

Story 2160 (1999 Tape 6)

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A Bektaşî's¹ Last Safeguard Against Infidelity

There was once a Bektaşî who refused to fast during Ramazân² and thus had no need for iftar³ and sahur,⁴ the two religiously approved nightly meals. As the day was ending he grew impatient for the arrival of iftar. He would say, "Hurry! Prepare the table for iftar! The sunset gun is about to be fired!" And he was equally anxious about

¹A Bektaşî is a member of the order of dervishes founded by the 13th century 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 folklore, however, they are represented as being irreverent scapegraces who outrage faithful Muslims. Many are the tales told about them.

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

³Immediately after sunset Muslims break the day's fast with a large meal called iftar. It is a ritual as well as a meal.

⁴To brace themselves for the twelve or more foodless and waterless hours, practicing Muslims have a meal just before dawn. It is called sahur.

Story 2160

continuing the sahur right down to the moment when the sunrise gun was fired.

One day a man said to him, "Why are you so impatient about participating in iftar and sahur when you have been eating all day long?"

"What do you mean by that remark? Are you trying to make me an infidel?"