

Story #168 (Tape #2, Summer 1970) Narrator: Ahmet Kalaycı (Süslü)

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Free "Kavurma" from a Live Ram

Once on a time a padişah gave Incili Çavuş a 25-kuruş piece, asking him to buy a ram and to make kavurma.* But then he said that he should also bring back the ram alive and bring back the money unspent.

Incili Çavuş took the 25-kuruş piece in hand. He wandered and wandered and wandered around, but could find no one more perceptive [about this] than himself. One evening he met a farmer who was returning

He greeted the farmer, "Good luck to you, uncle."

He said, "Thank you."

Incili Çavuş said, "Why do we not finish this road [i.e., walking it] by taking turns riding each other's back?"

When the farmer heard this proposal, he just stood and stared at Incili Çavuş. There was a steep road ahead of them. "Uncle," said Incili Çavuş, "let us climb up that steep road double [i.e., one on top of the other]. It will be difficult to go up that hill singly."

The poor man again stared at him with a sour face. They went up that as Incili Çavuş suggested and went to the village where the farmer lived. Incili Çavuş asked, "Do they accept guests in this village?"

"There is the village oda," he answered in a harsh voice.

Incili Çavuş went to the village oda while the farmer went to his own house. He had a grown-up daughter who asked her father, "Father, you

*This is a method of preserving meat. The meat is roasted with spice and its own grease is used to preserve it. It is packed in a can or crock.

look very sour. What is the matter?"

"Daughter, I met a fellow whom I cannot call a fool, for that would not be accurate, but he was a very strange fellow. That was what upset me."

was the matter with him?"

"Well, that fellow said, 'Good journey,' and then suggested that we should walk the road by riding on each other's back. Well, I took it pleasantly. We started going up the hill. There, he said, 'We cannot possibly go up the hill like this. Let us go up the hill double [homosexual implication?]', When I heard this, I was very angry. When we reached the village he asked whether guests were accepted in this village. In fact, I was going to have him here, but as I was upset, I just showed him the village oda."

What do you think his daughter said to this? She said, "Oh, father, he must have been a very great man. If you had brought him to our house, it would have been a good thing to do."

"How do you know he was a great man?"

"Well, what he meant by 'riding on each other's back' was that you should talk a little and he a little and thus the journey up the hill would be more pleasant. And when he said 'going uphill double,' he meant that you each should cut a stick and lean on it as you walked, but you failed to understand his meaning."

"You are very right, my dear. My head was not clear at the time, but now that you explain it, I understand."

"All right. Then go and bring the guest to our house right away."

The farmer walked to the oda and said, "Sir, let us go to my house."

Incili Çavuş said, "This is not your own idea. Tell me, who put it into your head?"

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"I have a child who gave me the idea."

They went to the house, and Incili Çavuş stayed there as a guest of the family. There Incili Çavuş explained [his problem] to the daughter of the farmer. "The padişah gave me a 25-kuruş piece.** He ordered that I should buy a ram with this money and make kavurma with the meat of the ram. But then he said that I should bring back the ram alive and the 25 kuruş unspent. Can you solve this problem?"

The girl said, "That's easy--in fact, the easiest thing in the world. Go to the marketplace and buy a woolly ram. Shear the wool off the ram, and with the wool I'll make a beautiful rug. We shall sell the rug and get 25 kuruş for it. If the ram has got large testicles, we shall remove them and make kavurma of the testicles. Then you will take the kavurma to the padişah, and with it the ram alive and the money unspent."

They did as she suggested. When the padişah heard about this girl, he said, "I need that woman. Let her be brought to the palace." It is possible that she eventually became the padişah's wife.

**Here, as at many points in this and other tales, Süslü Ahmet plays with rimes and near-rimes difficult to reproduce in English.

Ram to be alive [diri]

Money to come back [geri]