

Story 2210 (2001 Dictated)

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Location: Trabzon, capital  
of Trabzon Province

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Which Is the More Reliable?

One day Nasreddin Hoca<sup>1</sup> remained in bed much longer than usual. The sun was already high in the sky and shining brightly. He was finally awakened by a knocking on his front

When the Hoca opened the door, he found outside it a neighbor named Bey Bingöl.<sup>2</sup> Nasreddin Hoca said, "Hello, Bey Bingöl! What do you want?"

"I am supposed to go to the marketplace today, but because my donkey is ill, I have no transportation. I have come to borrow your donkey for a while.

This request annoyed Nasreddin Hoca. He did not wish to lend that neighbor his donkey, and so he invented a reason for refusing his request. He said, "My donkey is

<sup>1</sup>A hoca is the preacher and religious leader of a community. In the pre-Republican era the hoca was also the community's teacher, for education was then the responsibility of the clergy. Separation of "church" and state in the Republic required that teachers be given secular rather than religious training. Hoca belonged to the earlier period. For centuries he has been Turkey's most beloved comic folk character.

<sup>2</sup>In modern Turkish Bey is equivalent to Mr. Because

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not here today. It was taken by our community shepherd to graze in the village pasture."

The Hoca and his neighbor continued talking for a while. After a few minutes they heard coming from the Hoca's stable the loud braying of a donkey. Pointing toward the stable, Bey Bingöl said, "I can hear your donkey braying in your stable. You have told me a lie about it!"

Nasreddin Hoca responded with a clever retort. He asked, "Do you believe me or do you believe a donkey?"

it is the name of a Turkish province, Bingöl is an unusual surname.