

Story 1913 (Dictated)

Narrator: Ayşe Saldız, 11

Location: Karacabey, kaza town
in Bursa Province

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Second Childhood of the Hoca's¹ Turban

Nasreddin Hoca was very fond of children. When he saw children playing on the street, he would stand some time watching them. One day one of the children grabbed the Hoca's turban and ran away with it. When the Hoca chased that boy and was about to catch him, the child threw it to another child. When he chased the second boy, that culprit threw it to a third boy. Because Hoca was quite stout, he did not move very fast, and after awhile he realized that he would be unable to recover his turban. He therefore went home bareheaded.

When his wife saw him in that condition, she became alarmed. "What is the matter, Efendi?"² she asked. "Where

¹A hoca is the preacher and religious leader of a community. In pre-Republican times the hoca was also the community teacher, for the clergy were responsible for education. Separation of "church" and state in the Republic required that teachers be people of secular rather than religious training. Nasreddin Hoca was the most beloved of all Turkish comic folk characters.

²In early times the word efendi was a term of respect used in speaking to distinguished men. By the mid-20th century, however, its prestige had so eroded that it was used only while speaking to children and servants.

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is your turban?"³

"Oh, don't ask me that! It suddenly remembered its childhood and ran off to play with the other children in the street."

³Traditionally all Turkish men wore hats of some kind when appearing in public. Nowadays many young Turkish men, especially in the cities, ignore that custom. Older men, especially in rural areas, continue that practice. But the headpiece of a hoca is not merely a hat but also a symbol of his religious office. --See ATON Notes Vol. X for reference to an article on this subject