

Story 1402 (1989 Tape 6)

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Turkish Hospitality Tested Too Severely

This is a true story. It happened in the Province of Denizli at the town of Çal. There was a man there who was the director of the local office of the national Tax and Finance Bureau. Because Çal was not a very large town at that time, his job paid only a minimum salary. He did not complain about this, but there was another problem that disturbed him, for it took from him some of his already small salary.

Inspectors of various kinds from the national government used to visit Çal every year. At that time there were no hotels or motels or any restaurants in Çal, and so the burden of providing lodging and meals for these inspectors fell upon the only permanent official of the central government in Çal, the director of the national Tax and Finance Bureau. It made life very difficult for him, but he had no choice, for Turkish hospitality required that he provide for these inspectors while they were in Çal.

One day he received notice of the arrival of still another inspector at Çal. This time he lost his patience completely and decided to speak out about his distress. He wrote

Story 1402

Of inspectors there is never any end!

I pray a curse may fall on all of them!¹

--Ahmet Cemal
Town of Çal

Then he wrote a formal letter of resignation, and he handed both papers to his office boy. He said, "Son, when the inspector comes here to this office, hand him these papers. I have had all the inspectors I can stand!" He then went home

When the inspector arrived at the Tax and Finance Office, he could not find anybody at first. Then the office boy appeared and handed him the two papers Ahmet Cemal had written.

The inspector read the two papers carefully, but he was not offended by what they contained. Instead, he was amused by Ahmet Cemal's wit. He said to the office boy, "Son, go and bring your master here. I did not come here on a visit of inspection. I came to stay only long enough to give him my greetings." He continued to feel good will toward Ahmet Cemal, for when the inspector returned to the capital, he persuaded the authorities there to give Ahmet Cemal a promotion

¹ In Turkish this is a well-rimed couplet.