Story 1455 (1992 Tape 5)　　Narrator: Mukaddes Darwish

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Fish Bones as Brain Food

Temel[1] was a fisherman from the Black Sea coast of Turkey
He once went to İstanbul to visit a friend of his in that city.
One day during his stay in İstanbul, his friend took him to an
excellent restaurant for a meal.

After they had placed their order for dinner, and after
the food had been set before them, Temel asked the waiter to
bring him an extra plate, an empty plate. The waiter brought
him the plate that he requested, and the two men started to
eat hamsis.[2] Every time Temel finished eating a hamsi, he
placed its bones on the extra plate. After a while the İstanbul
man asked him, "Temel, my friend, why are you saving those
bones so carefully?"

"Because these fish bones are very valuable," Temel answered.
"They can be sold for a good price."

Surprised, the İstanbul man asked, "Why is that?"

[1]In comic anecdotes about the Laz dummer or fool, male
characters often have one or another of five or six very
common Laz names. Most frequently used is Temel, with Dursun
in second place. Thus when one of those names occurs in a
Turkish folktale, the audience knows at once that it is a Laz
tale.

[2]A type of anchovy caught in great quantities from the Black
Sea. Most Turks find them to be very tasty fish, and they are
a staple of the Laz diet.

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"Because people can increase their intelligence greatly by eating fish bones," said Temel.

"Well, if that is the case, then I should like to buy these bones from you. I wonder how much smarter I shall be after eating them!" Temel sold him the bones, and his friend ate them.

As they were leaving the restaurant, however, the İstanbul man said, "Temel, my friend, I suspect that you cheated me. Now that I think about it, I doubt that fish bones can make a person any smarter."

Temel answered, "But don't you realize that you have become somewhat smarter already?"