

Story 2138 (1999 Tape 4)

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Location: Gözsüz village,  
Malkara kaza,  
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ince

Date: January 25, 1999

### Threshing Wheat and Information

There was a man who moved from Salonika to Turkey and settled down in a village. Back in his old homeland he had taken care of somebody else's farm animals, but in his new country he needed to be a farmer himself.

He looked around the rural area where he now lived and saw that almost everyone was planting wheat, and so he planted wheat too. When harvest time arrived, this newcomer, following the example of his neighbors, cut down all of his wheat and gathered it together in the middle of a field. Then it was necessary to separate the wheat kernels from the plants.

He went to a neighbor's field and saw that Uncle Cafer was threshing wheat with a döven<sup>1</sup> and a team of

<sup>1</sup>Although nowadays many farmers have modern threshing machinery, there are still many who use the traditional method. A threshing floor (about 100 feet in diameter) is made of clean clay. After the grain is cut, it is thrown onto this working area. Over the plants is drawn what looks like a large door; in fact it is a plank rectangle into the bottom of which have been driven dozens of pieces of sharp flint stone. This döven chops up the wheat plants, and in

Story 2138

oxen.<sup>2</sup> The kernels of wheat were separated from the stalks, and the stalks themselves were chopped into short pieces of straw. The newcomer had never seen a döven before, and it looked to him like a door. He asked Uncle Cafer, "What are you doing?"

"I am taking the wheat kernels from the stalks of the plants and also chopping up those stalks into usable straw."

"Oh, good! May your work go easily," said the new farmer. As he returned home, he said to himself, "See what an ordinary door can do. It can make straw out of stalks. See how easy it is! Let me go and do the same thing."

He lifted one of his doors off its hinges and tied that door behind two oxen. He then drove the oxen around doing so separates most of the grain kernels from the plants. The ground-up mass is passed through a large-mesh sieve. In this winnowing, the chaff blows into a pile downwind; the kernels of grain, being heavier, fall onto a piece of canvas below the sieve; the pieces of straw to which kernels still cling remain in the sieve to be further "threshed" manually.

<sup>2</sup>We cannot imagine a döven so large or so heavy that pulling it would require two oxen or even one ox. In all instances of traditional threshing that we have witnessed, the döven was easily pulled by a donkey.

### Story

and around over the heap of stalks, but the door did not turn the stalks into straw. He went back to Uncle Cafer's field and said, "Look, Uncle Cafer, how is it that your door can make straw from wheat plants, but my door cannot?"

The neighbor answered, "This is not a door. It is a döven."

"What is so special about it then?"

"Driven into the bottom side of a döven are many sharp pieces of stone. The stones chop up the stalks into straw, and, at the same time, detach most of the kernels of wheat from the stalks," the neighbor answered.

"Why didn't you tell me about that before?"

Uncle Cafer answered, "You didn't ask me, and so I didn't tell you."