

Story 1745 (1994 Tape 2)

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The Saving Force of Proper Şehadet<sup>1</sup>

Once there were three skydivers who were ready to jump from an airplane. One was English, one was French, and the third was Turkish--a man from Kayseri.<sup>2</sup>

The Englishman jumped first, but his parachute failed to open. As a result, he was, of course, killed. It was the turn of the Kayseri man next, but before he jumped, he recited the Şehadet. After he had jumped, his parachute opened perfectly, and so he landed safely on the ground.

The Frenchman observed this, and he tried to repeat the Şehadet. He could not reproduce the words of the Kayseri man very accurately, and he did not know what

<sup>1</sup>The narrator uses the variant Şahadet. Şehadet means testifying or bearing witness to Islamic faith.

<sup>2</sup>Kayseri people are stereotyped as being very clever and shrewd, and there are many tales in which they exhibit these traits. Here the Kayseri man is saved by religious faith, not by his cleverness or shrewdness.

Story 1745

they meant. He said, "Eşşedek, eşşedek, yallah!"<sup>3</sup>

When he jumped, however, his parachute did not open, and so he too was killed.

<sup>3</sup>Yallah refers to Allah, but Eşşedek is quite meaningless--perhaps not even a real word.