



A Frog Inside the House

Turkish Sufism

A guest of Nasruddin Hodja farted in the parlour where the latter had welcomed him to offer him some tea, but the man tried to hide the bellow of release from the unwelcome intruder by flexing his foot in such a way that the leather of his babouche squeaked loudly, imitating the croaking of a frog.

‘You could have made me believe that a frog sang inside my house just as you farted,’ said Nasruddin parsimoniously, ‘but, unfortunately for you, frogs don’t smell like that.’ □

Adapted by Grian A. Cutanda (2023).

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Comments

The irreverent stories of Mullah Nasruddin were spread for centuries in all Muslim countries under the guise of jokes, although one would think, given their origin in the Sufi mystical tradition, that the masters of this lineage intended to transmit through them subtle moral, psychological and spiritual teachings among the population.

We have already discussed this character and his materialisation in Muslim narrative, as one more incarnation of the Trickster archetype of the human collective unconscious, in the second book of this Collection

– Volume 1 – in the comments on the story entitled ‘No Brains’ (see Cutanda, 2020, pp. 322-325).

At The Earth Stories Collection we thought that this short story could offer a striking metaphor, easy to remember for its comic nature, for the intuitive understanding of so many attacks on natural ecosystems at the hands of corporations or governments that try to argue, justify or hide their ecocides in the most clumsy and shameful ways.

Sources

Ashliman, D. L. (2009). Nasreddin Hodja: Tales of the Turkish Trickster. University of Pittsburgh website. Available on <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/hodja.html>

Cutanda, G. A. (2020). *The Earth Stories Collection – Vol. 1: The Myths of the Future*. Granada: TESC Press.

Associated text of the Earth Charter

Principle 6b: Place the burden of proof on those who argue that a proposed activity will not cause significant harm, and make the responsible parties liable for environmental harm.

Other passages that this story illustrates

Principle 6c: Ensure that decision making addresses the cumulative, long-term, indirect, long distance, and global consequences of human activities.

Principle 6d: Prevent pollution of any part of the environment and allow no build-up of radioactive, toxic, or other hazardous substances.

Principle 10d: Require multinational corporations and international financial organizations to act transparently in the public good, and hold them accountable for the consequences of their activities.

