

Story #650

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Nasreddin Hoca and Tamerlane Go Hunting

During the conquests of Timurlenk¹, (he had a dislike for hocas and the uneducated and would systematically get rid of them wherever he went) as his army approached Akşehir, the people chose Nasreddin Hoca to send as a delegation of good will to ensure the safety of their province. Nasreddin Hoca's robe was torn, so the people provided a borrowed gown for him. Nasreddin Hoca got on his donkey and proceeded to the camp site where Timurlenk had settled. The men of the camp informed Timurlenk of the Hoca's arrival, and he asked them to bring him to his presence.

Timurlenk asked the hoca why he had come, and the hoca told him he had come in the name of the Akşehir people to welcome him in their region. Timurlenk asked the hoca if the people of Akşehir found him to be their best representative, and the hoca replied in the affirmative. Timurlenk then said, "Not bad, not bad at all. What is your name?"

When the hoca replied Nasreddin, Timurlenk must have previously heard of him, for he asked him to be seated with him. They spoke of diverse matters, and the hoca even told Timurlenk that his robe was

¹Better known in the west as Tamerlane, this Central Asian despot defeated the Ottomans just north of Ankara in 1402, by which time he controlled much of Anatolia.

borrowed and that it was not fit to wear in his presence. After a while the hoca left Timurlenk and went back to Akşehir to tell the people that all had gone well.

The next day Timurlenk moved his forces closer to Akşehir, and camped at the outskirts. He called for the hoca to come and see him. They had a nice long chat. One day, Timurlenk was planning to go hunting on the big mountain near Akşehir. He sent word to the hoca and asked him if he would care to join him. The hoca replied that he would. Timurlenk had the puniest horse in his camp prepared for the hoca, and they all went hunting.

All of a sudden there was a great ^{rain storm} downpour, as it happens nowadays. The hoca did not own a change of clothes, and so he quickly stripped off his clothes and tucked them under his horse's saddle. He found a trail around the mountain and reached his house in Akşehir. The rain had stopped by then, and he therefore slipped his clothes back on. Timurlenk sent one of his men to see if the hoca had returned safely. He was told that the hoca had not even gotten wet. He asked to see the hoca, and when the hoca came to him, Timurlenk asked what had happened. The hoca told him that when the downpour started, the horse that he had given him, being far superior to that of the Prophet Ali, had sped like lightning and had gotten him home safely. Timurlenk was totally baffled to hear this story.

Ali-- Caliph

Next week, when he was about to go hunting, again, Timurlenk asked his men to prepare that particular horse for him. Once again

there was a storm while they were out on the mountain. This time the hoca had been given a decent horse, and he was able to return safely and quickly without getting very wet. But Timurlenk had a very hard time with the horse. He prodded and goaded the beast to go faster, but to no avail, and he returned to camp thoroughly soaked and disgusted. He asked his men to go fetch the hoca. He said that the hoca had mocked him and that he would have him executed.

They brought the hoca to his presence. Timurlenk asked the hoca how he had dared make fun of a conqueror like himself, but the hoca promptly replied, "I did not make fun of you. You just are not as quickwitted as I am--that's all. You should have known that horse was slow and you should have done as I did. You should have taken all your clothes off tucked them under the saddle and ridden through the forest. Then you should have put your clothes back on before you got to the village center." Timurlenk acknowledged the hoca's superior wisdom, and they resumed their friendship.