

Story 1357 (1988 Tape 9)

Narrator: Osman Kardeş, c. 60

Location: Akçaabat, kaza town of
Trabzon Province

Date: October 1988

Hasan Saka¹ Weighs in Rather Than Out

When Hasan Saka was the representative from this district in the Turkish Parliament, there were often complaints about his mismanagement of his official duties. After these complaints had continued over a long period of time, Kemal Atal, the head of the Democrat Party in this area, sent a telegram to him in Ankara. The telegram contained just one word: "Çekil!"²

Within a couple of hours Kemal Atal received a telegram back from Hasan Saka. It read, "I weighed myself. I weigh sixty-nine kilos³ and 750 grams. Thank you for your concern about me."

¹Despite his lengthy political career, Hasan Saka is known in the folk tradition as an awkward, bumbling, semi-literate person. Whether or not he was a Laz, he suffered the stigma of the Laz (and by extension Black Sea coast) stereotype of stupidity.

²The verb çekilmek means withdraw or resign. The imperative form, çekil, sounds very much like çeki, a word that refers to a unit of weight. If çeki was made into a verb, its imperative could understandably be confused with çekil. Hasan Saka quite obviously interpreted the one-word wire to his own advantage.

³A kilo or kilogram is roughly equivalent to 2.25 pounds