

Story #135 (Tape #42, 1961-62)

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Hell and the Hopeless Yürük

A Yürük went into town one day to sell some of his cheese and other merchandise. After accomplishing this, he walked around the town to do some sight-seeing. At one point he came upon many people going into the entrance of a building, and he joined them in order to see where they were going. Inside the building he heard a sermon being preached and he realized that he must be in a mosque. He squatted quietly and listened to the hoca preach about heaven and hell. Heaven was a delightful place, but to get there one had to walk across a bridge, the Bridge of Sirat, and this bridge was thinner than a hair and sharper than a sword. Below the bridge lay hell, which flames leaped up.

The Yürük waved at the hoca and was given permission to speak, "Hoca, efendi, is there a railing on both sides of that bridge?"

The hoca was at first puzzled by the question, but then, to make his listeners more frightened and more devout, he said, there is no railing at all."

When the Yürük heard this, he moved toward the door and picked up his shoes, which he had stacked one on top the other, and said, "Hoca, efendi, you may consider this poor soul already in that fire!"