

Story 838 (1974 Tape 19)

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Location: Tercan, a kaza town of
Erzincan Province

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Tailor Father¹ and Balaam's Ass in Erzincan

Tailor Father was one of the greatest scholars who ever lived in Erzincan. Everyone knew that he was a saint, but very few of his contemporaries recognized the extent of knowledge.

One day when Tailor Father was walking about in the city of Erzincan, he saw a--I beg your pardon!--donkey.² As they came closer together, the donkey stopped in order to give Tailor Father the right of way. He then reared back on his hind legs, lifting his forelegs off the ground. The owner of the donkey started beating the donkey to make it behave and move on.

Tailor Father rebuked the owner, saying, "You blind man

¹The Erzincan saint known as Tailor Father was referred to by the aged and unidentified narrator of ATON 834. That unidentified narrator was a resident of Olgunlar, a village at the opposite end of the province from Tercan.

²Speakers apologize not only for their use of a coarse word but also for their use of a word that might possibly be construed as a reflection on the listener. To call anyone in Turkey a donkey or a dog is a graver insult than it might be elsewhere, and so if someone uses the word donkey or dog, he first excuses himself in order to give reassurance to the listener that it is not snidely aimed at the listener.

Story 838

of Erzincan Even this donkey sees better than you do!"

Because of that remark we often refer to our people around here as blind men of Erzincan. Erzincan people are known for their blindness.³

³The blindness referred to here is not, of course, a matter of lack of visual acuity but of insensitivity or failure of perception.