

Story #134 (Tape #41, 1961-62)

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Location: Iskenderun

Date: February 1962

The Immoral Kadi and the Outraged Peasants

All the men of one of the villages near here went to the city to attend the Friday noon service at the mosque there. When they were approaching the city they heard a muezzin crying the ezan from the minaret. They noticed that it was not the muezzin they had heard last time they had come to the city for prayers, but they agreed that he had a beautiful voice. They wondered where this muezzin might have come from, and so they stopped a resident in the street and asked him

"Oh, he is from this city."

"Well, where has he been all this time that we hear him only now for the first time?" asked the peasants.

"Well--he's a Jew."

The peasants were amazed at this piece of information. "How could they raise a Jew to the top of a minaret to chant the ezan?" one asked.

"Impossible!" said another.

So they set about to find the kadi to question him about this matter. In those days the kadis often had their offices right in the mosques, and they attended to all the mosque business there. When it was their turn to talk with the kadi,

the peasants followed their muhtar into his office.

"What sort of thing is this, kadi efendi?" asked the muhtar. "We come in all the way from our village to attend the Friday prayers and we find this! You have dismissed the Moslem muezzin and employed a Jew! Are there no Moslems left in town?"

"What an outrageous group of peasants!" the kadi exclaimed. "Didn't you like his voice? Didn't he chant well?"

"He had a good voice and chanted well, as far as that goes."

"Did he make any mistakes in the words he used?" asked the

"No."

"Well, the service of the muezzin is to call the faithful to prayer, to announce the time of the services in the mosque.

is important is that he have a good voice and a beautiful voice. So it makes no difference whether he be a Jew or a Christian or a Moslem. I find no fault about that. According to the seriat there is nothing wrong with it. It happened that our former muezzin was called up for military service."

They thought about the kadi's explanation and after they talked it over they found it quite reasonable. They went into the mosque and attended the service and they found no fault with what they saw until they came out into the mosque yard. There they saw a number of large wine casks from which wine was being sold.

"What is this you are selling?" they asked the attendant.

"Wine," he said.

"Whose wine is it?"

"It belongs to the mosque," said the attendant.

All of the peasants looked from one to another, astounded at this news. Without saying a word, they all started toward the kadı's office to ask him about this.

"You impossible fellows!" the kadı exclaimed when he heard their questions. "The mosque property includes some vineyards, and these vineyards yield grapes, of course. But buys many grapes? They will rot if they are not used, and so we make wine of them. We sell this wine to infidel Christians, in this way we make a great deal of money with which to run the mosque."

Again the peasants left the kadı's office and talked about this matter among themselves. They finally agreed that as long as Moslems did not drink the wine there was no great harm done.

Before returning to their village all of the peasants went to the marketplace and bought there various things to take home to their families. Toward evening they started toward their village again. "Before we leave," said the muhtar, "let us stop by at the office of the kadı and say goodbye to him and thank him for his kindness to us."

They went to the kadı's office but they found it closed. They went around to the side of the building and looked in the

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windows to see if they could see him inside. They were shocked at what they saw, for the kadı was preparing to go to bed with a young man. They nearly lost their minds, and they returned to the door and started beating on it with their fists.

When the kadı came to the door and opened it, he asked, "What do you want now? Is it not enough that you have disturbed me twice already today?"

"You immoral kadı! What was it that we just saw you doing when we looked through your bedroom windows?" they demanded. "What is that young man doing naked in your bedroom?"

"You men must really be great fools to become so excited about nothing. That young man whom you saw was arrested for kidnapping a girl and trying to rape her. He claims that he is not yeat an adolescent and so could not have raped her. As I was the one who had to decide this case, I wanted to see for certain whether he could have raped a girl. Was he really capable of committing such a crime? In other words, I was simply doing my duty."

"You God-forsaken kadı! May God send you to the very bottom of this world!" And then the peasants returned to their village.