

Story 883 (1964 Tape 2)

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The Chemistry of a Hoca<sup>1</sup>

There was once an eccentric old hoca in Istanbul named Antakyalı<sup>2</sup> Ruştı. He knew very little about chemistry, but he had heard the names of substances referred to by chemists. He liked to mention oxygen, hydrogen, and CO<sup>2</sup> whenever he had an opportunity to do so

One day Antakyalı Ruştı climbed into the mimber<sup>3</sup> at the Saint Sophia mosque in Istanbul. He had been selected to preach to a large crowd of hocas who were gathered there.

At one point in his sermon he said to the congregation, "Hey, you who do not even know what hydrogen is or what oxygen is or what CO<sup>2</sup> is--you do not even know enough to write an application. How, then, can you possibly understand the more difficult subject of being a hoca?" He was really a very unusual character.

<sup>1</sup> A hoca is a Moslem priest.

<sup>2</sup> Antakyalı preceding a name indicates that the person is a native of the city of Antakya (Antioch) in extreme southern Turkey, Hatay Province.

<sup>3</sup> The mimber (also minber) is the pulpit of a mosque. It is ascended by way of a very steep (almost ladderlike) stairway