

Story 1399 (1989 Tape 6)

Narrator: Memduh Derin, 59,
graduate of technical
school

Location: Konya, Konya Province

Date: May 1989

Nasreddin Hoca and Tamerlane's Elephant

When Tamerlane arrived at Akşehir, he had a very large elephant among his animals. The elephant was allowed to roam about and forage wherever it wished to do so. The result was that many gardens and farm crops all around the city of Akşehir were badly damaged by this huge elephant.

The people of Nasreddin Hoca's village suffered more than most from the ravages of the elephant. They went to Nasreddin Hoca and said, "Aman,¹ Hoca Help us out of this difficulty. That elephant is destroying us! Let us go to Tamerlane and explain our difficult situation to him!"

"Very well," said the Hoca, and he started at once to lead the villagers toward Tamerlane's camp. But Tamerlane was a very fierce conqueror, and people everywhere were afraid of him. About halfway along their short trip to Tamerlane's camp, the villagers began to leave the column Hoca was leading and go back home. By the time that Nasreddin Hoca was actually admitted into the presence of Tamerlane, there was no longer even a

¹Aman is a common expression in Turkish. It may (negatively) mean alas or oh, dear! More positively, it may suggest, oh, my goodness or the equivalent of wow! or golly!

Story 1399

single villager with him. The Hoca was angry at the villagers for having deserted him in this way, and so he decided to take revenge upon them for their betrayal of him. He said to the great Tamerlane, "Your majesty, the people around Akşehir very pleased to have your elephant here, but they feel sorry for it because it is lonely. They request that you bring here a mate for that elephant."