

Story 1288 (1989 Tape 13)

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Nasreddin Hoca as Bowman *Archer*

One day when Nasreddin Hoca was walking through his village, he came to a place where a number of people were having an archery contest. When the people saw their hoca¹ coming, they urged him to show his skill as a bowman. They handed him a bow and some arrows and said, "Here, Hoca, show us what kind of archer you are."

Nasreddin Hoca fitted an arrow to the bow and shot it toward the target, but it fell to the ground only about half-way to the target. People laughed, but Hoca remained calm and undisturbed.

but still fell short of the target. Nasreddin Hoca responded to the laughter of the crowd by saying, "I shot that arrow to show you how our muhtar² used to shoot.

¹A hoca is a preacher and the religious leader of a community. In pre-Republican times the hoca was also the community teacher. Separation of church and state in the Republic required that teachers be people of secular rather than of religious training.

²A muhtar is the administrative head of a village or of a mahalle (ward) in a town or city. He is an elected official.

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With his third shot, he bent the bow back as far as he could and let the arrow fly. By great good luck that third arrow struck the target. The Hoca then said, "And I shot third arrow to show what kind of a bowman Nasreddin Hoca is here and now."