

Story #439 (Tape #2, 1972)

Narrator: Hasan Yurtseven

Location: Village of Üçhisar, kaza
of Ürgüp, Province of
Nevşehir

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The Mufti Learns Humility

Once a long while ago there was a mufti¹ who had read a great many books. Because of this, he was very proud and carried his nose high in the air. One day he decided to go to the sheik² of that area to ask the sheik to do him the favor of appointing him mufti of a certain village. But he was for some time unable to bring himself to the point of asking this favor. Finally he said, "I have read in books that each village should have a mufti. Can you show me a way and do me a favor?"

The sheik thought that the mufti would never gain enough common sense for such a job, but he said to him, "Very well, I shall do you a favor if you will go out and sell all of the liver that yonder liver-seller is carrying. Although the mufti was unhappy about having to do this, he was obliged to follow the instructions of the sheik.

Taking the basket of liver on his shoulder, the mufti went about the city shouting, "Liver! Liver! Liver!" After it had all been sold, he returned, looking very tired, and told the sheik that he had completed this work.

¹ The word mufti may be an exaggeration here. Villages do not ordinarily have a superior priest on the level of a mufti. The village priest is usually called either hoca or imam.

² Again, the word sheik may be too grandiose here. A sheik, in former times, was the leader of a religious community such as that of a tekke.

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In the meantime, the people of the town began going about saying that the mufti had gone mad. They made fun of him, but by this time the mufti did not care.

Finally, the sheik said to him: "You have risen to the expected level, and now you may have the favor you wished."³

³ This tale could profitably be translated again. There are some subtleties both of language and religious attitude that are not represented to best advantage in the present translation.