

Story 2150 (1999 Tape 5)

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Nasreddin Hoca¹ and the Importance of
İnşallah²

One day while Nasreddin Hoca was sitting with his wife, he said, "If it rains tomorrow, I shall go to the forest and chop wood. If it does not rain, I shall plow our field."

His wife answered, "Hoca, you should say 'İnşallah' whenever you make such statements."

The Hoca responded, "Why should it be necessary to say that in this case? It will either rain or it will not rain tomorrow. If it rains, I shall go to the forest, but if it does not rain, I shall go to our field."

"May it be as you say, Hoca."

It was raining on the following morning. Nasreddin Hoca took his axe and started out for the forest to chop

¹A hoca is the preacher and religious leader of a Muslim community. In pre-Republican times, the hoca was also a teacher, for education was then the responsibility of the clergy. Nasreddin Hoca has long been the best-loved Turkish comic folk character.

²İnşallah means if Allah is willing. Saying it is a safeguard against unbecoming human pride or hubris. It is widely used to qualify statements about people's intentions.

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wood. As he went along, he encountered some people who were trying to locate a certain village. They asked the Hoca for directions to reach that village. The Hoca said, "You should go in such and such a direction and watch for so and so road markings along the way."

Feeling that Nasreddin Hoca was not taking them very seriously, those people were annoyed and asked, "Why don't you pay better attention to what we are asking you?" They were so displeased that they beat the Hoca soundly and then forced him to lead them to the village they sought. It was still raining when he left them at their destination.

He was late getting home that evening and, beaten and soaked, he was very uncomfortable. He knocked on his front door--tak, tak, tak.

"Who is it?" called his wife.

"Wife, it is I, İnşallah."