A week later, Nasruddin once again borrowed the original pot from the friend. After a week passed, the friend asked Nasruddin to return it.

"I can't," said Nasruddin.

"Why not?" the friend asked.

"Well," Nasruddin answered, "I hate to be the bearer of bad news...but your pot has died."

"What?" the friend asked with skepticism. "A pot can't die!"

"Well, you believed it gave birth," said Nasruddin, "so why won't you believe it died?"

Nasruddin was invited to the royal palace for dinner one night. During the meal, the King asked Nasruddin if he enjoyed the stew.

"Yes," replied Nasruddin, "it was fantastic."

"Really?" said the King. "I thought it was pretty bad."

"Yes," said Nasruddin, "you're right--it was quite awful."

"Wait a minute," remarked the King. "You just said it was fantastic a few seconds ago."

"That's correct," explained Nasruddin, "but I live in and serve in the town of the King, not the stew."

One day, Nasruddin was talking to a traveler. The man lamented, "I am rich, but I am also sad and miserable. I am now traveling in search of joy--but I have yet to find it."

Nasruddin grabbed the rich man's hand-bag and ran. The man chased him, but Nasruddin was faster. He turned a corner, and while he was out of the man's sight, Nasruddin put the bag in the middle of the road and hid himself behind a house.

When he turned the corner, the rich man saw the bag and said "Praise Allah!" The man then opened the bag, saw the gold, and victory-danced right then and there in the middle of the street.

Nasruddin watched, then said a prayer of praise to Allah, thanking him for the ability to give joy to the joyless.

A local religious leader invited Nasruddin over for dinner one night.

Nasruddin arrived hungry, but the religious leader talked for hours and did not offer Nasruddin any food.

Nasruddin finally interrupted the man... "May I ask something?"

"Surely," the religious leader answered.

"I was just wondering... do any of the people in your stories ever eat?"

It was a cold winter day, and a heavily dressed man noticed Nasruddin outside wearing very little clothing.

"Mulla," the man said, "how is it that I am wearing all these clothes and still feel a little cold, while you are barely wearing anything, and seem unaffected by the weather?"

"Well," replied Nasruddin, "I don't have any more clothes, so I can't afford to feel cold. But you have plenty of clothes, and thus have the liberty to feel cold."

A philosopher made an appointment with Nasruddin to have a scholarly discussion. When the day came, the philosopher dropped by Nasruddin's house, but he wasn't home. The philosopher angrily chalked the word "Asshole" on Nasruddin's door.

When Nasruddin came home he saw this. He quickly realized that he had missed his appointment, and he darted off to the philosopher's house.

"Forgive my error," Nasruddin told the philosopher. "I totally forgot about our appointment today. But when I got home and saw that you had written your name on my door, I came here as fast as I could."

Every Friday Nasruddin arrived at the market with at least one excellent donkey to sell. Since his price was unusually low for such fine animals, he sold them quickly... and the richest of his donkey-selling competitors wasn't happy about this.

One day, the richest donkey-seller asked Nasruddin. "I cannot understand how you do it. My animals are inexpensive because my servants force farmers to give me fodder for free and I have slaves that look after my donkeys. With all that, I cannot match your prices--how do you do it?"

"It's not hard," replied Nasruddin. "You steal fodder and labor. I merely steal your donkeys."

Once young Nasruddin was sitting by the side of the lake when he saw a flock of ducks swimming in the water. He was quite hungry so he thought he'd try to catch one of the birds to go with the bread he carried--but the ducks honked and flew away before he could catch them.

For a moment Nasruddin was frustrated... then he broke up the bread and dipped the pieces into the lake.

A friend saw Nasruddin squatting at the water's edge, dipping bread into the lake. "Nasruddin?" he asked.

"It should be perfectly obvious," Nasruddin replied. "I am eating duck soup."

One day, Nasruddin's younger friends decided they would try to steal Nasruddin's pointy slippers. They waited around a tall cypress tree until Nasruddin walked along, then two of the boys started to pretend they were having a loud argument.

"Nobody could climb that tree. It's way too tall. No way!"

"Of course somebody could climb it. Nasruddin, please tell him that this tree is not too tall for someone to climb."

Nasruddin bowed slightly and replied modestly, "I can climb it, no doubt."

"Let's see you do it," challenged one boy.

"I'll hold your slippers for you while you go up," offered another boy.

"Well, all right then." Nasruddin stood back and assessed the tree, and the group of boys, and then the tree again. He rolled up his sleeves, took off his slippers and tucked them into his belt, then spit into his palms as he prepared to scale the tree.

"Wait, wait, Nasruddin! You won't need your shoes in a tree."

Nasruddin looked upward. "You never know — there might be a road at the top of this tree."

When Nasruddin was too young to attend school, his mother wanted to fetch water. To keep him close to home, she said "Do not let the front door escape your sight for one moment. Watch over it." Then she left along the way to the well.

At first, Nasruddin watched the door carefully. Before his attention could stray, an uncle visited. Soon, Nasruddin had news to tell his mother--his uncle wanted to know when he and his family could visit!

Nasruddin didn't know what to do... but then...

A hundred heartbeats later, Nasruddin had removed the door from the hinges and discovered dragging the door was much more work than he thought it'd be. Then he discovered that news travels quickly and his mother found him before a hundred footsteps... and young Nasruddin was proud of himself. "I brought the door so we could both watch over it!"

Once, when Nasruddin worked on a ferryman on the river, he was shuttling a small group of irreligious persons. They made fun of Nasruddin's turban and splashed his sandals. Nasruddin warned them to repent their sins and prepare their souls for God's judgment. Death could always take anyone unprepared, and who'd like their last act to be that of a bully?

Of course, a thunderstorm chose that moment to unleash rain, lightning, and thunder. The winds threatened to swamp the raft, and now the passengers feared for their lives.

"Tell us what we can do so that God forgives us!"

Nasruddin advised them gravely, despite the storm. "I am sure that the Lord will spare you in His mercy and lead us to safety. Trust me!"

The passengers were silent, so Nasruddin continued.

"Allah willing, we'll make it."

"How do you know?" asked a nervous passenger.

"I can see the dock from here."

Once long ago, Nasruddin was traveling with his small grey donkey on a hot dusty road. After traveling under the sun for hours, Nasruddin decided to rest under the next stand of shade trees. He tied his donkey, propped himself up against the side of a tree, and dozed off... and so did his donkey.

A superstitious thief silently approached behind Nasruddin's donkey as they snored peacefully. But as soon as the thief opened the saddlebag, Nasruddin's donkey brayed long and loud.

Nasruddin awoke and knew what was happening. He jumped up and

down and shouted exuberantly, "Praise Allah! Success is mine! What an auspicious omen! A dream disturbed by my donkey foretells great good fortune! What excellent news!"

The would-be thief thought, "A donkey's bray may be auspicious for him--but probably not for me!" He ran as fast as his thieving legs could carry him.

As Nasruddin settled back down in the shade to enjoy his nap just a little longer, he chuckled and thought, "Well, I guess that was one prophecy that worked out to be true."

Once, an unkind neighbor asked to borrow Nasruddin's donkey. Nasruddin pondered, then said "I'll have to ask her what she thinks about it."

The neighbor agreed to this foolishness. "Go, then."

Nasruddin returned. "I am sorry, but she said she won't work for you again because she didn't like the rotten fodder you fed her."

Nasruddin's neighbor asked "Are you high?"

"No, of course not. My donkey also said that you slandered me the last time you borrowed her.

Nasruddin's neighbor is now indignant and angry, and now says some things about Nasruddin that are biologically impossible.

Nasruddin continued to talk calmly. "Now you slander me to my face! My donkey never lies--your words are the proof!"

Nasruddin wanted to sell his firewood door-to-door, so he bought the milkman's donkey to help carry the load around town.

The donkey was a creature of habit and wanted to walk her old route. Nasruddin gave in--perhaps he thought the donkey knew where the firewood could be sold quickly... after all, her load will be lighter if it sold. However, this donkey wanted to bray loudly at a street corner. What was once a signal to the milk-man's customers, now was linked to Nasruddin the firewood seller. The first time this happened, a housewife ran out of a house carrying two jugs... and developed a bad attitude when offered firewood-for-sale. A similar scene repeated itself at the second such street-

corner, but two bottle-wielding young boys played the part of disappointed-that-it-was-only-Nasruddin-selling-firewood. The donkey discouraged their speech by braying at them. But right before the next street-corner, Nasruddin stopped and held the donkey's head. He stared into donkey eyes and said "I will do the selling. You do not know the difference between milk and firewood."

"Are you, fine sir, in the market for a donkey?" asked the camel and donkey seller, leading the Mullah toward his flock.

Nasruddin nodded yes.

"Have you ever seen better animals?"

"Not so fast," said Nasruddin. "To save time, show me the worst donkeys you have so we can get those out of the way."

"Okay. Those are the worst, over here."

"And which are of average quality?"

"These in the middle."

"Thank you. I'll buy the rest."

Once, the mayor realized that his donkey was missing.

Immediately Nasruddin organized a search party to help find the lost animal. Nasruddin walked up and down the streets, singing in a loud and rather unmelodious voice. Nasruddin's singing was awful. Sometimes people shut their windows.

Finally, a person asked Nasruddin "Do you really expect to find the donkey by singing like that?"

"Of course I can sing like this to find a donkey... if it is somebody else's donkey."

Once while Nasruddin was walking down a dusty road he found a dead chicken. It had been run over by a cart. He took the roadkill home, plucked it, and prepared it. Nasruddin's wife thought something awful about the fowl.

"This chicken is Providential," Nasruddin explained. It appeared before

me already dead on the road as I was walking.”

“But Nasruddin, the bird is unclean and cannot be eaten, because it has not lost its life by a man’s hand.”

“Is a perfectly edible roasted chicken considered unclean because Allah killed it instead of you?”

A wealthy businessman who enjoyed Nasruddin’s company invited him to go bear hunting. Nasruddin was terrified at the prospect, but he couldn’t decline if he expected to remain friends.

A half-hour after sunset Nasruddin returned home. His wife asked how the hunt went.

“It was so marvelous — I cannot even begin to tell you,” he replied wearily.

“How many bears were taken?”

“None.”

“How many did you chase?”

“None.”

“How many bears did you see?”

“None.”

“You’ve been gone all day. What happened that was 'marvelous?’

“When you’re hunting bears, none is more than enough.”

One evening before bed, Nasruddin prayed for a financial deliverance.

“I must have ten gold pieces to pay off all my debts.”

Nasruddin fell asleep and then into a dream of kneeling before a fabulous angel holding a large pot full of gold. Gold coins spilled into Nasruddin's hands... exactly ten.

Nasruddin couldn't believe his luck. As the angel faded, Nasruddin shouted. "Ten coins! Exactly what..."

But dream-shouting woke Nasruddin to the real world of empty palms.

Nasruddin immediately lay down under the covers and pretended to sleep again, saying, “Divine and generous angel... perhaps nine?”

With his trusty axe tied securely to his belt, Nasruddin walked into the woods for firewood. When he found a downed tree to chop, he searched for his axe but found it not... it was tied to his belt. Finally in desperation, Nasruddin kneeled and said "Generous and forgiving Allah, if I find my axe, I promise Thou eight measures of barley!"

Since Nasruddin was kneeling, the axe slipped a little and fell from his belt. Overjoyed to have found his axe again, he shouted: "Truly I offer Thou my thanks! But since it is so easy for Thou hear my prayers, let me also ask Thou to find me eight measures of barley, so that I may pay what I owe!"

Late one evening. Nasruddin and his young son saw two thieves trying to break into a store. The thieves were in a hurry and making a lot of noise-- one thief was hammering on the front door lock while the other tried to remove bars from a lower window. Nasruddin tried to steer his son away but... "Father! Who are those men in front of the store?"

"Hush!" whispered Nasruddin. "The men are musicians, playing their instruments."

"When will they start playing?" was whispered in return

"They're playing a special song--listen closely."

Soon his son complained. "I can't hear any music."

"They're playing, but you never know when you'll hear the music... it might take a minute, but it might not start until tomorrow morning--but you'll hear it many times, I promise."

Once, Nasruddin's neighbor asked to borrow a clothesline.

Nasruddin said, "I'm sorry, the clothesline is in use."

"But... I can see the clothesline, right there on the floor."

"Exactly. The clothesline is in use at this moment."

"But is coiled up on the ground, doing absolutely nothing."

"Its actual use is just that... to lie there."

Once, Nasruddin was entrusted with a jar of honey while a friend traveled.

Naturally, Nasruddin tasted, and tasted, and soon there was a lot less honey in the jar.

When his friend returned, he asked where the jar of honey was.

“Oh, how I wish you had not asked this question. And even greater than that desire, how I wish I did not have to answer!”

Nasruddin once worked as a language tutor for a young student who wanted to learn Kurdish. Nasruddin himself knew only a few words of Kurdish, but he thought he could fake teaching the language since his student knew less.

“Let’s start with the word for ‘hot soup’,” Nasruddin tutored. “In Kurdish, this is aash.”

“What is the word for ‘cold soup’?”

“There is no word for ‘cold soup’ — you see, the Kurds only eat their soup hot.”

“No! I’m ruined! I will become a beggar! What can I do to save myself from such misery and suffering?”

“Is that all you’re concerned about?” Nasruddin replied. “Not a problem. Soon you won’t have to worry about poorness.”

“You mean I will recover my fortune?”

“Not exactly,” said Nasruddin. “You’ll get used to being poor.”

Once, when Nasruddin was a donkey driver, he got a job to transport nine donkeys to a local farmer.

Nasruddin counted the donkeys--nine--and rode one with the others in front. He watched them closely, determined to deliver them... but Nasruddin was soon napping.

He awoke with a start, and quickly counted the donkeys... eight! He was

so agitated that he dismounted and again counted the donkeys... nine! Again... nine! So Nasruddin sat backwards bestride a donkey in front of the others, the better to keep an eye on such tricky beasts.

But, of course, Nasruddin noticed a particularly peculiar cloud, and once distracted, nearly fell off his donkey. He quickly counted... eight! Again he counted... eight! He dismounted, and lined the donkeys up by the side of the road... nine!

Now Nasruddin decided to walk behind the donkeys and count them... nine! again and again... nine! while he walked behind them... nine! and walked... nine! and walked. Nine!

Tired and dusty, Nasruddin delivered the donkeys.

"Did you have any trouble?" asked the farmer, who thought Nasruddin looked too tired to have only endured a donkey-ride.

"Quite a lot--these donkeys are tricksters. Sometimes they hide behind one another so it looks like there is only eight."

"Is that so?" asked the farmer.

"Yes, sir. The donkeys pulled that trick on me twice before I learned to count them by lining them up by the side of the road."

"Perhaps I'd better count them myself," said the farmer--then "You're right... I count ten! but one donkey has only two legs.

Once, Nasruddin was caught in an apricot tree, stuffing his face with fruit. The orchardist looked up at Nasruddin, expecting an explanation.

Nasruddin said, "I am a nightingale."

The orchardist laughed. "Pretty little nightingale, please sing!"

Nasruddin sounded like a wet cat fighting a firehose.

The orchardist was amused. "I've never heard any bird, much less a nightingale, sing like that!"

"I may not be the best singer in my nightingale family," chirped Nasruddin, "but you obviously have never traveled far from your trees--you should recognize the rare, exotic song of a Chinese nightingale."

Once Nasruddin had a sum of money that he wanted to hide, so he put his coins in a covered urn. He felt secure knowing he'd found a safe place to hide his money--but soon thought better of his hiding place. Since he knew where he'd hidden his money, there was no way he could stop himself from stealing from himself."

"Nasruddin, are you any good at guessing games?"

"Sure I am."

"Guess what's in my pocket and I'll give it to you. It's white, smooth, and is yellow inside."

"...and?"

"It tastes better cooked."

"Is it a piece of cake?"

"No..."

"Is it a hollow turnip with a daisy inside?"

"No..."

"I give up. Instead, you try to guess what I have in this bag. If you do, I'll give you all the peaches."

"Peaches!"

"How did you guess?"

Once, Nasruddin put a heavy block of salt on his donkey's back, then started for market. However, there was a stream to be crossed, and the donkey stumbled. Much of the salt was lost, and the rest was not something Nasruddin thought he could sell. The donkey was delighted after its burden was lightened.

The next time Nasruddin brought the donkey to the stream, it was bearing a load of firewood. The donkey accidentally-on-purpose stumbled and the firewood became wet and heavy.

"That didn't work so well, did it?" said Nasruddin. "You can't expect to get off so easily every time."

Nasruddin once commented to his barber "I might not have much hair on the top of my head nowadays, but I used to have to shave thirty, sometimes, forty times a day."

"That is truly strange. What was wrong with you?"

"Nothing! I used to work at a barbershop myself."

Nasruddin heard that the king sent out a committee to seek suitable candidates for qazis (judges). Nasruddin put an old fishing net on his shoulder. When the members of the committee reached his village, the old net drew their attention.

"I carry this net with me to remind me of my humble past as a poor fisherman," explained Nasruddin. The committee was impressed, and in due time Nasruddin was nominated as a qazi.

Shortly afterwards those king's representatives met Nasruddin again and noticed the net was gone.

"Where is the net, Nasruddin?" they asked.

"Well, you don't need the net after the fish is caught, do you?" replied Nasruddin.

One day a fool asked Nasruddin "is God true?"

"Everything is true" replied Nasruddin.

"Even false things?"

"Even false things are true," said Nasruddin.

"But how can that be?"

"I don't know. I didn't do it," shrugged Nasruddin.

One day, The Sultan took offense to a joke Nasruddin had told, so the mythologized mullah was arrested and imprisoned. Nasruddin apologized and begged for his life, but the Sultan sentenced Nasreddin to be beheaded the following day. The next morning, Nasruddin the prisoner was brought before the Sultan and asked if he had any last words.

"If you will delay my sentence for one year, I will teach your favorite

stallion to sing."

The Sultan did not believe that such a thing was possible; but his anger had cooled, and he was amused by the audacity of Nasruddin's claim.

"You will have your year. But if by the end of that year you have not succeeded, then you will wish you had never asked for it."

That evening, Nasruddin's friends were allowed to visit him in prison, and they noticed his unexpected good spirits. "How can you be so happy? Do you really believe that you can teach the Sultan's horse to sing?"

"Of course not," replied Nasruddin, "but I now have a year which I did not have yesterday; and much can happen in that time. The Sultan may come to repent of his anger and release me. He may die in battle or of illness, and it is traditional for a successor to pardon all prisoners upon taking office. The Sultan may be overthrown by another faction, and again, it is traditional for prisoners to be released at such a time. The horse may die, in which case the Sultan should allow me another year with another horse."

"Even if none of those things happen... perhaps the horse *can* learn to sing."

The Sultan of a great city was annoyed by the cheats and liars who entered his gates and caused trouble. He therefore set soldiers at all entrances. The soldiers were under orders to hang those who lied about their purpose for wishing to enter--so Mullah Nasruddin saddled his donkey and rode to the city.

At the gate a guard stopped him and gave him a warning that a lie would result in his being hanged.

"This is good. I have come to be hanged."

"You are a liar and will certainly hang!"

"Then you know I have spoken the truth and should not be hanged."

One day Nasruddin was walking along a deserted road. Night was falling as he spied a troop of horsemen coming toward him. His imagination began to work, and he feared that they might rob him or impress him into the army. Before either could happen, Nasruddin leapt over an iron fence. The other travelers became curious... most men don't leap the fence to get into the graveyard. They rode through a nearby open gate to see what they

could see.

Nasruddin was easy to find—lying motionless on the pathway between groups of graves.

One of the horsemen asked "Are you O K?"

"I'm fine, my apologies..."

"Why were you in such a hurry to get into... this unpleasant place?"

Nasruddin said "I am here because of you; and you are here because of me."

Nasruddin was selling olives at the market. He called to a woman who was passing by and tried to entice her with an olive, but his potential customer said she didn't have any money with her.

"No problem," said Nasruddin. "You can pay me later."

She still looked hesitant, so he again offered her one to taste.

"Oh no, I can't, I'm fasting," she responded.

"Fasting? But Ramadan was months ago!"

"Yes, well, I missed a day and I'm making it up now. Go ahead and give me a kilo of your olives."

"Forget it! If it took you months to pay back a debt you owed Allah, who knows when you'll get around to paying me!"

"Nasruddin once ferried a pedant across a piece of rough water and, during the worst of it, he said something rude and ungrammatical.

"Have you never studied grammar?" asked the scholar.

"No."

"Then half of your life has been wasted."

A few minutes later Nasruddin turned to the passenger. "Have you ever learned how to swim?"

"No."

"Then all your life is wasted--the ferry is sinking!"

End.

Non \$€rviam!