

Story 876 (1964 Tape 2)

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Location: Görele, kaza town in  
Giresun Province

Date: August 1964

"As a Christian I Saved Myself; As a Moslem I Saved You"

In the old days, eating during the fasting hours of Ramazan<sup>1</sup> was a very serious offense--punishable even by death in some instances. If a person was caught eating during fasting hours, he could be hanged immediately, right on the scene. There were once a couple of young men, about twenty years of age, who were caught violating the fast.<sup>2</sup> They were taken before a kadı,<sup>3</sup> to whom their captors said, "Your Honor, we caught these two violating the fast."

The kadı asked the first of these young men, "What is your name?"

"Mehmet."

"Hang him!" said the kadı to his aides. "And what is your name?" he said to the second young man

"Karakin."

"Ah, you are a Christian, and so it is all right for you

<sup>1</sup> The holy month of fasting. During the fasting hours of the day, nothing must pass the lips of a Moslem.

<sup>2</sup> The narrator uses here the Turkish expression orucu yemek, meaning, literally, to eat the fast.

<sup>3</sup> A kadı was the pre-Republican judge of Şeriat (religious) law.

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to eat. Hang Mehmet and let Karakin go free," the kadı said

Now this Karakin was a very clever fellow. He said, "O Kadı, I have been very favorably impressed by your justice. If I were to become a Moslem, would you free this friend of mine?" (In earlier times if an infidel captive accepted the Faith, he would usually be released.)

"Of course I would," said the kadı.

The Christian fellow, who had already been acquitted himself, went through the conversion ceremony and was given a good Moslem name, like Ahmet. After this was finished, he and Mehmet were both released.

As the two young men walked away, the one newly named Ahmet said, "Well, this has been a strange episode. As a Christian, I saved myself. Then, as a Moslem, I saved you!"