

Story #653 (1976, Tape #17)

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The Hoca Teaches Divination (İlmî gifir)

Ahmet Uysal: "Is it true that there used to be a discipline in the old days called gifir, İlmî gifir?"

Narrator: "Yes, İlmî gifir. This was practiced by the dervishes and the astrologers. They gave news or information from the other world, from beyond this life. Even though this is no longer in practice, it was regarded as a science or discipline at one time, and it was widely practiced. It would be nice if it were still practiced. One could find out if the market price for meat and yoğurt would remain stable, or if the woman one married would remain on the track. Anyway, back to our subject." news -- from "other world" -- never say

There was a hoca who taught this science to a class of students. At the termination of his teaching, when it was time to examine the students' knowledge, one student entered the room after the class had assembled for the test. Before the examination had started, the hoca had taken a ring into his palm. So, he asked this student, "Is there something in my fist or is there not?"

There were books on the science, and the student, after leafing through one of those books, replied, "It is full, sir. There is an object in your palm."

So, the hoca asked his second question, "Well, what is the object in my fist then?"

Once again the student opened the book, did some calculations, and replied, "It is made of metal, sir."

The hoca praised the student for giving the correct answer. Then he asked what the shape of the object was like. The student again bent over calculations, and when he was confident, replied, "Sir, it is round and has a hole in it."

The hoca again praised the student, and asked him to name the object. The student said he did not need to study the matter further, nor did he need further calculations. He said, "The object is a millstone."

The hoca became exasperated at this reply, and exclaimed, "Good Lord, I have done a good job of teaching the science to this student, but you did not give him enough sense to know that a millstone could not fit into the palm of my hand!"