

Amantje → All

Story 936 (1977 Tape 25)

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Location: Erzurum, capital city
of Erzurum Province

Date: May 19, 1977

Sultan Murat and the Lunatics

As you know, there were three sultans named Murat who came and went in our history. They were Sultan Murat I, Sultan Murat II, and Sultan Murat III.

One day when Sultan Murat I¹ was making a routine inspection of a lunatic asylum, he stepped inside one of the cells and found a man there restrained very tightly in chains. It appeared that he was the kind of patient who had to be bound in this way to prevent him from escaping or from attacking someone. Sultan Murat asked this man, "What did you do? Why did they bring you here?"

The lunatic answered Sultan Murat by saying, "Oh, my Sultan, I have been trying to tell people that I am the last prophet. I was born a prophet, and I have been telling people that they should believe me and obey what I say to do. I am now the only prophet who lives partly in this world and partly in the other world."

When Sultan Murat heard these words, he said quietly to the man, "You are really quite mad." Then he left the room

¹ Ottoman sultan 1360-1389.

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and moved on to the next room. There he found another man who was also restricted by an iron chain. He asked this man also, "What have you done? Why are you here?"

The man said, "Oh, my Sultan, I have been trying to tell everyone I meet that I am really God. 'I am the one who created all people, and you must believe what I say.' That is what I tell them."

Sultan Murat had heard all he could stand. "What makes you people say such things?" he asked. "You claim that you are God, and the fellow in the next room claims that he is the last prophet. What kind of talk is this? I have heard enough!"

The lunatic answered angrily, "Oh, my Sultan, don't you believe that fellow! As God, I have not yet sent any prophet to this world!"² Sultan Murat could find no words to answer this comment, and so he left the asylum.

It would be better to prevent lunatics from talking than to have to listen to such comments. If intelligence runs wild, a person may lose himself. He becomes confused about how to speak properly, and he begins to say all manner of stupid things.

² What precedes this point in the tale is a well-known Turkish anecdote. See, for example, ATON Tale 757. All that follows is Behçet Mahir's expansion--moralistic, philosophical, illustrative.

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Intelligence is not always proportionate to age. It is something within the head and has nothing to do with age or maturity. If a person has no values of his own, he will never be able to understand the values of other people. First a person must learn about himself and understand himself, and it is only then that he can learn about others. That fact explains, in part, why the human brain is the most wonderful thing on earth. Intelligence proves the existence of God. Intelligence separates wrong from right. Intelligence can bring power and wealth.

There is an old proverb which says, "The intelligent person can be successful in his own right without inheritance, but the unintelligent may lose whatever inheritance he may receive." Yes, the most important thing in this world is the human mind. Among the eighteen thousand kinds of living creatures, only man received intelligence from God. He gave the animals only consciousness and instinct. If a sheep were aware of what was going on, she would not willingly go on her own feet beneath the knife. Real intelligence was given only to man.

Animals have a kind of perception of their own, and they can adjust more easily than human beings. If someone sells his animal, that animal gets used to his new home very quickly, very easily, but if a human being goes to a

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different place, he cannot become comfortable there so easily. Animals have eyes in their hearts. Day and night are the same to them. They can see in the dark as well as in the light. God gave this kind of perception to animals but he gave intelligence only to man.

God handed three things to his angels, and He said, "Go and take these to Adam, but allow him to choose only one of them. The other two bring back here."

The angels took to Adam these three things: Intelligence, Faith, and Shame. They said, "Oh, Adam, God sent these three things from which you are to choose one for yourself. Choose one--any one that you wish."

Adam asked, "What are the three things from which I am to choose one?"

The angels said, "God sent with us Intelligence, Faith, and Shame

Adam then said, "Give me Intelligence

But no sooner had Adam chosen Intelligence than Shame spoke up and said, "I cannot survive separately from Intelligence. Wherever Intelligence is, I am there too!"

Then Faith spoke out. She said, "I cannot be separated from Intelligence either. I cannot live without it!"

Accordingly, Intelligence took Shame on one side and Faith on the other side. If a person has Intelligence, he

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has Shame and Faith too; if he doesn't have Intelligence, then he has neither of the other qualities. God gave Intelligence to all men, but some manage to use it more advantageously than others.

I should like to explain that further. There was once a man who said, "After working for thirty years, I at last found God. I was finally able to see His face.

People asked him, "What kind of work were you doing during those thirty years?"

That man answered, "For the first ten years I did cleaning jobs. For the next ten years I was an ironworker. And for the last ten years I was a doorkeeper. It was after that that I was able to see his face. I worked at cleaning for ten years, and at the end of that time I had thoroughly cleaned my own interior. In the ironworking I fought my body for ten years and at last mastered myself so that I could command my flesh, 'Stop!' and it would stop. I then worked for ten years as a doorkeeper. During that time I kept my hand over my mouth as a watchman, never allowing any wrong or unworthy thing to escape my mouth. After all that, I was able to see the face of God. After all that, I found peace and light."³

³ Although allegory is by no means unprecedented in the folktale, it is rather uncommon, especially in the way it is used here.

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know a quatrain that I wish to pass along to you

O Flesh, you could not stop. You never had control

Disgraceful, stupid were your acts.

You spent my life and wasted much of it

To you I owe the boredom and the shame.

If a person has a conflict between his mind and his body,
flesh, it is to be hoped that he will be able to control
himself.