

Story 1543 (1992 Tape 1

Narrator: Mustafa Aytekin, 30

Location: Derinkuyu, kaza town
on Nevşehir Province

Date: 1992

A Laz¹ Tricks Allah

One day two Lazes went out fishing on the Black Sea. They went out on the sea a great distance in the hope of catching larger fish than they would have caught closer to the shore. Unfortunately they caught only a few fish out there

After a while a sudden storm arose on the Black Sea. Within a few minutes the two Lazes were fighting to save their lives instead of trying to catch more fish. They opened their hands² and began to pray, saying, "O Allah, if you will save us from this storm, we shall give you a kilo of fish."

One of these Lazes was more frightened than the other. As the storm continued, he said, "O Allah, if you save us, we

¹The Laz people are a large ethnic minority living primarily in extreme northeastern Turkey along the Black Sea coast. While there are Lazes living throughout Turkey, the vast majority live in Rize, Trabzon, and Artvin provinces. Although their native language is a form of Mengrillian Caucasian, most adult Lazes speak Turkish readily, though they may have a number of dialectal pronunciations. Like the inhabitants of three or four villages elsewhere in Turkey, Lazes are often stereotyped as being stupid. Of course, they are not in fact any more stupid than anyone else; they are simply the butt of folk humor.

²Unlike Christians, who clasp their hands together in prayer, Moslems pray with their hands separated and their palms open wide toward heaven.

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shall give you fifty kilos of fish!"

When the second Laz heard his friend promise Allah so many fish, he said to him, "What are you talking about? don't even have fifty kilos of fish! Our catch today has amounted to only ten kilos."

The first Laz bent over his friend and said quietly in his ear, "Be quiet! Don't interfere! I am just tricking Allah into saving our lives!"