

Story 1466 (1989 Tape 8)

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38

Location: Hıyarlık village,
Kahta kaza,
Adiyaman Province

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The Kurd¹ and the Lost Word

My father lived in a village, but he married a woman who came from the city. One day my father had to go to the nearest city to purchase several things, and my mother asked him to

her some spices while he was there. Because my father was a Kurd, he did not know what spices were. He asked my mother to explain to him what baharat² was, but he still did not know what she meant. He finally asked her, "In what kind of a store do you buy baharat?"

She answered, "You buy it at a grocery store."

As he traveled toward the city, he began repeating the word baharat so that he would not forget it. The trip to the city was a long one, however, and he couldn't repeat it steadily

the whole distance. As a result, he had forgotten the word by the time he reached the city. After he had done his other shopping, he went to a grocery store to buy what his wife

¹Member of the largest ethnic minority group in Turkey. Kurds live throughout the country, but the great majority of them are in the southeast.

²Baharat means spices in general, not any specific spice.

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wanted. But having forgotten the exact sound of the word baharat, he asked the grocer for halat.³

The grocer said, "My friend, I do not sell that kind of equipment. You will have to go to a blacksmith shop to buy that." This confused my father even more.

Another customer in the store said to my father, "Look here, brother. How are you going to use whatever it is that you are trying to buy?" My father explained that my mother was going to put it in something she was cooking. "In that case, brother," said the other customer, "you probably want baharat. You should say, 'Baharat.'"

Yes, you are right," said my father.

³In Turkish halat usually means rope or hawser, but the narrator said that in Kurdish it means plow.