

Story 858 (1964 Tape 8)

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Location: Erikli village, Samsun Province; but taped at Sinop Penitentiary

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Ezan and ^{NOT here} Mevlüt Messages

A small and poor village once hired a ^{shepherd} hoca¹ to serve both as imam² and muezzin³ for its mosque. Hocas were our schoolteachers in those days, and so this man had a third job, that of teaching the local children

There was a fairly educated woman living in that village, and she would often go to the school to observe the classes and listen to the hoca teach. As a result of these visits, the hoca and this woman became very good friends

One day the hoca had to go to the nearest town on business for the mosque. While he was there he bought a couple of things for the woman with whom he had become friendly. He bought her some leblebi⁴ and raisins. When he returned to his village, he wanted to present her with these

¹ A hoca is a Moslem priest

² The imam is the person who leads the five daily prayer services in the mosque.

³ The muezzin is the person who issues the call to prayer (called the ezan) from the minaret.

⁴ Leblebi are roasted chickpeas, a tasty snack food sometimes eaten with drinks. Leblebi are also sometimes eaten with raisins, just as nuts and raisins are sometimes eaten together elsewhere.

Story 858

gifts, but he thought it would not be appropriate to deliver them to her personally. He therefore asked another woman in the village to deliver them to his lady friend. But second woman simply kept the gifts for herself and never delivered them to the hoca's paramour *four, seven*

The home of this paramour was right across the street from the mosque. The next day when the hoca climbed the minaret to chant the ezan, he could see the woman across the way very clearly. Keeping the tune and rhythm of the ezan chant, the hoca inserted some words of his own. He

"I sent you leblebi and raisins

Oh, haven't these yet come to you?"⁵

Coming out on her balcony, the woman danced about, snapping her fingers, and singing back,

The leblebi have not arrived;

The raisins have not arrived;

My eyes have not yet seen them.⁶

That same evening the woman was invited to read Mevlüt⁷

⁵ The Turkish rhymes.

⁶ The last two lines of the Turkish rhyme: Gelmedi leblebi / Gelmedi üzüm / Gelmedi görzüm.

⁷ Mevlüt is a cantata celebrating the birth and life of Mohammed. It is often used as a requiem both at the time of death and on anniversaries of the death date. It was written in 1409 by Süleyman Çelebi at Bursa when that city was the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

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4

4

Story 858

among a group of women at one of their homes. She read Mevlüt very well and was known for this. While she was away from home the hoca went to visit her. He knocked on her door, there was no response. He asked, "Do you know where the of this house is?"

"She has gone to read Mevlüt at such-and-such a house," the neighbor said

The hoca went to that house and stood outside a window watching her perform the Mevlüt reading. He then tapped lightly on the window, tak, tak, tak

The woman heard the sound and realized that it was the hoca there. She inserted a warning into her reading:

"Whether you are fox or whether you are marten,
Go away tonight and come back tomorrow