

Story #635 (1974, Tape #50)

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The Kadı Punished by His Own Questions

Once in the past there was a kadı and his secretary who traveled all over the land. One day they took to the road, and as they advanced they came across a shepherd and his herd. The kadı said to his aide, "We'll ask the shepherd a question about the faith, and we'll get a sheep out of him for our dinner."

So the kadı called out, "Hey, you shepherd. What is the morning prayer time?"

"The morning prayer is said around four o'clock. Are you asking me about the noon prayer, sir? The noon prayer is said around eleven o'clock, and our Holy Book is the Koran. Would you ask about the afternoon prayer, kadı, sir? The afternoon prayer is said at five. And would you ask about the night prayer sir? The night prayers are at eight or nine. They are quite hard to recite. The yatsı¹ prayer is thirteen.² Would you ask about the

¹Yatsı is the last prayer service of the day, usually held two hours after sunset.

²The numbers 13 and 20 apparently refer to the number of rekats at given prayer service. A rekat is one complete cycle of gestures, positions, and words used in a mosque prayer service.

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teravi prayer, sir? The teravi³ prayer is twenty. You have a yellow turban on your head, but are you demented? And do your ears not hear? Why are you asking such questions?"

The kadi siad, "Son, this is not the time for us to stop."

They continued on their way, and further on, once again came across a shepherd. They decided to put their questions to this shepherd too. "Shepherd," they asked, "when is the morning prayer?"

The shepherd had a cane with a knob in his hand. He said to the kadi, "The morning prayer is one, two, three, four. The noon prayer, ten, the afternoon prayer eight, the night prayer, thirteen.

The kadi ran off, for the shepherd started striking his cane on the nape of the kadi's neck, and saying, "And this is the number for the ."⁴

[Ahmet Uysal: "There is a forgotten segment in this tale. I am now adding this part."]

The kadi ran off, and the secretary asked, when he finally caught up with him, "Why did you not wait for me kadi efendi?"

³The teravi is a special prayer service held during Ramazan, the holy month of fasting.

⁴The name given to the service here is in Arabic. The shepherd is striking the kadi the number of times that there are rekats in each prayer service he mentions.

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And the kadi replied, "Damn you! The man fortunately forgot the teravi, or he might have beaten me to death!"

[Ahmet Uysal: "Because the teravi has a greater number of rekats. If he were to hit the cane twenty times. . . . Ha! Ha! Ha!]