

Story 1286 (1989 Tape 13)

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Sivas Province

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Nasreddin Hoca Judges a Legal Case

During one period of his life Nasreddin Hoca served as a kadı.<sup>1</sup> One day during his term as kadı, the Hoca made a clever judgment.

Two men came before the Hoca to settle a quarrel they had. One was a restaurant owner, and he said, "Kadı, I have a complaint against this man."

"Why? What did he do?" asked Nasreddin Hoca.

"While I was broiling kebab, this fellow came up with some bread in his hand. He held the bread in the steam coming off the kebab, and then he ate that bread, smacking his lips as he did so. I asked for a fee for his use of that steam, but he refused to pay me anything.

"Let me take your purse for a moment," said Nasreddin Hoca to the defendant in the case. When the purse was handed to the kadı, he shook it hard close to the ear of the restaurant owner and asked, "What do you hear?"

"I hear the clinking sound of coins.

<sup>1</sup>Before the founding of the Turkish republic, the kadı was a judge of canon law. In folktales kadıs were often easily corrupted by bribes, and there are numerous anecdotes and tales about immoral and/or corrupt judges of this kind. Nasreddin

out of law?

Out of Court

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"Very well, then. You have received your fee."

"But you didn't give me anything!" the shopowner objected.

"What do you want? The person who sells steam off food deserves to be paid only the sound that comes off money."

Hoca was a kadı for only a small part of his life, and he was clearly an atypical kadı.