

Story 2158 (1999 Tape 6)

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A Bektaşî¹ Excuse for Not Fasting
During Ramazan²

There was once a Bektaşî who did not fast during the holy month of Ramazan. Several people noticed this sacrilege and reported it to the local kadı.³

The kadı summoned the Bektaşî to his courtroom and asked him, "Are you not fasting during Ramazan?"

"No, I am not, for I am seferi."⁴

¹A Bektaşî is a member of the order of dervishes founded in the 13th century by Hacı Bektaş Veli. They had considerable impact on both Islam and the Ottoman government. They were, nevertheless, among the dervish orders closed during the Kemalist reforms of the 1920s and 1930s. In Turkish folktales, however, they are represented as being irreverent scapegraces who outrage faithful Muslims. Many are the tales told about them.

²Ramazan (Ramadan in most countries) is the holy month of fasting in Islam, during which the faithful do not eat a morsel or drink a drop of liquid between sunrise and sunset.

³A kadı was a Muslim judge of canonical law before the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923.

⁴Excused from the rigors of fasting during Ramazan are the very young, the ill, the pregnant, and travelers. The word seferi means traveler.

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The kadı responded, "What do you mean by that? You have been living steadily in this village for fifty or sixty years."

"Ah, but I am just passing through this world on my way to the next world."