

Story 2030 (1997 Tape 2)

Narrator: Tayfun Demirtürk,  
27

Location: Yeşilova village,  
Acıpayam kaza,  
Denizli Province

Date: May 22,

A Saint's Reprimand

(I am going to tell you a story about a saint,<sup>1</sup> a man named Cemil Emmi. My childhood was spent in Kayseri, and while we lived there, my family and our relatives used to give accounts about this saint.)

People in that area had great respect for Cemil Emmi, and they used to consult him frequently. They would go and get his advice about all sorts of things that were important to them. They would consult him before accepting a new job, or before undertaking a new project, or before buying or selling anything. If the person who consulted him believed his advice to be helpful, Cemil Emmi would give that person a ring or some candy. But if the visitor rejected his advice, Cemil Emmi would give that person

<sup>1</sup>In Christianity sainthood is usually bestowed by a religious leader (such as the pope) or by a religious council. In Islam one more often becomes a saint (evliya) by the choice of common people who have observed personally one's behavior, one's benevolence, and one's power to do things beyond the ability of others. Miracles are, allegedly, often performed by Muslim saints.

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some garlic. There were some people who consulted him simply to receive a ring or some candy. After hearing many accounts about him, I myself wished to meet him, but before I come to that, let me tell you some of the accounts which I heard about him.

It was at one of our family gatherings that I first heard about this incident. One day Cemil Emmi was praying in one of the large mosques in Kayseri. In the midst of his prayers, Cemil Emmi stopped and called out to the imam,<sup>2</sup> "İmam Efendi,<sup>3</sup> go home and take care of your orchard!" The imam was embarrassed, and his face turned red, but he followed Cemil Emmi's advice and left the mosque.

<sup>2</sup>An imam is the leader of the organized and required part of a Muslim prayer service, the part known as farz in Turkish, fard in some other languages. Individual worshippers may subsequently continue with their own optional meditations.

<sup>3</sup>In earlier times the word efendi was a term of respect used in speaking to distinguished men. By the mid-20th century, however, its prestige had so eroded that it was used only while speaking to children or servants.

<sup>4</sup>Mind reading of this kind is a common attribute of Muslim saints. An 8th-9th-century saint named Behlül Dane was credited with having read the mind of a prayer leader and given him a similar reprimand in the middle of a service. See ATON tales numbered 268, 420, 471, 474, and 1012.

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Later the imam told several people, "Cemil Emmi was right. While I was leading the prayer service in the mosque, my mind wandered to some work that had to be done in my orchard. I was unable to concentrate as I should have on the movements of the prayer service. I do not know how Cemil Emmi knew what was going on in my mind, but he was right. A person guiding others in worship should not let his thoughts dwell upon anything else