

Story 1527 (1992 Tape 1

Narrator: Mustafa Ayetkin, 30

Location: Derinkuyu kaza,  
Nevşehir Province

Date:

Nasreddin Hoca<sup>1</sup> as Moneychanger

One day Nasreddin Hoca was passing some time at a coffee-house. After he had been sitting there for a while, he was approached by a stranger who asked him to change some of his money into smaller denominations. The Hoca looked around at the other guests at the coffeehouse, for he was fearful that they might discover that he didn't have any money at all in his pocket. He picked up the stranger's money and examined it. He turned it over in his hand and stared at it for a few minutes longer. Then he said to the stranger, "This money is already in smaller denominations than anything I have in my pocket.

But the stranger now wished to force the Hoca to make some exchange. He said, "That is all right. Take what you want of my money and give me at least one coin in exchange."

Nasreddin Hoca did not know what to do to get rid of this bothersome stranger, and so he examined the man's money again

<sup>1</sup>A hoca is a preacher and the religious leader of a community. In pre-Republican times the hoca was also the community teacher. Separation of church and state in the Republic required that teachers be people of secular rather than of religious training. Nasreddin Hoca is Turkey's most popular comic folk character.

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Then he said again, "Son, this money is worth much less than the money in my pocket."

The stranger grew even more stubborn, for he was determined to compel Nasreddin Hoca to exchange some of his money. He said, "Oh, Hoca, I do not care how much less valuable than my money is the money you give me. Just change my money for yours."

Not wishing to be defeated in this matter, Nasreddin Hoca used his shrewdness to save himself. He said, "Son, since your money has such little value, you would owe me something even if I took all of your money in exchange for one piece of mine"