

Story #562 (1974 Tape #12)

Narrator: Esat Söylü, small business man

Location: Akdağmadeni, kaza town in Yozgat Province

Date: August 1974

Seven Years' Learning Lost in a Minute

In the past people went from Central Anatolia to work in Istanbul, where they would spend many years earning money, learning city talk, and serving mankind. We were living very primitive lives in those days.

A peasant once went to Istanbul and remained there for seven years. He learned the ways in which city people talk, and he earned some money. He bought a donkey there in Istanbul and set out on it

his village. In Central Anatolia he found a spring by a willow tree, and after tying his donkey to the tree, he sat down there. He ate some food, drank some water, and then fell asleep. When he awoke, he found that his donkey was gone, and he said, "Oh, good Allah,

I shall have to walk!"

He searched for the donkey, but he could see no sign of it anywhere. Then he noticed a farmer plowing in the distance, and he shouted to this farmer. As you know, he had learned the ways city people talked in Istanbul. "O Father Adam who is agitating the soil! I attached my asinus to this willow tree, and when I was in a state of somnolence, he extricated himself and effected a departure. Has this event been observed by you?"¹

What could the farmer understand from this? He thought that the man was swearing at him, either in Kurdish² or in Arabic. He took his

¹ This is not, of course, a literal translation but a free English equivalent of the "citified" peasant's affected language.

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goad, which had a metal blade for scraping off the plowshare, and approaching the man said, "Let me hear you say that again!"

Again the peasant repeated, in the city speech he had learned, what the situation was. The farmer said, "Yes, it has been observed," and he hit him twice with the shaft. "Now say it in Turkish!"

The peasant said to the farmer, "Father, I tied my donkey to that willow tree over there. Then I ate bread and fell asleep. When I awoke, I found that my donkey had escaped." To himself he said, "Oh, Allah, what I took seven years to learn he made me forget with two blows of his stick!"