

Story 762 (1970 Tape 13)

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Bursa, kaza merkezi,
Bursa Province

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Swearing on Behalf of the Kadi

Back in the days when judges were called kadis¹ there was a man who was known to swear a great deal. After enough people were disturbed by his blasphemy and coarse language, he was brought before a kadı to be tried. While the kadı was asking the swearer the usual questions--What is your name? How old are you? What is your father's name? What is your mother's name? and so on--another man burst noisily into the courtroom and shouted, "Kadı efendi,² Kadı efendi! Hear me for a moment!"

Looking with astonishment into the face of this man, the kadı said angrily, "What do you want? Speak!"

"Do you see this suit of clothes I am wearing?"

"Yes," said the kadı.

¹The kadı was a dispenser not only of secular law but also of religious or şeriat law before the founding of the Republic.

²Efendi, equivalent roughly to Sir, was once a term of respect that might be applied to any prominent person. Now, in the late twentieth century, it is usually applied only to servants or children. Bey is now the more prestigious term used for the more distinguished person.

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"Well, this suit was made for me by a tailor, and that tailor used a pair of scissors made by a certain blacksmith."

"Naturally."

"The blacksmith who made those scissors died today."

"Peace be unto him," said the kadı.

"That blacksmith left a great amount of property, kadı efendi, and I have come to ask you whether or not I am entitled to any of that property."

At that point the man being tried for swearing jumped forward and said, "Kadı efendi, this is the kind of person I swear at, saying I hope to screw his wife. I don't swear just at anyone.

"Well, then, I congratulate you," said the kadı, "and I hope that you will swear one at this fellow on my behalf too!"

The case against the swearer was dismissed.