

Story #174 (Tape #3, Summer 1970) Narrator: Ali Şengül, c. 35, night watchman at Forestry Compound; family from Pazar Köy, in Mengen area, 20 km. or so from Gerede but in Mengen kaza

Location: Kızılcahamam kaza  
Ankara vilayet

Date: Last week of July 1970

Nasreddin Hoca and the Larger Fish

One day Nasreddin Hoca was in the market. While walking about there, he felt like eating some fish. He walked to the fish seller to buy fish, but just then he saw that his neighbor was also buying fish. He thought that since he was buying fish, there was no point in his wasting his money on it. He thought, "I can go to my neighbor's house and eat fish there," and so he turned back and went home and said nothing to his neighbor as he bought fish.

When his neighbor prepared the fish for frying, Nasreddin Hoca dropped in on him. Before he entered the house, however, the neighbor had removed the big fish and placed them in the cupboard when they had seen him coming. When he entered the house, they said, "Please come in and sit down to eat."

When Hoca sat down to eat, he picked up one of the small fish, put his mouth to its ear, and then whispered something into the fish's ear. When his host asked him, "What are you doing, Hoca?" he said, "I asked the fish who swallowed His Reverence Jonah. The fish replied, 'We do not know, but there are larger fish than we in the cupboard. Go and ask them, and they may know.'"

The host brought out the larger fish from the cupboard, and Hoca talked to them in the same manner as before, but they did not know,

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either. The Hoca explained to the host that there were still larger fish than they somewhere, and perhaps they would know.