

Story 821 (1974 Tape 18)

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Location: Tercan, kaza town of
Erzincan Province

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Osman Kalkan of Tercan

Nobody knew all of the stories told about Osman Efendi.¹ He was a native of this town when he died at around the age of sixty or sixty-five. He was famous for his ready answers for every situation and for his jokes. He read the Koran beautifully. He had a fantastic voice, and he used it to best advantage when singing lyrical poems. May God bless him!

The government gave the textile franchise in this area to a group of businessmen from Sivas. They were allowed to buy all the textile shops owned there by the Sümerbank.² One does not have to go to Sivas in order to buy from these shops. There are people who, for a small fee, are willing to take orders for merchandise from these shops, collecting the

¹ Efendi was once a prestigious and respectful honorific when added to a man's name. It has, for some reason, been devalued over the years until now it is applied primarily to children and servants.

² Several of the national banks in Turkey (and all banks are national banks) work with given industries: the Railroad Bank, the Sugar Bank, etc. The Sümerbank has been associated with textiles, especially with Turkish carpets.

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money for them ahead of time. They then go to Sivas by train, buy the items ordered, bring them back, and distribute them to the people who ordered them.

One day it was the turn of Osman Efendi to go to Sivas with some friends to buy and bring back many things that people in this town had ordered. They went there and picked out all of the merchandise wanted, but there was some time left before the return train to Tercan. During that time, Osman Efendi drank quite a bit and forgot all about buying a ticket for the return trip.

When they boarded the train to go home, all his friends had tickets, but Osman Efendi did not. When the conductor³ started coming through the cars to check everyone's ticket, Osman Efendi immediately arose and started saying his prayers. As a result of that, the conductor could not ask him anything.⁴ Throughout the whole trip he could never approach Osman Efendi because he continued saying prayers whenever the conductor was near.

When they reached the Erzincan border, the train crew changed, and there was a new conductor. The conductor who

³ In Turkish the conductor is called the control man.

⁴ It is highly improper to interrupt anyone at his/her prayers.

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was leaving said to this new one, "I could never check ticket of that fellow over there, because every time I went near him, he was praying. Will you please do that for me?"

Just before you reach Tercan coming from Sivas, you pass through the village of Kargin. When the train came to Kargin, the new conductor went and stood right alongside of Osman Efendi until he had finished his prayers. Then, before he could start praying again, he asked Osman Efendi for his ticket.

Osman Efendi reached down into his bag and took out a cake he had there. Handing this cake to the conductor, he said, "Conductor, although I prayed for all of your family I still could not get away from you. I'm going to get at Tercan and shall not go any farther."

The conductor laughed and let him go.