

Story 1564 (1992 Tape 2)

Narrator: Mustafa Aytakin, 30

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of Nevşehir Province

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Nasreddin Hoca¹ and Two Drunks

One morning Nasreddin Hoca left his home very early to go to the mosque. It was so early that the moon was still shining brightly in the sky. As he walked along, he came to a place where two drunken men were fighting in the street. One of them said, "That is the moon that is shining up there!"

The other shouted back, "No, no, it is not the moon! It is the sun!"

When they saw Nasreddin Hoca coming along, they said, "All right Here comes a hoca. He will be able to decide which one of us is right!" They said to Nasreddin Hoca, "Oh, hoca, tell us what it is up there in the sky? Is it the moon or the sun?"

Nasreddin Hoca thought for a moment about this situation. "If I say that it is the moon, the drunk who thinks it is the sun will fight me. On the other hand, if I say that it is the sun, then the drunk who thinks it is the moon will fight with

¹A 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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me." He therefore said to the drunks, "I am sorry, friends, but I am a stranger in this part of the country, and I do not know anything about what happens here."

When the drunken men heard this statement, they said, "Oh-h-h! Very well then, hoca. We shall put our question to one of the local residents here."

Nasreddin Hoca then proceeded on to the mosque