

Story 1373 (1989 Tape 4)

Narrator: Memduh Derin, 59

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Nasreddin Hoca's Donkey as Judge of Karaman

One day Nasreddin Hoca went to the community gristmill to grind some grain. There was quite a bit of straw still mixed with the grain, and before he left home, his wife had said, "Hoca, don't forget to winnow the grain before you start grinding it." But the Hoca was absentminded, and he forgot to do this. Instead, he ground the wheat and the straw together.

It was not until he was on his way home that Hoca remembered his wife's instructions. Then he said to himself, "Well, if I forgot to winnow the grain, the least I can do now is to winnow the flour." Tossing the flour up in the air, he got rid of not only some of the chaff but also some of the flour. After he had finished doing this, he looked for his donkey, which had been downwind from the winnowing. The donkey was so covered with flour that the Hoca could not see it against the background of all the flour that had fallen to the ground. Thinking that he had temporarily lost his donkey, the Hoca began searching for the animal.

A neighbor came along and found the Hoca still searching. "Oh, Hoca, what are you looking for?" he asked.

"I lost my donkey a couple of hours ago, and I am still looking for it.

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Realizing what had happened, the neighbor decided to amuse himself at the Hoca's expense. He said, "Hoca, you will not find him here. I have just come from Karaman, and I saw your donkey there. Your donkey is very clever, and so as soon as he arrived at Karaman, he was made judge of that town."

The Hoca set out immediately for Karaman to recover his donkey. Along the way, he picked a large handful of very tender green grass. When he reached Karaman, he went directly to the court. There he opened the door of the judge's room just a little, thrust the handful of grass inside, and said, "Hır, hır, hır!"¹

Quite surprised by this, the judge began to laugh. The Hoca then said, "Oh, yes! Of course you can laugh when you are offered a good meal!"

¹This is the sound farmers in some parts of Turkey use for calling donkeys to them.