

Story 1388 (1989 Tape 6)

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Language Barrier

In 1960 I accompanied a troupe of Mevlevi¹ when they went to Paris to put on some performances there. One of the musicians in the Mevlevi band, Fahrettin Çimenli, was a good friend of mine. Fahrettin played the tambourine, and he really played it very well.

We all ate our meals together at a restaurant where everything was served table d'hôte. We had great difficulty eating the food they served there, however. When we observed the way they prepared the meat, we were sickened at the sight. They did not cook the meat thoroughly,² and it smelled very different from the meat we were accustomed to eating. I was able to eat so little at that restaurant that I lost five kilos during the fifteen days we were in Paris

¹A dervish order better known outside Turkey as "The Whirling Dervishes."

²Moslem people will not eat rare meat. It must be so thoroughly cooked that it shows no redness or even pinkness.

Story 1388

Fahrettin Çimenli tried to talk with the waiter in order to get some food that we could tolerate, but the two never understood each other, for Fahrettin could speak no French and the waiter knew no Turkish. Fahrettin said in Turkish, "This meat was not cooked well." The waiter did not understand this. Then Fahrettin repeated what he said, but this time he spoke very slowly, as if that would make his remark clearer. Of course, the waiter still could not understand him. Fahrettin then said to us, "Give me a pen and a piece of paper!" He wrote on the paper, "This meat is not cooked well." But, to his surprise, the waiter still failed to understand his remark. By then the rest of us were so amused by his efforts that we all burst laughing.

When livestock is slaughtered in Moslem lands, it is bled more thoroughly than it is in many other places.