

**thus spake  
mulla nasrudin**

**BHAGWAN SHREE  
RAJNEESH**

# **Thus Spake Mulla Nasrudin**

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh

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*For beloved*  
**VIVEK**  
*to laugh*  
*and to meditate*

*with love*  
*and blessings*

*26.8.1972*

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Mulla Nasrudin  
stories  
that  
never happened.

"...if one is incapable of laughing,  
one will become incapable of being  
religious."

-- Rajneesh --

#### FOREWORD

Four-year-old Mulla Nasrudin at his birthday party, in the midst of a confusion of games, races and treasure hunts, asks: "WHEN THIS IS ALL OVER, CAN WE PLAY?"

Most of us live life's games with too much seriousness and think the joy doesn't begin until it is all over, and we have found some heaven. False views of religion have injected us with this heaviness.

But Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh tells us:

"...Oh! Don't take life so seriously!

Be playful -- totally.

Because that is the only way to be living.

Life is a play -- a leela.

And to know it so is religion.

And to live it so is sannyas -- renunciation."

Like little Nasrudin, many of us let all of life pass us by, as we search for happiness. But the play and the fun that can make us happy is only in the here and the now of the moment. We don't have to wait for the "party" to be over to start playing; we have only to plunge into the NOW; we must come to see that all our actions are but games -- games to be played light-heartedly with detachment. It is our attitude towards life that causes our sufferings and not life itself.

One is reminded of the Zen story in which a man is weeping because his glass is half empty. The Zen master looks at it and points out to him that he is wrong, it is half-full. When he

realizes this, he stops weeping and begins to laugh joyously.

Through these jokes, Bhagwan makes us aware of much about ourselves: In Mulla we see mirrored our own egotism, our wrong thinking. By becoming aware of this in Mulla, we become aware of it in ourselves. Through these jokes we learn to laugh at our own absurdities. Through awareness we can empty ourselves of them. This emptying and discarding process is meditation.

Of meditation, Bhagwan says, "...seriousness is a barrier to it. And this seems impossible to some persons, how to be religious without being serious...A temple must be a playhouse -- where everyone becomes a child and plays with existence. Meditation is a play regained."

Bhagwan's purpose in writing these Mulla stories is to bring us to a state of meditation and awareness; to make us empty and light and non-serious. He is teaching us the way to the Divine through jokes, much the same as Jesus, Buddha and all the great avatars taught through stories and parables. To point out our wrong thinking directly.

he says, often only makes us more defensive; but to reveal the truth through stories and jokes makes it easy for us to laugh at our faults and to discard them with ease.

To try to discard our samskaras (impressions) with seriousness is a difficult task. The enormity of it is shown in another Mulla joke, in which little Mulla has pulled up a very big weed from the garden. A neighbour remarks how strong he must be to have managed this. "Yes, do not forget that the whole world was pulling on the other side," says Nasrudin.

Seriousness causes a tension that makes this discarding of "weeds" (samskaras) seem like a tug-of-war between man and the universe. But there is no tug-of-war other than the illusionary one we ourselves have created. By an attitude of light heartedness and laughter at ourselves, the tension relaxes and a let-go comes by itself, effortlessly. And when all the false impressions are emptied from the mind, even to the ends of their very roots, we can at last behold divinity! And divinity is "nothing" but this very

emptiness that is at the end -- VOIDNESS. So if we can learn to laugh at ourselves, we too can become like Bhagwan -- void, divine, endless bliss. Only then can we say we are really religious.

Let these Mulla stories be the instrument that will show the way, and let us be deeply grateful to Bhagwan for taking the trouble to teach us through them.

-- ma ananda prem --

The mother told her little boy, Nasrudin, that if he stayed home and behaved himself, she would bring him something from the store.

When she returned home, she asked him: "Well, were you a good little boy, Nasrudin?"

"OH," said Nasrudin, "I WAS GOODER THAN GOOD. WHY, I WAS SO GOOD I COULD HARDLY STAND MYSELF."



2

"Please, mister, will you ring that doorbell for me?" asked little Nasrudin.

The gentleman obliged with a beaming smile.

"Now, sonny, what else should I do?"

"RUN LIKE HELL!" said Nasrudin.

3

A very voluble preacher was working himself into a frenzy during a sermon on hell and damnation. Little four-year-old Nasrudin in the congregation couldn't take his eyes off the wild figure in the pulpit. Finally he whispered to his mother: "WHAT WILL WE DO IF HE EVER GETS LOOSE?"

4

The four-year-old Nasrudin's birthday party was well organized by the neighbourhood ladies, with games, races, and treasure hunts. In the midst of the confusion, little Nasrudin asked: "WHEN THIS IS ALL OVER, CAN WE PLAY?"

5

Father: "Remember, son, beauty is only skin deep."

Mulla Nasrudin: " 'S' DEEP ENOUGH FOR ME. I'M NO CANNIBAL."

6

The father was reading the school report which had just been handed to him by his hopeful son, Nasrudin. His brow was wrinkled as he read: "English, poor; French, weak; Mathematics, poor; History, weak"; and he gave a glance of disgust at the quaking lad.

"Well, Dad," said Nasrudin, "it is not as good as it might be, but have you seen that?" and he pointed to the next line, which read: "HEALTH, EXCELLENT."

7

A teacher attempting to broaden the outlook of her narrow-horizoned class, asked each student to write an essay on his views of foreigners. All turned more or less acceptable pieces except for hard-bitten young Nasrudin, whose essay in full was: "ALL FOREIGNERS ARE BASTARDS."

The shocked teacher made no direct comment but devoted her next lecture to a description of Greek architecture, Roman law, English drama, German music, Italian poetry, Russian novels, Chinese philosophy, and African sculpture. She then asked the class to write another essay on foreigners.

With beating heart, she reached Nasrudin's paper. It read, in full: "ALL FOREIGNERS ARE BASTARDS. SOME ARE CUNNING BASTARDS."

8

Nasrudin (who has eaten his apple):  
"Let us play Adam and Eve."

Small sister: "How do you play  
that, Nasrudin."

Nasrudin: "WELL, YOU TEMPT  
ME TO EAT YOUR APPLE AND I  
WILL GIVE 9N."

9

Nasrudin, aged seven, asked to  
count in school, responded promptly:

"1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, JACK,  
QUEEN, KING."

Little Nasrudin pulled a very big weed from the garden. "You must be pretty strong, Nasrudin, to pull out such a big weed," remarked a neighbour.

"Yes," agreed Nasrudin. "DO NOT FORGET THAT THE WHOLE WORLD WAS PULLING ON THE OTHER SIDE."

"What a boy you are for asking questions," said Nasrudin's father. "I'd like to know what would have happened if I'd asked as many questions when I was a boy?"

"PERHAPS," suggested young Nasrudin, "YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ANSWER SOME OF MINE."

The little boy, Nasrudin, would not take his medicine. His father was trying to persuade him.

"Come on, Nasrudin," said his father. "I don't like medicine any better than you, but I just make up my mind that I'll take it, and I do. It's just a question of will power."

"WELL, WHEN I HAVE GOT MEDICINE TO TAKE," said Nasrudin, "I JUST MAKE UP MY MIND THAT I WON'T TAKE IT, AND I DON'T."

It seemed to the father of Mulla Nasrudin that, now that his son had turned thirteen, it was important to discuss those matters which an adolescent ought to know about life.

So he called Nasrudin into the study one evening, shut the door carefully, and said with impressive dignity, "Son, I would like to discuss the facts of life with you."

"SURE THING, DAD," said Nasrudin. "WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW?"

14

"Will you marry me, darling?"  
asked Mulla Nasrudin.

"Before I give you my answer,"  
the young lady said, "I'd like to ask  
you one question: do you ever drink  
anything?"

"YES," said the young Nasrudin  
rather proudly, "ANYTHING."

15

Gruff father to Nasrudin: "Why  
don't you get out and find a job?  
When I was your age I was working  
for Rs. 3 a week in a store, and  
at the end of five years I owned  
the store."

Nasrudin: "You can't do that  
nowadays. THEY HAVE CASH  
REGISTERS."

"Kiss me," said the young lady urgently. "Mulla, please kiss me."

But Mulla Nasrudin turned his head away, saying: "Of course not. How can I? I am your own brother-in-law. HECK, WE SHOULDN'T EVEN BE LYING HERE MAKING LOVE."

The first morning after the honeymoon, Mulla Nasrudin got up early, went down to the kitchen, and brought his wife her breakfast in bed. Naturally, she was delighted. Then he spoke: "Have you noticed just what I have done?"

"Of course, dear; every single detail," said his wife.

"GOOD," said Nasrudin. "THAT IS HOW I WANT MY BREAKFAST SERVED EVERY MORNING AFTER THIS."



Mulla Nasrudin had been back from his honeymoon only a week when a friend asked him how he liked married life.

"Why, it's wonderful," was his enthusiastic reply. "IT'S ALMOST LIKE BEING IN LOVE."

"I should never have got married," said Mulla Nasrudin, the newly wed, to his pal at work. "MY WIFE DOES NOT LIKE ME WHEN I AM DRUNK, AND I CAN'T STAND THE SIGHT OF HER WHEN I AM SOBER."

Mrs. Ullla Nasrudin: "Just think, we have been married twenty-four hours."

Ullla Nasrudin: "YES, AND IT SEEMS LIKE IT WAS ONLY YESTERDAY."

"These spoons which your aunt gave us as a wedding present are not real silver," announced Ullla Nasrudin.

"Do you know anything about silver, Ullla?" asked her wife.

"NO," replied Nasrudin, "BUT I KNOW A LOT ABOUT YOUR AUNT."

The little old lady had watched the tender parting of the young couple at the loading ramp. As the plane taxied down the runway, the young man, Mulla Nasrudin, burst into tears.

"There, there, my boy, don't cry," said the lady, who was sitting next to him. "Are you crying so because you have to leave your wife?"

"NO," said Nasrudin, "BECAUSE I HAVE TO GO BACK TO HER."

"We've been married a year and we never quarrel," explained Mulla Nasrudin. "If a difference of opinion arises and my wife is right, I give in right away."

"But what if you are right, Mulla?" asked his friend.

"WELL," said Nasrudin, "THAT SITUATION HAS NEVER COME UP."

24

It was their first quarrel.

"And you tell me that several women proposed marriage to you?" asked the wife.

"Yes. Several," replied the Mulla.

"Well, I wish you had married the first fool who proposed."

"I DID," said Nasrudin.

25

"Now that you are married, Mulla, I suppose you will take out an insurance policy?" Mulla Nasrudin's friend told him at work.

"Oh, no," answered Nasrudin. "I DON'T THINK SHE'S GOING TO BE SO DANGEROUS."

26

"Do you think that you have as good a sense of judgement as I have?" asked the wife during a quarrel.

"Well, no," replied Mulla Nasrudin slowly. "Our choice of partners for life shows that YOU HAVE BETTER JUDGEMENT THAN ME."

27

"How is it that, after only three months of marriage, you manage to stay out so late every night?" asked Mulla Nasrudin's wife.

"IT'S EASY," said Nasrudin. "I GOT INTO THE HABIT WHILE WE WERE COURTING."

Mulla Nasrudin left his young wife alone on the beach for a few minutes. When he came back, he saw a crowd of excited people gathered at the water's edge. "What's the matter?" he asked a cop. "They just pulled some dame out of the water," was the reply. The Mulla investigated and found that the rescued party was his wife. "What are you doing to her?" he cried. "We are giving her artificial respiration," was the answer. "ARTIFICIAL HELL," screamed Nasrudin. "GIVE HER THE REAL THING. I WILL PAY FOR IT."

"Darling," she whispered to Mulla Nasrudin after the last guest had left the wedding reception, "for the rest of your life you will have to put up with my ugly face."

"NEVER MIND," said Nasrudin. "I WILL BE OUT AT WORK ALL DAY."

30

He was so sick that his doctor ordered him to take a long rest cure in Florida. But after two months he died anyway.

Skipped back home, the corpse was viewed by the widow and her brother, Ullla Nasrudin. "Ullla," she sighed, "he does look nice, doesn't he?"

"HE SURE DOES," replied Nasrudin. "WHO WOULDN'T AFTER TWO MONTHS IN FLORIDA?"

31

Ullla Nasrudin went in to see his dentist, and when asked what tooth was bothering him, replied: "Oh, just drill anywhere, doc. I FEEL LUCKY TODAY."

At a political meeting addressed by one of the dignified statesmen, Mulla Nasrudin insisted on shouting: "WHO is the woman you're living with in the capital?"

He was ignored and once more yelled: "WHO is the woman you're living with in the capital?"

His friend pulled his arm anxiously: "Shut up. That's his wife!"

"I KNOW. I KNOW," said Mulla Nasrudin. "BUT I AM GOING TO MAKE HIM ADMIT IT."

"Mulla Nasrudin, do you plead guilty?"

"I couldn't say, Your Honour," said Nasrudin. "I HAVEN'T HEARD THE EVIDENCE YET."



Mulla Nasrudin boasted how he kept his money in a rock under the mattress.

"Sure," advised his friend, "you have interest that way."

"Indeed I don't," said Nasrudin. "I PUT A BIT ASIDE FOR THAT AS WELL."

The visitor complained of the long muddy avenue to Mulla Nasrudin's house.

"Well, now," soothed the Mulla, "IF IT WAS ANY SHORTER IT WOULD NOT REACH THE HOUSE."

"I intend to put together a volume of my collected sermons to be published posthumously," said the preacher to Mulla Nasrudin.

"OH, REALLY—— I SHALL LOOK FORWARD TO THAT," said Nasrudin.

"WHAT are you giving up for Ramadan?"

"Fucking, drinking and chasing women. What are you giving up, Nasrudin?"

"TELLING LIES," said Mulla Nasrudin.

"You are lucky you don't have to get up and go to mosque on these dark mornings, Mulla."

"NO — I AM AN ATHEIST NOW-A-DAYS — THANK GOD!" said Mulla Nasrudin.

Doctor: "You look much better this week, Mulla."

Mulla Nasrudin: "I certainly am, doctor. I reckon it's because I followed the directions on the bottle of medicine you prescribed for me last time."

Doctor: "Splendid. Eh — what directions?"

Nasrudin: "It said: 'KEEP THIS BOTTLE TIGHTLY CORKED.'"

Mulla Nasrudin said to the bartender: "Have you seen Sheikh Abdulla around here in the last hour and a half?"

"Yes, he was here," said the bartender.

"GOOD," said Mulla Nasrudin. "DID YOU NOTICE WHETHER I WAS WITH HIM?"

Mulla Nasrudin walked out of a hall where a politician was addressing a meeting. Someone in the corridor asked him if the speaker had finished his speech.

"YES," said Nasrudin. "HE FINISHED HIS SPEECH SHORTLY AFTER HE STARTED, BUT HE HAS NOT STOPPED YET."

Mulla Nasrudin, a candidate for the police force, was being verbally examined. "If you were by yourself in a police car and were pursued by a desperate gang of criminals in another car doing forty miles an hour along a lonely road, what would you do?"

The Mulla looked puzzled for a moment and then replied: "FIFTY."

An exasperated politician was being heckled.

"There seems to be a great many fools here tonight," he exclaimed. "I wonder if it would be advisable to hear one at a time."

"THAT'S FAIR ENOUGH," shouted Mulla Nasrudin in the audience. "FINISH YOUR SPEECH."

Mulla Nasrudin left the gas turned on in his little shop one night and upon arriving in the morning struck a match to light it.

There was a terrific explosion, and the Mulla was blown out through the door.

A passerby rushed to his assistance, and inquired if he was injured.

Nasrudin gazed at his place of business, which was now burning quite briskly, and said:

"NO, I AIN'T HURT. BUT I GOT OUT JUST IN TIME, EH?"

"I sent my little boy for two pounds of plums and you only sent a pound and a half. Are your scales correct, Mulla?"

"My scales are all right, madam," said Mulla Nasrudin. "HAVE YOU WEIGHED YOUR LITTLE BOY?"

A man entered Mulla Nasrudin's shop, which he found empty except for the Mulla, who was playing chess with a dog. The dog, watching the board intently, made his moves by grasping the particular chessman in his teeth. He wagged his tail wildly when he made a good move and, on occasion, would bark sharply to indicate "Check!"

The customer, finally recovered from his stupefaction, gasped out, "Hey, that's a smart dog you have got there."

And Mulla Nasrudin answered: "NOT SO SMART! I HAVE BEAT HIM THREE TIMES OUT OF FIVE SO FAR."

"If you will give me your telephone number, I will call you up some time."

Mulla Nasrudin: "It's in the book."

"Fine! And what's your name, sir?"

Mulla Nasrudin: "THAT'S IN THE BOOK, TOO!"

Friend: "How do you spend your income, Mulla?"

Mulla Nasrudin: "About 30 per cent for shelter, 30 per cent for clothing, 40 per cent for food, and 20 per cent for amusement."

Friend: "But that adds up to 120 per cent."

Nasrudin: "THAT'S RIGHT."

Mulla Nasrudin and his friend sat silently over their beers, each sunk in misery.

Finally, the friend heaved a sigh and said: "I wish I were dead."

Nasrudin sighed in his turn and said: "IF ONLY I FELT THAT GOOD."



Mulla Nasrudin used to say: "I grew so disturbed with everything I read about the connection between smoking and cancer that I finally simply forced myself TO GIVE UP READING."

Once Mulla Nasrudin was stopped by a thief who said: "Your money or your life!"

The Mulla closed his eyes and there followed a lengthening silence.

Finally, the thief said again: "Come on, your money or your life!"

Mulla Nasrudin opened his eyes and said querulously: "I AM THINKING! I AM THINKING!"

A friend met Mulla Nasrudin for the first time in five years.

"Tell me, mulla," said he, "did you marry that girl, or do you still darn your own socks and do your cooking?"

"YES," was Mulla Nasrudin's reply.

Mulla Nasrudin and his friend Sheikh Abdulla approached each other one night in the tavern.

"Good morning, Nasrudin. How are you?"

"I am fine, Abdulla, but my name is not Nasrudin."

"Mine's not Abdulla, either."

"NOT TO WORRY," said Mulla Nasrudin. "WE ARE PROBABLY NOT OURSELVES TODAY."

Mulla Nasrudin: "I suppose you could say I have an uncanny knack of getting my own way. I am terribly ambitious, and somehow I always seem to achieve my selfish goals—women, money, power—I just brook no opposition, but forge ahead, regardless of others."

Psychiatrist: "And how long have you had this complaint?"

Nasrudin: "WHO'S COMPLAINING?"

A psychiatrist was called in to examine Mulla Nasrudin who was suing his employers for compensation after an industrial injury.

"Now, Mulla, perhaps you could show me just how high you can raise your arms...." The Mulla complied, painfully raising his arms only to shoulder level.

"And how high could you raise them before? Can you show me?" asked the psychiatrist blandly.

"Come off it, doctor—you don't catch me that way," sneered Nasrudin. "I COULD ONLY RAISE THEM THIS HIGH BEFORE THE ACCIDENT AS WELL!"

56

The landlord sent a stiff letter to his tenant, Mulla Nasrudin: "My rent is considerably overdue and I must ask you to send on some money."

Mulla Nasrudin's reply was swift: "I DON'T SEE WHY I SHOULD PAY YOUR RENT— I CAN'T PAY MY OWN."

57

Mulla Nasrudin bumped into Issacs who was looking terribly dejected. "What's the matter?" asked the Mulla.

"I am bankrupt," said a quiet Issacs; "my business failed."

"Oh, well," said Nasrudin, "what about the property in your wife's name?"

"There is no property in my wife's name."

"Well, then, what about the property in your children's names?"

"There is no property in my children's names."

Mulla Nasrudin put his hand on Issacs' shoulder: "Issacs, you are very mistaken, you are not bankrupt—  
— YOU ARE RUINED."

Saleem was in a quandry. What to do?— marry the wealthy widow that he didn't love, or the poor lassie that he loved overmuch?

"Listen to your heart, man," urged his best friend, Mulla Nasrudin. "Marry the one you love."

"Aye, you are right as usual, Mulla," he nodded, "money is not everything."

"IN THAT CASE, SALEEM, WOULD YOU MIND GIVING ME THE WIDOW'S ADDRESS?" asked Nasrudin.

Mulla Nasrudin called on a doctor to ask his advice. The doctor told him he must stop drinking and smoking. Nasrudin said nothing and quietly rose to depart.

"Friend," the doctor reminded him gently, "you have not paid for my advice."

"NO," said Nasrudin, "AND WHAT'S MORE, I AM NOT TAKING IT EITHER."

It was after midnight and Solly Giusberg was sleeping soundly in his bedroom above his pawnshop, when he heard a loud hammering on the door below. Angrily, he got out of bed and put his head out of the window.

"Get yourself down here," demanded Mulla Nasrudin, the caller.

"What, at this time of night?" replied Giusberg.

"Come down, or I will smash your door in."

Muttering to himself, the pawnbroker staggered down the stairs and opened the door.

"What you want?" he asked.

"I want to know the time," said the Mulla.

"What!" said Giusberg, "you wake me up in the middle of the night to ask me the time?"

"WELL, YOU HAVE GOT MY WATCH, HAVEN'T YOU?" said Mulla Nasrudin.

"Everything God made is perfect," said Mulla Nasrudin one day in the tavern.

A hunchback rose from the rear of his audience and asked: "What about me?"

"WHY," said Nasrudin, "YOU'RE THE MOST PERFECT HUNCHBACK I EVER SAW!"

Mulla Nasrudin was in bed with a cold and a high temperature.

"How high is it, Doctor?" he wanted to know.

"A hundred and five, Nasrudin," said the doctor.

The Mulla contemplated for a while and then asked again: "WHAT'S THE WORLD'S RECORD?"

"Got a cigarette, Mulla?"

"Here. Take the pack."

"Thanks. Got a match?"

"You can keep this lighter."

"Thanks again. Say, have you got an oil well or something?"

"NO," said Mulla Nasrudin.

"ONLY LUNG CANCER."

Mulla Nasrudin one day noticed a parrot perched atop a farmhouse gable. Attracted by the bright plumage, he ran to fetch a ladder, climbed on the roof, and was about to clap his cap over the bird when the parrot fixed on him with a beady eye and asked: "What the hell do you think YOU'RE doing?"

"GOSH, I didn't mean nothin'," said Mulla Nasrudin. "I THOUGHT YOU WAS A BIRD, SIR."

The bandage-covered patient who lay in the hospital bed spoke dazedly to his visiting pal, Mulla Nasrudin:

"Wh-What happened?"

"You absorbed one too many last night, and then you made a bet that you could jump out of the window and fly around the block."

"Why," screamed the beat-up human, "didn't you stop me?"

"STOP YOU, HELL— I HAD RUPEES 25 ON YOU," said Mulla Nasrudin.



The eccentric Sultan once sent Mulla Nasrudin as a henchman around the country. He was to interview the house-holders, and to every man who was boss in his house, he was to give a horse. To every man who was henpecked, he would give a chicken.

Everywhere the Mulla went, he handed out chickens with never an occasion to give any one a horse. At last, though, he arrived at the house of a burly farmer, with a bristly, unshaven face, a deep bass voice, and muscles like an ox. In the background was his thin and wizened wife. The Mulla said: "Are you boss in your family, sir?" The farmer leaned his head back and bellowed with laughter. "You bet, little man," he said. "What I say around here goes." And he opened and closed fists the size of hams. The Mulla was convinced.

"You get a horse," he said. "Do you want a brown horse or a gray horse?"

The farmer leaned his head and shouted: "Tilda, do we get a brown horse or a gray horse?"

Tilda called back: "You get a brown horse."

And Mulla Nasrudin said: "YOU GET A CHICKEN."

The neighbourhood grocer was weary to death of Mulla Nasrudin and his habit of stretching his credit as far as it could possibly be stretched. Finally, he decided to have it out with him.

"Mulla Nasrudin," he said, when the Mulla arrived on his next shopping expedition, "I am sorry, but before you make another purchase, I would like to have you settle your bill. All of it. Let's start fresh." Nasrudin drew himself up and allowed a haughty expression to cross his face and said, distinctly, "GO HALFWAY TO HELL," turned on his heel, and began to stalk out.

The grocer called out: "One moment, Mulla. Just out of curiosity — why just halfway to hell? Why not all the way?"

Mulla Nasrudin sighed. "THE TROUBLE IS," he said, "I HAVE AN EQUALLY LARGE BILL WITH THE BAKER."

Mulla Nasrudin's face lit up as he recognized the man who was walking ahead of him down the subway stairs. He slapped the man so heartily on the back that the man nearly collapsed, and cried: "Goldberg, I hardly recognized you. Why, you have gained thirty pounds since I saw you last, and you have had your nose fixed, and I swear you are about two feet taller." The man looked at him anxiously. "I beg your pardon," he said in icy tones, "but I do not happen to be Goldberg."

"AHA," said Mulla Nasrudin. "YOU HAVE EVEN CHANGED YOUR NAME."

Mulla Nasrudin, who went to a large city to see the sights, engaged a room at a hotel and before retiring asked the clerk about the hours for meals.

"We have breakfast 7 to 11, dinner from 12 to 3, and supper from 6 to 9," explained the clerk.

"LOOK HERE," inquired the Mulla in surprise, "WHAT TIME AM I GOING TO SEE THE TOWN?"

Psychiatrist: "Your wife is suffering from a severe mental illness, Mulla. You should have arranged for her to see me long ago!"

Mulla Nasrudin: "BUT, DOCTOR, WHEN SHE WAS IN HER RIGHT MIND SHE WOULDN'T SEE A PSYCHIATRIST AT ANY PRICE!"

The prosperous and time-honoured partnership of Nasrudin and Kutbudin threatened to go on the rocks when Kutbudin fell madly in love with Mulla Nasrudin's wife. The Mulla was very understanding about the whole thing, but finally told his partner: "This thing cannot go any longer. The situation must be resolved one way or another."

"We have always been sporting men," said Kutbudin. "What do you think of the idea of playing one game of backgammon to see who gets the girl."

Mulla Nasrudin thought this proposition over for a few moments and then agreed. "LET US PLAY FOR A QUARTER A POINT," he added, "JUST TO MAKE IT INTERESTING."

Mulla Nasrudin and his friend were adrift in an open boat in the middle of the Atlantic, and things looked very bad for them. After five days without food or water, the friend began to pray: "Oh, Lord, I have not been very good during my life. I have not been good to my wife and I have often spent all my wages on gambling and beer. But, if you spare me life now, I promise...."

"HANG ON A MINUTE," interrupted Nasrudin. "DON'T GO TOO FAR. I THINK I CAN SEE A BOAT."

Mulla Nasrudin's old friend Haider Ali died. He was the only atheist in the whole town but the people came to his wake just the same.

Mulla Nasrudin, looking at the corpse laid out in his best suit, said: "WHAT A WASTE! ALL DRESSED UP AND NOWHERE TO GO!"

The prosecuting counsel was having a little trouble with a rather difficult witness, Mulla Nasrudin. Exasperated by the Mulla's evasive answers, he asked him if he was acquainted with any of the jury.

"Yes, sir, more than half of them," replied the Mulla.

"Are you willing to swear that you know more than half of them?" asked the counsel.

"IF IT COMES TO THAT, I AM WILLING TO SWEAR THAT I KNOW MORE THAN ALL OF THEM PUT TOGETHER," said Mulla Nasrudin.

Mulla Nasrudin, in a tailor shop, was viewing his new suit in a three way mirror.

The Tailor asked: "Well, what do you think, Mulla?"

"GREAT," said Nasrudin. "I WILL TAKE ALL THREE OF THEM."

A local bank failed and there was a wildly curring, milling mob of frantic depositors pounding on the doors. In the centre of this half-crazed, shouting crowd was Mulla Nasrudin running his mouth louder than the rest. "They should string up the president of this bank to a lamp post.... also the board of the Trustees! To take the poor depositors' hard earned cash.... The poor depositors now left without homes or bread... We should send the bank officials to Siberia to the salt mines.... The dirty crooks!" Finally a policeman walked over to the Mulla and asked, "Look, mister, have you got any money in this bank, may I ask....?"

"Listen, officer," came Mulla Nasrudin's answer, "IF I HAD ANY MONEY IN THIS BANK, WOULD I BE TAKING IT SO LIGHTLY?"

Mulla Nasrudin had his suspicions. One day he left work early, and sure enough, when he arrived home, he found a strange hat and umbrella in the hallway and his wife on the couch in the arms of another man.

Wild for revenge, the Mulla picked up the man's umbrella and snapped it in two across his knee.

"THERE NOW I HOPE IT RAINS."

Mulla Nasrudin got a job in a bank. The cashier tossed him a packet of one-rupee notes and said: "check them to make sure there are one hundred." The Mulla started counting. Finally he got up to "56," "57," "58." Then he threw the package in the drawer. "IF IT IS RIGHT THIS FAR," remarked Nasrudin to the man next to him, "IT IS PROBABLY RIGHT ALL THE WAY."

Mulla Nasrudin burst into a police court one day. "Your Honour," he moaned, "some disgusting urchins have chalked a lot of filthy four-letter words on the fence surrounding my house. AND WHAT'S MORE, THEY HAVEN'T EVEN SPELLED THE WORDS RIGHT!"

Abdul Rehman was a very sick man indeed and his friends took turns visiting him to keep up his spirits. The night Mulla Nasrudin came, he was warned in advance that Abdul Rehman was very low and he must be extremely careful to say nothing discouraging. Nasrudin was doing beautifully and actually had Rahman chuckling over a number of funny stories. But, suddenly, however, the Mulla stopped and began to shake his head. "What's the matter?" said Rahman anxiously.

"I was just thinking," said Nasrudin. "HOW IN THE NAME OF THE HOLY PROPHET ARE THEY GOING TO GET A COFFIN DOWN THE CROOKED STAIRS IN THIS HOUSE?"

Mulla Nasrudin was taking a stroll through a cemetery and reading the inscriptions on tombstones. He came to one which declared: "Not dead, but sleeping."

After contemplating the phrase for a moment, and scratching his head, the Mulla exclaimed: "HE SURE AIN'T FOOLIN' NOBODY BUT HIMSELF!"



"In view of the present world situation," said Mulla Nasrudin one day in the tavern, "the best thing that can happen to a man is not to be born at all in the first place. BUT I DOUBT THAT EVEN ONE MAN IN A HUNDRED THOUSAND IS THAT LUCKY."

A young mother was looking at a toy for her small child. "Isn't that awfully complicated for him?" she asked Mulla Nasrudin, the salesman.

"That, Madam," replied the Mulla, "is an educational toy, designed to prepare the child for life in today's world. Any way he puts it together is wrong."

Mulla Nasrudin, having spent considerable time tramping the corridors of the museum, paused for a refreshing cigar.

He had not been smoking long when a museum guard approached him angrily and said: "Do you see that?" He was pointing to a sign on the wall which said in glaring red letters: NO SMOKING.

Mulla Nasrudin regarded it for a moment, then said to the guard: "IT DOES NOT SAY 'POSITIVE-  
-LY!'"

Mulla Nasrudin sat moodily over his drink, and his friend said: "You look pretty down in the mouth, Mulla. What's the matter?"

Nasrudin said: "My psychiatrist says I am in love with my umbrella and that that's the source of my troubles."

"In love with your umbrella!"

"YES. ISN'T THAT RIDICULOUS? OH, I LIKE AND RESPECT MY UMBRELLA AND ENJOY ITS COMPANY, BUT LOVE?"

Once Mulla Nasrudin said, addressing a big gathering: "It is with some trepidation that I address an audience of people, all of whom are smarter than I am. ALL OF WHOM PUT TOGETHER, THAT IS."

Mulla Nasrudin became ill and called in a specialist.

The specialist, as he stood by the bedside, said: "Yes, I can cure you."

"What will it cost?" asked the Mulla faintly.

"Five thousand rupees."

"You will have to have your price a little," replied Nasrudin. "I HAVE A BETTER BID FROM THE UNDERTAKER, SIR."

Mulla Nasrudin was working as a city-reporter in a local daily. One night as he was passing along the ways on the banks of the river, he heard the sound of someone struggling in the water.

"Are you drowning?" shouted the Mulla.

"I am," replied a feeble voice from the water.

"WHAT A PITY!" said Nasrudin condescendingly. "YOU ARE JUST TOO LATE FOR THE LAST EDITION TONIGHT. BUT CHEER UP; YOU'LL HAVE A NICE LITTLE PARAGRAPH ALL TO YOURSELF IN THE MORNING."

"Now look me right in the face!"  
 "DOCTOR," said Mulla Nasrudin,  
 "I GOT MY OWN PROBLEMS."

Mulla Nasrudin, who was invited to a house party he didn't wish to attend, telegraphed to the hostess: "REGRET I CAN'T COME. COMPLETE LIE FOLLOWS BY LETTER."

An American, staying with Mulla Nasrudin, received a telegram, and his face broke out in smiles. Said his friend, Mulla Nasrudin: "Good news, Robert?"

"You bet, Mulla. My grandfather and grandmother just celebrated a golden wedding."

"Golden wedding? What is that?" asked the Mulla.

"Well, you see, they've been together for fifty years—"

whereupon Nasrudin broke in: "AND NOW HE'S MARRIED HER? OH, BRAVO!"

"And at her request you gave up drinking, Mulla?"

"Yes."

"And you stopped smoking, for the same reason?"

"I did."

"And it was for her that you gave up dancing, card parties, and billiards?"

"Absolutely."

"Then why didn't you marry her?"

"WELL," said Mulla Nasrudin, "AFTER ALL THIS REFORMING I REALIZED I COULD DO BETTER."

One friend of Mulla Nasrudin was amazed to see that the Mulla had hitched his prize-winning possession, his prize-winning bull, to the plow and was guiding it across his fields.

He said: "Mulla have you gone crazy? That bull is worth twenty-five thousand rupees. Why are you letting him pull a plow?"

"THAT BULL," said the Mulla grimly, "HAS GOT TO LEARN THAT LIFE ISN'T ALL PLAY."

Mulla Nasrudin crept into the psychiatrist's office, looked furtively around, then pressed his ear to the desk.

"Listen!" he hissed.

The psychiatrist pressed his ear to the desk.

"I can't hear anything," he said.

"EXACTLY WHAT I MEAN," said Nasrudin. "WORRYING, ISN'T IT?"

Mulla Nasrudin was defeated ignominiously when he ran for the office of sheriff.

He got only one vote out of a total of 3,500, and the next day he walked down main street with two guns hanging from his belt.

"You were not elected, and you have no right to carry guns, Mulla," yellow citizens told him.

"LISTEN, FOLKS," replied Nasrudin, "A MAN WITH NO MORE FRIENDS THAN I HAVE GOT IN THIS COUNTY NEEDS TO CARRY GUNS."

"Yes," said Mulla Nasrudin, "my family can trace its ancestry back to Muhammad the Prophet."

"I suppose," remarked his friend, "you will be telling us that your ancestors were in the Ark with Noah?"

"CERTAINLY NOT," said Nasrudin. "MY PEOPLE HAD A BOAT OF THEIR OWN."

"What do you think, Mulla, of our two candidates for presidency?"

"WELL, I AM GLAD," said Mulla Nasrudin, "THAT ONLY ONE CAN BE ELECTED."



Mulla Nasrudin and a friend met in the garment district one day. The friend's voice was heavy with woe. He said to the Mulla: "Did you hear about Mahmood?"

Nasrudin, startled, said: "No; what about Mahmood?"

"He dropped dead with a heart attack yesterday."

"WHAT!" said Mulla Nasrudin. "IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEASON?"

Mulla Nasrudin was driving along a country road when he noticed a couple of repairmen climbing telephone poles.

"FOOLS!" he exclaimed to his companion, "THEY MUST THINK I NEVER DROVE A CAR BEFORE."

100

Mulla Nasrudin rushed into  
a barber shop.

"Cut everything short," he said,  
"HAIR, WHISKERS, AND CONVER-  
-SATION."

101

Mulla Nasrudin lost his faith  
once and became a hard-bitten  
atheist. His new credo was "THERE  
IS NO GOD, AND MUHAMMAD IS  
HIS PROPHET."

102

Friend: "So your new job makes you independent, *Uulla*?"

*Uulla Nasrudin*: "ABSOLUTELY. I GET HERE ANY TIME I WANT BEFORE EIGHT, AND LEAVE JUST WHEN I PLEASE AFTER FIVE."

103

As *Uulla Nasrudin* was leaving, he murmured to the hostess: "The meal was delicious, WHAT THERE WAS OF IT."

Noting the hurt expression on the hostess's face, the *Uulla* blushed and hastened to say: "OH, OH, AND THERE WAS PLENTY OF FOOD, SUCH AS IT WAS."

"I turned the way I signaled," said the lady, indignantly, after the crash.

"I know it," retorted Mulla Nasrudin. "WHAT'S WHAT FOOLED ME?"

A young swain, on an automobile drive in the country with his loved one, left the car long enough to venture into a field where he might pick a bouquet of wild flowers for his lady fair. He had barely plucked the blossoms, when he became aware of a bull present in the same field.

The bull, a large specimen, was facing him with head lowered. It made distinct moving sounds and with one leg scrapped the ground.

Far away, on the other side of the fence stood the owner, Mulla Nasrudin, who was taking in the situation with a serene eye. The young man yelled out to him: "Hey, is that bull safe?"

Mulla Nasrudin shouted back: "Safe as anything." Then he considered a moment more and shouted again: "CAN'T SAY THE SAME ABOUT YOU, THOUGH."

Mulla Nasrudin was worried by a vicious-looking dog.

"Don't be afraid of him," the owner reassured. "You know the old proverb: A barking dog never bites."

"Yes," replied Mulla Nasrudin. "YOU KNOW THE PROVERB, I KNOW THE PROVERB, BUT DOES THE DOG KNOW THE PROVERB?"

Mulla Nasrudin and his two friends were considering the problem of what each would do if the doctor told him he had only six months to live.

Said Robinson: "The first thing I would do would be to liquidate my business, withdraw my savings and have the biggest fling on the French Riviera you ever saw. I'd play roulette, I'd eat like a king, and most of all, I'd have girls, girls and more girls."

Said Sheikh Abdulla: "The first thing I would do would be to visit a travel agency and plot out an itinerary. There are a thousand places on earth I have not seen, and I would like to see them before I die: the Grand Canyon, the Taj Mahal, Aukov Wat, all of them."

Said Mulla Nasrudin: "IF MY DOCTOR SAID I HAD ONLY SIX MONTHS TO LIVE, THE FIRST THING I WOULD DO WOULD BE TO CONSULT ANOTHER DOCTOR."

Mulla Nasrudin was aboard a ship, but unfortunately, about halfway across, a storm struck the vessel. It grew rapidly worse, and the cry to abandon ship was given.

There followed a scene of unbelievable confusion. Children screamed, women wailed, men shouted and rushed wildly to and fro, while the crew struggled to impose order and place as many as possible in the lifeboats. The sheets of rain and the heavy seas added the last touch of nightmare to the situation.

And through it all, watching everything with interest, was Mulla Nasrudin. He sat on a coil of rope, utterly calm, and hummed to himself.

A friend rushed to him, crying: "Mulla, Mulla, how can you sit there so calmly? The ship is sinking. It is being completely destroyed!"

"SO?" said Nasrudin. "THE SHIP IS NOT MY PROPERTY."

Mulla Nasrudin was seriously ill in a foreign country. He said to his friend: "Listen, Fareed, just in case you return and I don't, here's a letter to give Sultana when you get back to the old neighbourhood. Tell her my last thought was of her and her name was the last word I spoke. And here's a letter for Fatima. TELL HER THE SAME THING."

The genius of Mulla Nasrudin had carried him to big success in business without much aid of education.

He was asked to distribute the prizes at a school, and made the usual speech of good counsel.

"Now boys," he said, "Always remember that education is a great thing. There's nothing like education. Take arithmetic. Through education we learn that twice two make four, that twice six make twelve, that seven sevens make —  
— AND THEN THERE IS GEOGRAPHY."

"I saw a feller trying to kiss your lass in the park last night, Mulla."

"Did he succeed?" asked Mulla Nasrudin.

"No."

"THEN SHE WAS NOT MY LASS," said Nasrudin.

Mulla Nasrudin advised his son on his marriage day: "SON, A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE IS OFTEN BASED ON WHAT A HUSBAND AND WIFE DON'T KNOW ABOUT EACH OTHER."

The gentleman was on his way home when he passed Mulla Nasrudin's house and saw through the window Mulla Nasrudin hitting his small boy over the head with a loaf of bread.

Next day he passed, and the next, and the next, and each time the Mulla was hitting the boy on the head with a loaf of bread.

Finally one Tuesday when he passed, he saw the Mulla hitting the boy on the head with a cake.

"Hello," he said putting his head in through the window, "run out of bread to-day?"

"OF COURSE NOT," replied Mulla Nasrudin, "IT'S HIS BIRTHDAY."



Mulla Nasrudin: "I can't eat this stuff."

Mrs. Mulla Nasrudin: "Never mind, dear. I have some lovely recipes for making use of left-overs."

Nasrudin: "IN THAT CASE I'LL EAT IT NOW."

The young bride was telling her father how wonderful marriage was.

"DO you know Dad," she said, "Ali gives me everything I ask for."

"Which merely shows," replied her father, Mulla Nasrudin, "THAT YOU ARE NOT ASKING FOR ENOUGH."

116

Mulla Nasrudin's advice to newlyweds: "NO FAMILY SHOULD HAVE LESS THAN THREE CHILDREN. IF THERE IS ONE GENIUS IN THE FAMILY, THEN THERE SHOULD BE TWO TO SUPPORT HIM."

117

"Nice to see you are attending mosque again, Nasrudin," said the preacher. "Is it because of my sermons?"

"NOT YOURS," said Mulla Nasrudin. "MY WIFE'S!"

Mulla Nasrudin was obviously enjoying his holiday in the hills. When he returned to his hotel each evening, he was full of the wonders of the place.

Another guest, interested, so to speak, by Mulla Nasrudin's delight asked him: "Is this your first time in these hills?"

"Aye, it is that," said the Mulla.

"You seem to be having such fun that I presume you haven't had a holiday for a considerable time," said the chatty guest.

"It's not only that," smiled the Mulla, "but it's my honeymoon as well."

"In that case," asked the guest, taken aback, "where is your wife?"

"OH, SHE'S BEEN HERE BEFORE!" said Mulla Nasrudin.

"Well," said Hameed, "we have been friends for the last thirty years and never fallen out."

"NO, never a word between us," said Mulla Nasrudin.

"But there is just one thing I never liked to bring up in case we would quarrel," remarked Hameed.

"And what was that?" queried the Mulla.

"Oh, I still don't like to mention it, but I can't stand your wife!"

"Well," said Nasrudin, "we will not quarrel about that. TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I CAN'T STAND HER MYSELF."

Mrs. Mulla Nasrudin was reading about birth and death statistics.

Suddenly she turned to the Mulla and said: "Do you know that every time I breathe a man dies?"

"VERY INTERESTING," returned Mulla Nasrudin. "HAVE YOU TRIED TOOTHPASTE?"

The judge looked very severe. "Mulla," he said, "your wife says you hit her over the head with a baseball bat and threw her down a flight of stairs. What have you got to say for yourself?"

Mulla Nasrudin rubbed the side of his nose with his hand and meditated. Finally he said: "Your Honour, I guess there are three sides to this case: MY WIFE'S STORY, MY STORY AND THE TRUTH."

122

Mulla Nasrudin awoke his wife in a great state of excitement. "Quick," he cried, "give me my spectacles before I wake up." When his wife brought them to him, he explained, "I AM HAVING A BEAUTIFUL DREAM, BUT THERE ARE ONE OR TWO THINGS IN IT I CAN'T WAKE OUT."

123

Mulla Nasrudin received a note that read: "Leave a thousand rupees under the cottonwood tree in Pizitz Square Tuesday night, or we will kidnap your wife and you will never see her again." The Mulla answered: "I HAVEN'T GOT ANY THOUSAND RUPEES, AND I AM COUNTING ON YOU BOYS TO KEEP YOUR PROMISE."

Mulla Nasrudin, a well track habitué, told his wife: "The darndest thing happened to me this afternoon. I was bending down to tie my shoe-lace and some near-sighted goon strapped a saddle on me."

"What did you do?" asked his wife.

"What the hell could I do?" complained Nasrudin. "I CAME IN THIRD."

Mulla Nasrudin rushed up to a farmer on the road and said: "I am looking for an escaped lunatic, my wife. Did she pass this way?"

The farmer puffed thoughtfully on his corn cob pipe and asked: "What does she look like?"

"She is very short," said Nasrudin, "and she is very thin and she weighs about 350 pounds."

The farmer looked at him in amazement. "How can a woman be short and thin and still weigh 350 pounds?" he asked.

"Don't act so surprised," said Nasrudin angrily. "I TOLD YOU SHE WAS CRAZY."

126

Mrs. Mulla Nasrudin: "I suppose all geniuses are conceited."

Mulla Nasrudin: "SOME OF THEM—  
BUT I AM NOT."

127

Mulla Nasrudin's wife had fallen headlong down a steep incline and lay motionless at the bottom.

Nasrudin, fearful of the consequence, leaned over the top of the incline and called out: "Fatima, are you dead?"

The wife groaned and called back: "I am badly bruised, but quite alive."

Nasrudin shook his head dolefully and said: "I HOPE YOU ARE, BUT YOU ARE SUCH A LIAR, I DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO BELIEVE YOU."

The Mulla Nasrudin's family was planning a daughter's wedding and the guest list was being made out. There was no use in being foolishly extravagant, so only the minimum number of invitations was sent out. That is, one to: every member of the family, to the tenth cousins, and all their relations by marriage; all the bride's friends back to kindergarten, and their relatives; all the neighbours, and their relatives; and of course, such strangers as happened to be in the vicinity.

When that was done, Mrs. Mulla Nasrudin looked at the list ruefully and said: "There are still the guests on the groom's side to consider."

Mulla Nasrudin nodded. "WELL", he said, "IT HAS TO BE. AND IT WILL ONLY BE FAIR TO GIVE HIM FREE CHOICE. WHICHEVER HE WANTS  
 ——— EITHER HIS MOTHER OR HIS FATHER."

A gentleman at a social function remarked to Mulla Nasrudin, the stranger at his side, "Heavens, what an ugly woman that one is."

"That woman," said Nasrudin, "is my wife."

The first man flushed painfully and could only stammer, "I am sorry."

"NOT AS SORRY AS I AM," said Mulla Nasrudin.



Mulla Nasrudin had managed to make his way into a closet, just one step ahead of the pursuing Mrs. Nasrudin.

Mrs. Nasrudin banged peremptorily on the door. "Come out of there, you coward!"

"I will not," shouted the mulla from within.

"Do as I say," thundered Mrs. Nasrudin.

"I WON'T," yelled the mulla. "I'LL SHOW YOU WHO'S MASTER OF THE HOUSE."

Mulla Nasrudin (in early morning): "It must be time to get up."

wife: "Why?"

Nasrudin: "BABY'S FALLEN ASLEEP."

A mover in a movie house was disturbing the audience. When patrons yelled to cut it out, the mover snapped: "I paid for the seat and I will do as I please!"

"SURE" howled Mulla Nasrudin from the back row, "BUT YOU ARE KEEPING EVERYBODY AWAKE!"

One day Mahmood met Mulla Nasrudin and said: "Nasrudin, I have got a bargain for you! An elephant! A whole living elephant! And for just one thousand rupees."

Nasrudin said: "Are you crazy? What do I want with an elephant?"

"It's a beautiful elephant. All gray. Ten feet tall with a complete trunk."

"But I have nothing to feed it. I have no place to put it; I live in a three-room apartment."

"Two beautiful tusks, maybe two feet long each. It's a magnificent beast. They don't make them like that any more."

"Mahmood," said the Mulla, almost screaming. "I have a three-room walkup apartment on the fifth floor. Where will I keep an elephant?"

"You are a hard man, Nasrudin," said Mahmood. "I will tell you what. I will throw a second whole elephant for only hundred rupees extra."

And Mulla Nasrudin said: "NOW YOU ARE TALKING."

Doctor Abrams was called to Mulla Nasrudin's shop where the Mulla was lying unconscious. Dr. Abrams worked on him for a long time, and finally revived him.

"How did you happen to drink that stuff, Nasrudin?" he asked the Mulla. "Didn't you see the label on the bottle? It said: POISON."

Nasrudin: "Yes, doctor, but I didn't believe it."

Dr. Abrams: "Why not?"

Nasrudin: "BECAUSE WHENEVER I BELIEVE SOMEONE I AM DECEIVED."

"How is your wife?" Mulla Nasrudin asked the old friend he had not seen in years.

"She's in heaven," replied the friend.

"Oh, I am sorry," said the Mulla. But then he realized that was not the thing to say, so he added: "I MEAN, I AM GLAD." And that was even worse. So Mulla Nasrudin came out with: "WELL, I AM SURPRISED."

The scene was a court-martial. Mulla Nasrudin was giving evidence against a private who was accused of calling a lieutenant an idiot.

"Now, Nasrudin," said the president of the court, "how can you be sure that the accused was in fact referring to lieutenant Jones when he called him an idiot?"

"WELL, SIR," replied Mulla Nasrudin, "LIEUTENANT JONES WAS THE ONLY IDIOT THERE AT THE TIME."

Mulla Nasrudin was subject to insomnia. His wife was, on the contrary, a very heavy and sound sleeper. It was Nasrudin's awiable habit, when he was having a particularly bad night, to go into his wife's room, shake her into reluctant wakefulness, and say: "WHAT'S THE MATTER, DEAR? CAN'T YOU SLEEP EITHER?"

"Oh, poor Mr. Jones," mourned Mulla Nasrudin. "Did you hear what happened to him? He tripped at the top of the stairs, fell down the whole flight, banged his head and died."

"Died?" said Mrs. Nasrudin, shocked.

"DIED!" repeated the Mulla with emphasis. "BROKE HIS GLASSES TOO."

Mulla Nasrudin: "If a man steals, no matter what, he will live to regret it."

Wife (cooly): "You used to steal kisses from me before we were married."

Nasrudin: "WELL, YOU HEARD WHAT I SAID."

Mulla Nasrudin came into the house, dripping wet and looking incredibly bedraggled. Outside the window, the pelting rain was all too visible.

His sympathetic wife said: "Oh, it's raining cats and dogs outside."

"You are telling me," said Nasrudin. "I JUST STEPPED IN A POODLE."

"Who was that sweet young thing, Mulla, I saw you with last night?" asked a friend.

"THAT WAS NO SWEET YOUNG THING, BOY — THAT WAS MY WIFE," replied Mulla Nasrudin.

Mulla Nasrudin and his wife stopped on the street to watch a funeral procession pass. It was done in elaborate style, from the long, gleaming hearse, through the cars packed with flowers, to the impressive line of automobiles following.

Said Mulla Nasrudin's wife: "It's a rich guy. I have watched funerals like that before. There's a solid mahogany casket, polished so you can see your face in it, with satin lining and gold carved handles. They put it in a big mausoleum, with stone doors, statues, flowers, praying and ringing."

"WOW," said Mulla Nasrudin, eyes shining. "NOW THAT'S WHAT I CALL LIVING."

Salesman: "Sir, is your wife at home?"

Mulla Nasrudin: "Yes, sir."

Salesman (after knocking on door): "I thought you said she was at home, sir?"

Nasrudin: "YES, SIR, BUT I DON'T LIVE HERE."

Mulla Nasrudin came home from a hard day's work, sat down at the kitchen table, and said to his equally harried wife: "Dear, for once in your life don't start with your own troubles. Ask, instead, what happened to me at business. Ask, already, what kind of a day I had. Go ahead, ask. Just ask."

Whereupon Mrs. Mulla Nasrudin said apprehensively: "So what happened, Mulla?"

And Mulla Nasrudin buried his head in his hands, groaned, and said: "WHAT HAPPENED? OH, DEAR, BETTER YOU SHOULD NOT ASK."

"Do you believe in love at first sight, Mulla?" a friend asked Mulla Nasrudin.

"WELL," said Nasrudin, "I THINK IT SAVES A LOT OF TIME."



146

"DON'T YOU THINK, MULLA,  
THAT A MAN HAS MORE SENSE AFTER  
HE IS MARRIED?" ASKED MULLA  
NASTRUDIN'S WIFE.

"YES," SAID NASTRUDIN. "BUT  
IT'S TOO LATE THEN."

147

SON: "ISN'T IT WONDERFUL HOW  
LITTLE CHICKS GET OUT OF THEIR SHELLS,  
DAD?"

MULLA NASTRUDIN: "WHAT GET'S  
ME IS HOW THEY GET IN, SON."

Mulla Nasrudin lived only for the day when the social system could be overturned by violence and remolded closer to his heart's desire.

"Come the revolution," he said fervently to his wife, "you won't have to live on bread and potatoes. You will eat strawberries and cream."

"Actually," said his wife, "I don't like strawberries and cream."

"COME THE REVOLUTION," said Mulla Nasrudin violently, "YOU WILL EAT STRAWBERRIES AND CREAM AND YOU WILL LIKE IT"

Mrs. Mulla Nasrudin: "I suppose you think I am a perfect idiot?"

Mulla Nasrudin: "OH, DEAR, NONE OF US IS PERFECT."

Boss: "Mulla, you're a liar. You took a day off to bury your wife, and I met her in the park THIS morning."

Mulla Nasrudin: "OH, I DID NOT SAY SHE WAS DEAD, SIR. I JUST SAID I WOULD LIKE TO GO TO HER FUNERAL."

Mulla Nasrudin, an expectant father, was pacing up and down the hospital corridor.

"I hope it's a girl! I hope it's a girl!" he kept repeating.

"What do you mean, you hope it's a girl?" asked a nurse.

"THEN," replied Nasrudin, "SHE WILL NEVER HAVE TO GO THROUGH WHAT I AM GOING THROUGH."

152

"HAS THIS dog a good pedigree, Mulla?" asked Mulla Nasrudin's wife.

"HAS HE? SAY, IF THAT DOG COULD TALK, HE WOULDN'T SPEAK TO EITHER OF US," said Mulla Nasrudin.

153

Mrs. Mulla Nasrudin: "Why, she is the loudest-mouthed woman I ever heard."

Mulla Nasrudin: "SWUSH, DEAR, YOU FORGET YOURSELF."

"Mulla, dear," said Mrs. Mulla Nasrudin, "such an odd thing happened to-day. The clock fell off the wall, and if it had fallen a moment sooner, it would have hit mother."

"I ALWAYS SAID THAT CLOCK WAS SLOW," said Mulla Nasrudin.

Mulla Nasrudin was engaged in a most affectionate embrace with his secretary when there came the sound of a key in the front door.

The Mulla broke away at once, eyes wide with alarm.

"Heavens," he cried, "it's my wife! Quick, jump out the window!"

The young woman, equally alarmed, made a quick step toward the window, then demurred. "I can't," she said, "we're on the thirteenth floor."

"FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE," cried Mulla Nasrudin in exasperation, "IS THIS A TIME TO BE SUPERSTITIOUS, BABY?"

156

Mulla Nasrudin and his neighbour were discussing the weather. Said the neighbour: "Man, that shower will do a lot of good; it will bring things out of the ground."

"GOD FORBID," said Mulla Nasrudin, "I HAVE THREE WIVES THERE!"

157

A cameraman, working for the educational department of a film company, met Mulla Nasrudin in town and said:

"I have just been taking some moving pictures of life out on your farm."

"Did you catch any of my men in motion?" asked the Mulla curiously.

"Sure I did."

The Mulla shook his head reflectively, then commented:

"SCIENCE IS A WONDERFUL THING!"

"So you are undertaking to keep bees, Mulla?" asked a neighbour.

"YES," answered Mulla Nasrudin. "I DON'T WANT TO MISS ANYTHING IN LIFE, AND I HAVE BEEN STUNG EVERY OTHER WAY THERE IS."

Mulla Nasrudin: "My wife asked me to take our old cat off somewhere and lose it. So I put it in a basket and tramped out into the country for about eight miles."

Friend: "Did you lose the cat, Mulla?"

Nasrudin: "LOSE IT! IF I HAD NOT FOLLOWED IT, I'D NEVER HAVE GOTTEN BACK HOME."

School was out and little Makood came bursting into the house crying bitterly.

"The kids beat me up, Dad. They said I have a big head."

"Now, Makood, don't you listen to them," roared his father, Mulla Nasrudin. "It's not true."

So, partly convinced, Makood returned to school the next day. That afternoon the scene was repeated, and again Mulla Nasrudin repeated his words of reassurance.

"So now calm down," said Nasrudin, "because I would like you to run down to the store and get nine pounds of potatoes."

"Okay, Dad. Give me a bag to put them in," replied Makood.

"A BAG! WHAT DO YOU NEED A BAG FOR?" asked the Mulla. "CARRY THEM IN YOUR CAP!"

"Oh, Mulla, do you realize it's almost a year since our honeymoon, and that glorious day we spent on the sands? I wonder how we'll spend this one?"

"ON THE ROCKS, DEAR," said Mulla Nasrudin.



Mulla Nasrudin walked into a bakery and said: "I want a birthday cake baked for me in the shape of the letter N." The baker nodded. "I will have it ready for you by two this afternoon. But it will cost money."

"Money is no object," said the Mulla.

At two o'clock the Mulla was back. The cake was proudly presented in all its glory, and the Mulla flew into a passion. "Not an ordinary N, you idiot," he shouted. "I want a beautiful flowing N in script." The baker said: "But you didn't say so. If you can come back at eight in the evening, I will have it for you."

The Mulla was back at eight. Another cake was presented. He looked at it critically and said: "I don't like the frosting. Could you make it with a pinker cast? I will pay for the extra trouble." "I can fix that in no time, if you will wait," said the baker. By eight-thirty he was back, and the cake was perfect. With a sigh of relief, the baker pulled a box down and prepared to package the cake. "HOLD IT," said Mulla Nasrudin. "I AM EATING IT HERE."

Mulla Nasrudin, very agitated, took his son to a child guidance clinic; the child was noisy and aggressive. The psychiatrist, having observed that the child was hyper-active, made out a prescription for a sedative but forgot to specify who was to take it. The next appointment was a week later.

"How has your little boy been behaving this week, Mulla?" enquired the psychiatrist.

Mulla Nasrudin shrugged. "WHO CARES?" he drawled.

164

Mrs. Mulla Nasrudin (as Mulla enters house): "What time is it?"

Nasrudin: "Just one o'clock."

But at this very moment the clock strikes three.

Mulla Nasrudin: "DEAR ME, HOW THAT CLOCK STUTTERS."

165

"Did I ever tell you how I tried jujitsu on a burglar?" asked Mulla Nasrudin.

"NO," said his wife.

"Well, I got hold of his leg and twisted it over his shoulder. Then I got hold of his arm and twisted it round his neck, AND BEFORE HE KNEW WHERE HE WAS I WAS FLAT ON MY BACK."

166

"That fellow must live in a very small flat," said Mulla Nasrudin.

"How can you tell?" asked his wife.

"Why, haven't you noticed that his dog wags his tail up and down, instead of sideways?"

167

"So your wife is a reckless driver?" asked a friend.

"Say, when the road turns the same way as she does, it's just a coincidence," replied Mulla Nasrudin.

Mulla Nasrudin discovered his wife again and again in the arms of her lovers. Finally, he shot her dead. The jury brought in a verdict of justifiable homicide.

Just as Nasrudin was to leave the courtroom a free man, the judge stopped him and asked: "Why did you shoot your wife instead of her lover, Nasrudin?"

"SUN," he replied, "I DECIDED IT WAS BETTER TO SHOOT A WOMAN ONCE THAN A DIFFERENT MAN EACH WEEK."

DOCTOR (after examining patient):  
"I don't like the looks of your wife, Mulla."

Mulla Nasrudin: "NEITHER DO I, DOCTOR, BUT SHE'S GOOD TO OUR CHILDREN."

Mulla Nasrudin, deeply troubled, was consulting a psychiatrist.

"My wife," said the Mulla, "is convinced she's a chicken. She goes around squawking constantly and sleeps on a large bar of wood she has fixed up as a perch."

"I see," said the psychiatrist thoughtfully. "And how long has your wife been suffering from this fixation?"

"For nearly two years."

The psychiatrist frowned slightly and said: "But why have you waited till now to seek help?"

Mulla Nasrudin blushed and said: "OH, WELL, — IT WAS SO NICE HAVING A STEADY SUPPLY OF EGGS."

Mulla Nasrudin, having been away on a business trip, returned home unexpectedly and found his wife in the arms of his best friend.

He staggered back and said: "FAREED! I AM MARRIED TO THE LADY, SO I HAVE GOT TO. BUT YOU?"

172

Mrs. Ullla Nasrudin: "I can't decide whether to go to a palmist or to a wind-reader."

Ullla Nasrudin: "Go to a palmist. IT'S OBVIOUS THAT YOU HAVE A PALM."

173

Wife: "Ullla, what is the most difficult thing for a young mother to learn?"

Ullla Nasrudin: "THAT OTHER PEOPLE HAVE PERFECT CHILDREN TOO."

174

Mulla Nasrudin came home in the small hours and gave his wife the glorious news:

"Darling, I have been elected."

She was delighted. "Honestly?" she said.

Mulla Nasrudin laughed in an embarrassed way.

"OH, WHY BRING THAT UP?"

175

"You know, dear, your wife doesn't seem to be as well dressed as she was when you married her," a friend said to Mulla Nasrudin.

"THAT'S FUNNY," replied Nasrudin. "I AM SURE IT'S THE SAME SUIT."

176

Mrs. Mulla Nasrudin: "Wake up, Mulla, there's a burglar going through your pants pockets."

Mulla Nasrudin (turning over): "OH, YOU TWO JUST FIGHT IT OUT BETWEEN YOURSELVES."

177

Mulla Nasrudin, the father of a very obstreperous youngster was listening to his wife reading from a child psychology book.

"It says here," she announced excitedly, "that we must give him a completely free hand!"

"DOES IT INDEED?" replied Mulla Nasrudin grimly. "AND DOES IT SAY WHERE?"



Sunday was to be the day of Saleem's wedding, and he and his father, Mulla Nasrudin, were enjoying a nightcap together. Raising his glass in a toast to his father, Saleem asked: "Any advice before I take the big step, dad?"

"Yes," said Mulla Nasrudin. "Two things. First: insist on having one night out a week with the boys. SECOND: DON'T WASTE IT ON THE BOYS."

Passer-by: "Kinda cold sitting on your front porch in this weather, isn't it, Mulla?"

Mulla Nasrudin: "Well, yes, a little, but you see my wife is taking her singing lesson, AND I DON'T WANT THE NEIGHBOURS TO THINK THAT I AM BEATING HER UP."

Mulla Nasrudin awoke early one morning and shook his wife until she awoke with a start. "What's the matter, darling?" she inquired lazily.

"Fatima," said Nasrudin firmly, "IF I DREAM ONCE MORE THAT YOU HAVE KISSED ANOTHER MAN, I WILL NEVER TALK TO YOU AGAIN AS LONG AS I LIVE."

Mulla Nasrudin : "On your way to Abdulla and son's you will pass a football ground."

Office Boy (hopefully) : "Yes, Sir!"

Nasrudin : "WELL, PASS IT!"

Three girls and Mulla Nasrudin were brought before the presiding judge. The girls had been arrested for soliciting and the Mulla was arrested for peddling without a license.

"What do you do for a living?" the judge asked, pointing to the first girl.

"Your honor, I am a model," she answered.

"Thirty days," was the sentence.

Then he turned to the second. "What do you do for a living?" he asked.

"Your honor, I am a T.V. actress."

"Thirty days." Then he turned to the third girl. "What do you do for a living?" he demanded.

"To tell you the truth," she answered, "I am a prostitute."

"For telling the truth," he said, "I am going to suspend sentence." Then he turned to Mulla Nasrudin. "And you," he said, "what do you do for a living?"

"TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH," said Nasrudin, twisting his hat in his hands, "I AM A PROSTITUTE ALSO, YOUR HONOR."

During a play, the curtain fell suddenly and the manager of the theater stepped out before the audience in the last degree of agitation.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "I am distressed to have to tell you that the great and beloved actor, Mendel Kalb, has just had a fatal heart attack in his dressing room and we can not continue."

Whereupon Mulla Nasrudin rose in the balcony and cried out: "Quick! Give him some chicken soup."

The manager, surprised, said: "Sir, I said it was a fatal heart attack. The great Mendel Kalb is dead."

The Mulla repeated: "So quick! Give him some chicken soup."

The manager screamed in desperation: "Sir! The man is DEAD! What good will chicken soup do?"

And the Mulla shouted back: "WHAT HARM?"

Mulla Nasrudin and Sheikh Abdulla, strolling down the boulevard, spied two attractive women in the distance, walking together and approaching them.

Abdulla said: "Good heavens, Mulla, what an unusual coincidence! Walking there towards us, arm in arm, are none other than my wife and my mistress!"

"Odd," said Nasrudin, thoughtfully. "Perhaps we should learn to know one another better, FOR I WAS ON THE POINT OF SAYING PRECISELY THE SAME THING."

Sheikh Kareem had heard that his old friend Mulla Nasrudin had married for the third time, but he didn't meet the new bride until some months later, when he bumped into the newly-weds in the lobby of a big hotel. He was horrified to observe that the new Mrs. Nasrudin wore an obvious wig, had one glass eye, a wooden leg and a set of false teeth that rattled ominously every time she moved a muscle.

Completely taken aback, he whispered in Nasrudin's ear: "What came over you, Mulla, to marry an old battler like that?"

"You can speak up, my boy," said Mulla Nasrudin cheerfully. "SHE'S DEAF TOO."

Mulla Nasrudin: "Did you hear about my wife?"

Fareed: "No! What about your wife?"

Nasrudin: "She ran off with my best friend."

Fareed: "What are you talking about? I am your best friend."

Nasrudin: "NOT ANYMORE."

Mrs. Mulla Nasrudin, reduced to tears in the course of a family argument, said to her husband: "You brute! How can you treat me so cruelly after I have given you the best years of my life?"

And Mulla Nasrudin replied: "GOOD HEAVENS! WERE THOSE YOUR BEST YEARS?"

Mulla Nasrudin was bursting with pride.

"Did you hear about my son?" he asked a neighbour.

"No. What's with your son?"

"He's going to a psychiatrist. Twice each week he's going to a psychiatrist."

"Is that good?"

"Of course, it's good. Forty rupees an hour he pays, forty rupees! AND ALL HE TALKS ABOUT IS ME."

"Has your son's college education been of any value, Mulla?"

"Oh, yes," said Mulla Nasrudin. "IT CURED HIS MOTHER OF BRAGGING ABOUT HIM."

Mulla Nasrudin's young son came prancing into the room and said:

"Papa, may I have another apple?"

Nasrudin raised his eyes from his newspaper to glance sternly at the boy.

"Again an apple?" he demanded.

"Listen, where do you think all these apples come from? YOU THINK THEY GROW ON TREES?"

"Do you know, Dad, that in some parts of Africa a man does not know his wife until he marries her?"

Mulla Nasrudin: "WHY SINGLE OUT AFRICA?"

"I suspect that your son's peculiarities are congenital, Mulla," said the doctor gently. "It may be hereditary in your family."

Mulla Nastrochin was scandalized.

"You must be wrong, doctor," he protested. "I can assure you there's never been anything in the slightest hereditary in MY family!"

"Sir, I came to — er — ask you whether you would object — er — to my marrying your daughter," a young man asked Mulla Nastrochin.

"My boy," said Nastrochin, "you are only twenty-one and my daughter is twenty-seven. WHY NOT WAIT A FEW YEARS TILL YOU ARE BOTH ABOUT THE SAME AGE?"



It was their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. They were having drinks and dinner at one of the fanciest restaurants in town. Both were feeling sentimental.

"Mulla," said the wife, "what would you do if something happened to me?"

"I'd go absolutely out of my mind," said Nasrudin.

"Aw, go on," she said. "I'll bet you would turn right around and get married again."

"Oh, no I wouldn't," said Nasrudin. "I WOULDN'T GO THAT FAR OUT OF MY MIND."

"Dad, what effect does the moon have on the tide?" asked Mulla Nasrudin's son.

Mulla Nasrudin (from the depths of his newspaper): "NOT ANY, SON. ONLY ON THE UNTIED."

196

"Is a Ton of coal very much,  
Papa?"

"THAT DEPENDS, MY SON," said  
Mulla Nasrudin, "ON WHETHER YOU  
ARE SHOVELING OR BUYING IT."

197

Mulla Nasrudin had been  
trying to reach his home by phone  
for over an hour, but kept getting  
a busy signal. Finally he asked  
the operator if she could cut in on  
the line. She told him that she  
could do it only in a case of life  
or death.

"Well," said the Mulla. "I can  
tell you this much. IF THAT'S MY  
TEEN-AGE DAUGHTER ON THE  
PHONE, THERE'S GOING TO BE A  
MURDER."

The young couple, thinking that their parents would oppose their marriage, had eloped to the hills.

After being there for the necessary period, they got married and had grown to like the small hill-town so much that they decided to make their home there permanently.

After three weeks of married bliss, a telegram arrived.

"Oh, darling," said the young wife, "It's from Daddy."

"What does he say?" asked the bridegroom eagerly.

"DO NOT COME HOME AND ALL WILL BE FORGIVEN" — Mulla Nasrudin.

"Don't you think, Doctor, you have overcharged for attending my son when he had the measles?"

"You must remember, Nasrudin, that the bill covers twenty-three visits."

"YES," said Mulla Nasrudin, "BUT YOU FORGET THAT HE INFECTED THE WHOLE SCHOOL."

"But, Mulla, that isn't our baby."

"Shut up," said Mulla Nasrudin.

"IT'S A BETTER CARRIAGE."

Mulla Nasrudin riddled up to a guest at one of his daughter's social evenings. He had heard him addressed as doctor and now he said diffidently: "Doctor, may I ask a question?"

"Certainly," he said.

"Lately," said Mulla Nasrudin, "I have been having a funny pain right here under the heart——"

The guest interrupted uncomfortably and said: "I am terribly sorry, Mulla, but the truth is, I am a doctor of philosophy."

"Oh," said Nasrudin, "I am sorry!" He turned away, but then overcome with curiosity, he turned back. "Just one more question, doctor. TELL ME, WHAT KIND OF DISEASE IS PHILOSOPHY?"

Mulla Nasrudin shook his head sadly as his son left the room. For the fourth successive month his report card had shown nothing but D's. "I am finally convinced," said Nasrudin to his wife, "THAT OUR SON MUST HAVE A SIXTH SENSE. THERE IS CERTAINLY NO SIGN OF THE OTHER FIVE."

Mulla Nasrudin's youngest son came home in great excitement, saying: "Father! Father! On returning from school, I ran home behind the streetcar all the way and saved three annas carfare."

Whereupon the exasperated Mulla slapped his son's cheek resoundingly and said: "SPENDTHRIFT! WHY DID YOU NOT RUN HOME BEHIND A TAXICAB AND SAVE THREE RUPEES?"

204

medium at a seance: "I believe  
tho is your late wife knocking."

Mulla Nasrudin: "AH— SHE  
HAS NOT CHANGED A BIT."

205

"Dad, may I go in for a swim?"

"Certainly not," said Mulla  
Nasrudin. "It's far too deep, son."

"But mummy is swimming."

"YES, DEAR, BUT SHE'S INSURED."

A club of eccentric young men had for one of their rules that on Tuesday evenings any man who asked in the clubroom a question which he was unable to answer himself should pay a fine of ten rupees. One evening Mulla Nasrudin asked: "Why doesn't a ground squirrel leave any dirt around the top of his hole when he digs it?"

After some deliberation he was called upon to answer his own question.

"That's easy," said the Mulla. "The squirrel starts at the bottom and digs up."

"All very nice," suggested a member, "but how does it get to the bottom?"

"THAT'S YOUR QUESTION," answered Nasrudin.

"Understand your wife fell off a scaffold and died, Nasrudin?"

"That's right," said Mulla Nasrudin.

"Frightfully sorry, old chap. What was she doing up there?"

"GETTING HANGED," said Mulla Nasrudin.

208

"It must be hard to lose a wife," said a friend at Mulla Nasrudin's wife's funeral.

"ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE," said bereaved Mulla Nasrudin.

209

Mulla Nasrudin's oldest daughter had just given birth to a beautiful baby boy and Nasrudin was being congratulated. He looked downcast, however, and a friend said: "What is the matter, Mulla? Don't you like the idea of being a grand-father?"

The Mulla heaved an enormous sigh. "No," he said, "I don't. But that does not bother me so much. IT'S JUST THAT IT'S SO HUMILIATING TO HAVE TO GO TO BED WITH A GRANDMOTHER."



Mulla Nasrudin got into a subway car, which was clearly marked TIMES SQUARE in various places, and said apologetically to the large man next to him: "Pardon me, does this train go to Times Square?" Intent on his newspaper, the large man said rather shortly: "Yes, it does."

A moment later, the Mulla said again: "Are you sure it goes to Times Square?" Irritated, the large man said: "Of course, I am sure." The Mulla said argumentatively: "But how can you be sure?" At this the large man exploded. He said: "Can't you see the signs in this car? Read them. Don't they say TIMES SQUARE? What more do you want?"

The Mulla shrank within himself and sat motionless thereafter. At the next stop, however, another anxious-looking individual stepped into the train. He approached Mulla Nasrudin and asked apologetically: "Does this train go to Times Square?" At which Nasrudin jumped to his feet in agitation, shook his fist at the new comer, and said: "NOW LOOK WHAT YOU DID! YOU MADE ME UNCERTAIN AGAIN."

Mulla Nasrudin's wife was on her death-bed, with her husband at her side. He held her cold hand and tears silently streamed down his face.

Her pale lips moved. "Mulla," she said.

"Sush," said Nasrudin. "Don't try to talk."

But she insisted. "Mulla," she said in her tired voice. "I have to talk. I must confess."

"There is nothing to confess," said the weeping Mulla. "It's all right."

"No, no. I must die in peace. I must confess, Mulla, that I have been unfaithful to you."

Mulla Nasrudin stroked her hand. "Now, dear, don't be concerned. I know about it. WHY ELSE DID I POISON YOU?"

The funeral cortege was being set up for the wife of Mulla Nasrudin, who was dressed soberly in the appropriate black.

The funeral director said to the Mulla in a respectful whisper: "And you will be sitting in the lead car with your mother-in-law."

Nasrudin frowned. "With my mother-in-law?"

"Yes, of course."

"Is it necessary?"

"It is essential. The bereaved husband and the bereaved mother—the two closest survivors together."

Mulla Nasrudin turned to look at the large and robbing figure of his mother-in-law and said: "WELL, ALL RIGHT THEN, BUT I TELL YOU RIGHT NOW THAT IT'S GOING TO SPOIL THE PLEASURE OF THE OCCASION."

Mulla Nasrudin's wife was on her dying bed. She was in great pain.

"Oh," muttered she, "I suffer the tortures of hell."

And Mulla Nasrudin, unmoved, said politely: "ALREADY?"

214

Mulla Nasrudin bought a ferocious tiger at an auction sale, outbidding several prominent circus proprietors. "What on earth are you going to do with that man-eating beast, Nasrudin?" he was asked by the head of a wild-animal act. "Going into competition with us?"

"Oh, no," said Nasrudin. "IT'S NOT THAT. BUT MY POOR WIFE DIED LAST WEEK AND I AM LONELY."

215

A country doctor called upon Mulla Nasrudin, soon after the death of Nasrudin's wife, and announced his intentions of cutting his bill, for services rendered, in half. With tears in his eyes, Mulla Nasrudin reached out and clasped the doctor's hand and in a trembling voice said: "GOD BLESS YOU, MY GOOD FRIEND. I WILL BE AS GOOD AS YOU AND KNOCK OFF THE OTHER HALF."

216

The old Mulla Nasrudin said to his wife at the luncheon table: "One time recently, I dreamed I was lecturing to an audience. I woke up with a start, AND BY HEAVEN, I WAS."

217

"My wife is annoying me," said old Mulla Nasrudin. "Every time she has a bath she spends a couple of hours playing with rubber ducks and plastic submarines."

"If it makes her happy, why should you worry, Mulla?" asked the psychiatrist. "I certainly don't see why it should annoy you."

Mulla Nasrudin snorted indignantly. "YOU SHOULD IF THEY WERE YOUR'S. . . ."

218

Mulla Nasrudin was sitting on a park bench enjoying the late spring sunshine, when another old man sat down at the other end of the bench. They viewed each other cautiously and finally the other one heaved a tremendous, heartfelt sigh.

Mulla Nasrudin rose at once and said: "IF YOU ARE GOING TO TALK POLITICS, SIR, I AM LEAVING."

219

"You must help me, Doctor," said old Mulla Nasrudin to his psychiatrist. "I can't remember anything for more than a few minutes. It's driving me crazy."

"How long has this been going on, Nasrudin?" asked the psychiatrist gently.

"HOW LONG HAS WHAT BEEN GOING ON?" replied the Mulla.

The family was very much disturbed. Mulla Nasrudin, aged 90, decided to get married again. What worried his relatives was the fact that the bride Nasrudin selected was a young, healthy, 22-year old. One of Nasrudin's sons button-holed him and pleaded.

"Look, Dad, you must give this more thought. It's very serious. In fact, a thing like this could prove fatal!"

"So what?" answered Nasrudin.

"IF SHE DIES, I WILL MARRY AGAIN."

"Pop," said Mulla Nasrudin's youngest son, "can you remember the first girl you ever kissed?"

The old Mulla gave a hollow laugh. "SON," he remarked drily, "I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER THE LAST ONE."

222

Mulla Nasrudin, on  
his death-bed, opened his eyes and  
asked the attending priest suddenly:  
"HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHERE  
PEOPLE IN HELL TELL EACH OTHER  
TO GO?"

223

On his deathbed Mulla Nasrudin  
was heard saying: "wife is not fair  
to us men. When we are born, our  
mothers get the compliments and the  
flowers. When we are married, our  
brides get the presents and the  
publicity. AND WHEN WE DIE, OUR  
WIDOWS GET THE LIFE INSURANCE  
AND THE WINTERS IN KASHMIR."

Saint Peter was dividing the crop of newly arrived souls for earlier processing. "All right, you men, come up here. Just the men, please. We'll take care of the women later. How many of you are married men here with your wives? Good. All those of you who are boss in your family go in a line here. The henpecked ones in that other line there"

The line of the henpecked formed immediately and grew longer. The other line was non-existent until one lone person — Mulla Nasrudin — appeared in it.

Saint Peter paused to look at him. "Are you aware that this is the line for those men who are boss in their family?"

"Yes, sir," muttered Mulla Nasrudin.

"Are you sure you belong here?"

"I HAVE TO BE," said Nasrudin. "MY WIFE INSISTS."

"Hey!" cried Satan to the new arrival, Mulla Nasrudin. "You act as if you owned the place!"

"I do," said the Mulla. "MY WIFE GAVE IT TO ME BEFORE I DIED!"



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