

Story 1449 (1992 Tape 5)

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A Laz View of Dance Tempo

One of the most popular folk dances of İzmir Province is called the Efe dance.¹ Compared with the very rapid dances performed along the Black Sea coast, this Efe dance is very slow. Because it is performed so slowly, Laz people often consider the Efe dance to be a very simple and easy one.

Well, anyway, one day a Laz named Cemal² left his home in Rize to go and visit some friends of his who lived in İzmir. During his visit there his friends took him to a folk-dance festival where the Efe dance was performed. After this dance had been going on for a while, his friends said to Cemal, "Cemal, do you notice how beautifully those dancers are performing?"

Cemal answered, "With so much thinking between one step and the next step, even my grandfather could perform as well as they are doing!"

¹This is a sword and shield dance. Efes were swashbuckling village boys who became noble outlaws in western Turkey during pre-Republican times. They robbed the rich to give to the poor, and as a result were often in conflict with both local and imperial forces. As late as World War I and the War of Independence (in the 1920s), they reportedly protected citizens in western Turkey from enemy action.

²The man's name is Kemal, but Laz people often pronounce the k sound like the English j sound. The English j sound in Turkish is made with the letter c. (Before they actually hear the words spoken, Turkish readers pronounce Coca-Cola as Joja-Jola, and if we were giving an English phonetic equivalent of Cemal, we would call it Jemal.)