

Story 1876 (1995 Tape 2)

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Location: Ankara,  
Ankara Province

Date: January 1995

Laz<sup>1</sup> Lesson in Logic

Temel<sup>2</sup> had purchased a large and very expensive house. His next step was to equip it with all of the furniture and other things that such an elegant house should have. He had reserved one large room of his new home for a library. Up to this time, he had not owned any books, and so it was necessary for him to go to a bookstore to purchase some. In one bookstore he saw a set of eight large volumes with beautiful red bindings. He bought these very attractive volumes, took them home, and placed them on a shelf in his library.

After awhile it occurred to Temel that all he knew about those eight books was that their bindings were beautiful. He had no idea

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<sup>1</sup>The word Laz referred originally to an ethnic minority living primarily in Trabzon and Rize provinces, along the extreme eastern part of the Turkish Black Sea coast. More recently the word has come to be applied to any resident of the entire Turkish Black Sea coast. In the Turkish oral tradition, Laz people are stereotyped as being stupid or inept. This stereotype (like most others) is unjustifiable, for Lazes are, of course, much like other people.

<sup>2</sup>Temel (like Dursun, İdris, and Hızır) is a name given to so many Laz males that it automatically signals Laz to most Turkish audiences. Because Lazes are stereotyped as being stupid people, the name Temel may, by extension, be applied to any stupid person, whether or not he happens to be Laz.

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what the writing in these books was about. Going back to the bookstore, he asked the salesman, “What is the subject of these books? What are they about?”

salesman replied, “These books contain a long study of logic.

Of course Temel had no idea whatsoever about what the word logic meant. “Can you explain logic to me?” he asked the book salesman.

salesman decided to define logic for Temel by asking him a series of questions. He asked, “Temel, do you have a fish tank?”

“Yes.”

“When I say fish tank to you, what do those words remind you of?” asked the salesman.

“They remind me of the sea.”

“And what does the word sea remind you of, Temel?”

“It reminds me of the beach.”

“And what does the word beach remind you of?”

“It reminds me of beautiful women in their bathing suits,” answered Temel

“Of course, because you are male. That is logical.”

“Ah, then, so that is the way it works,” said Temel. He was very pleased about having learned the nature of logic.

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A few days later his friend İdris came to visit Temel and to see his new house. When they entered the library, İdris noticed at once the eight bright red volumes that Temel had bought. “What is in these books, Temel?” asked his friend.

“İdris, these books explain all about logic.”

“Logic? What is logic, Temel?”

Temel felt very proud to be able to answer this question. He said, “İdris, do you have a fish tank?”

“No, I do not have a fish tank.”

Temel thought, “Alas! Then my friend İdris is not male!”