

Story 1019 (1984 Tape 2) Narrator: Hasan Tekiř, 35,  
clerk in state office;  
formerly imam, prayer  
leader

Location: Seydiler village, kaza  
merkezi of Afyon,  
Afyon Province

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A Koranic Cure for Illness<sup>1</sup>

In one of the villages where I served as prayer leader  
I had an eighty-five-year-old friend who had a slightly  
crooked nose. It looked as if it had once been broken  
One day as we were sitting together eating, I asked him,  
"Uncle Kadir, why is your nose crooked? Did you break it  
at some earlier time?"

"I used to be a wrestler, and I broke it during a  
wrestling match."

Because I was only eighteen at the time and still  
quite ignorant, I looked at this old man with a beard and  
said, "There is nothing left in you of your wrestling days  
now!"

He was offended by this, and so he grabbed my arm and  
shook it in a rough and challenging way. Before I quite  
knew what had happened, we had arisen and started wres-  
tling. Just as I was about to throw him to the ground, he

<sup>1</sup>This tale was probably recalled to the mind of the  
narrator by the immediately preceding tale about Doctor  
Lokman.

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braced his back against a wall and prevented me from doing so. But he grew furious about this, and he stripped off all of his clothes except his trousers and quickly began wrestling again. After a few minutes he had the advantage over me and was going to throw me to the ground. But just at that moment, my head struck against a mirror hanging on the wall, knocking it off and smashing it. I called out, "Uncle Kadir, we have broken the mirror!"

Hearing this, he came to his senses and said, ("Hoca,<sup>2</sup> let us not behave this way!" But he really had been a wrestler, and he was still a wrestler. I certainly found that out quickly!

Some time after this, Uncle Kadir grew ill. The old man had a son who was a lawyer, and this son took his father to various medical doctors in an effort to have his illness cured. One day I went to visit Uncle Kadir, and he said to me, "Hasan, my son is torturing me."

"How is that?" I asked him.

"Well, he does not really understand my condition, and so he keeps dragging me around from one doctor to another. He gives me no peace at all. Whenever he has time,

<sup>2</sup>The narrator was an imam, a prayer leader. He was not really a hoca, who is a preacher and, in pre-Republican times, a teacher. Hoca is occasionally, as here, used more freely to refer to any religious leader.

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he puts me in a taxi, and then we go to see still another doctor. Let us find some remedy for my pain."

"Uncle Kadir, your remedy is to read a great deal of the Koran and to pray frequently."

"Tell me which verse in the Koran to read most frequently.

I answered, "Read the Innafettahnake<sup>3</sup> most frequently.

After about six months I visited him again, and I was pleased to find him completely recovered. "I got entirely rid of that illness," he said

Three days after I had left him, I was later told, he arose and went to morning prayer service. He walked home and read the Koran for a while. Then, as he started to walk out again, his soul was seized and he died at once.

Ahmet Uysal: Why did he stop wrestling when the mirror was broken? Was that a sign of bad luck?

Narrator: No, that is not a sign of bad luck. He came to himself and realized how foolish it was for an old man to be wrestling with a young person, and so he said, "Hoca, let us not behave this way."\_7

<sup>3</sup>This is an attempt by the translator to establish a phonetic equivalent in Turkish for the Arabic term used here. What verse is this?