

Story 857 (1964 Tape 8)

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The <sup>1</sup>Hoca Eats the Dessert

One evening a hoca and a <sup>2</sup>Bektaşî were invited to dinner at a friend's home. After the main part of the meal was finished, the <sup>1</sup>host brought the dessert and placed it in the middle of the table.

Looking closely at the dessert, the hoca said to his host and the Bektaşî, "The dessert is so small that if we divide it into equal portions, none of us will have more than a taste. I have a suggestion. Let's not eat it tonight but save it until tomorrow. Then the one who has had the most interesting <sup>1</sup>dream tonight will be given the whole dish to eat."

*Thyphus*

other two agreed to this suggestion, and the dessert was placed on a shelf. The three men talked together for some time after dinner, and then they retired for the night. In the middle of the night, however, the hoca awakened and felt somewhat hungry. He went to the shelf in the dining

<sup>1</sup> The hoca is a Moslem priest.

<sup>2</sup> A Bektaşî is a member of a dervish order of the same name. Once politically powerful, this religious order was banned, along with other dervish orders, during the early days of the Republic and its Kemalist Reforms of the 1920's.

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room, found the dessert, and ate the whole dishful himself.

When they arose in the morning, the host said, "Let us now tell our dreams to see who will get the dessert from last night's dinner. Hoca, you tell your dream first."

said the hoca, "I'd rather tell mine last. You and the Bektaşi tell your dreams first

Bektaşi then said, "I dreamed last night that I was somehow down under the surface of the earth. I kept going down and down and down into the underworld until at last I reached the seventh level below the surface." Then the Bektaşi told them all about what he had seen there

host then told his dream. "Last night I dreamed that I could fly. I flew higher and higher into the air until I had reached the seventh level of heaven." He then proceeded to tell his friends what he had felt and what he had seen up there

It was then the hoca's turn to tell his dream. He said, "Well, last night in my dream I saw one of you seven levels below the earth and the other seven levels above the earth. You were both so very far away from this world that I supposed neither of you would ever return. I therefore ate the dessert."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> There is an in-group dimension of humor in this tale that must be explained to non-Turkish audiences. Fairly or unfairly, hocas have a reputation of being gluttonous. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the hoca manipulates the situation to get all of the dessert for himself.