

Narrator: Mehmet Bilgin, 15

Location: Abıclar (village near base of Nur Mountains in Hatay Province)

Date: February 15, 1962

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Nasreddin Hoca and the 999 Liras

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Liras - 999

One day Nasreddin Hoca prayed to Allah to send him 1000 liras in a bag, adding, "Oh, Allah, if it is one lira short of that amount, I shall not accept the bag." A neighbor of Hoca's was standing outside Hoca's house, listening through his chimney to what was going on inside. This neighbor was a great miser but he was a practical joker too, and he decided to play a trick on the Hoca.

*Ever dropping -- at chimney*

The neighbor went home and put 999 liras into a bag. Then he returned to Nasreddin Hoca's house, climbed up on the roof and lowered the bag down through the chimney. When the Hoca saw the bag, he opened his eyes in amazement, grabbed the bag, and began to count its contents. He counted 999 liras and opening up his hands toward heaven said, "The Almighty Allah who has given me 999 liras today will, I am sure, give me in the future the one that is missing." Then he put the 999 in his purse.

His neighbor, who was listening through the chimney, regretted what he had done. He came down quickly from the roof, knocked at the door, and explained to the Hoca that it was he who had lowered the money down as a joke. "We shall laugh together over this many times, Hoca, but now give me my money back and I shall go home."

Nasreddin Hoca would do nothing of the sort. He argued that Allah had sent him the money in response to his prayers. Upon hearing this, the neighbor threatened to sue the Hoca. He went, in fact, and complained to the kadi about Nasreddin Hoca. When the Hoca was summoned to appear before the kadi, he said to the plaintiff, "I cannot go to court, for I have no suitable

*Court -- of law*

clothes for the occasion." The neighbor had never been known to give anything to anyone, but now he offered to lend the Hoca a suit of clothes and a new turban so that he could appear in court to answer the charges against him.

Nasreddin Hoca appeared in court, and when asked by the kadı why he had not returned his neighbor's money, he said, "Efendim, this man is lying to you, and I think I can prove it. Before long he will claim that the turban I am wearing is his, too,"

Astonished at the Hoca's unexpected maneuver, the neighbor exclaimed, "Why, of course it is mine. I loaned him that turban as well as the very suit that he is wearing now."

Without showing any excitement but quite unperturbed, Nasreddin Hoca commented quietly to the judge, "You see what I mean, Efendim. He now claims that the clothes I am wearing are his. No wonder that he claims the money is his, too." He then turned to his neighbor and said sternly to him, "Don't you from now on ever dare to interfere again in my affairs with Allah."

The kadı acquitted Nasreddin Hoca on this evidence