

Story 1859 (1984 Tape 6)

Narrator: Ali Çiftçi, farmer; by this time he must have been in his late 60s or early 70s

Location: Çıkırıkçı village, Sarıkaya kaza, Yozgat Province

Date: February , 1984

The Power and Patience of a Saint

Basralı Hasan¹ was a teacher. Every day he would teach three or five² students, and after this work was done, he would return home. But his work was still not finished for the day, because when he would arrive home, his wife would climb on his back and insist that he carry her on a tour of their house. He had to carry her through every room in the house. Growing more and more tired of this situation, Basralı Hasan one day decided to leave home.

¹Basralı means from Basra. Basra is a city in southern Iraq on the waterway known as the Shatul-Arap. He was born in Medina in the year 642, but he moved to Basra quite early in his adult life. Although a very learned and pious man, he was not generally recognized as a saint; the First Encyclopaedia of Islam does not credit him with sainthood. However, in Islam sainthood is not something designated by any official person or organization. Sainthood is established by popular opinion, and the folk may deem saintly any religious person whom they admire. Hasan died in Basra in 728.

²In Turkish three or five is not to be taken literally. It can mean any number from a couple to a few.

Story 1859

As he was walking along, he met two men along the road. Inasmuch as they were going in the same direction, they decided to travel together. After they had been walking for a while, these three men became hungry. One of Basrali Hasan's two companions said, "Let me pray for some food, and then we shall all say, 'Amen.' Then perhaps Allah will send us something to eat." That man did pray for food, and his companions did say, "Amen," and as a result, a lamb fell at their feet from the sky. They cooked this lamb, ate it, and, after a brief rest, they continued on their way.

After walking for several hours, they again felt hungry. This time the other traveling companion of Basrali Hasan prayed, and again all three men said, "Amen." A second lamb then fell from the sky for them. After eating that lamb and resting for a short while, they resumed their journey.

When it became time for them to eat again, Basrali Hasan prayed for food, and they all said, "Amen." This time, however, they received two lambs. Basrali Hasan's companions were amazed by this.

Basrali Hasan asked the first of those two men, "In whose name did you pray for food?"

"I prayed in the name of a powerful saint named Basrali Hasan."

Story 1859

Turning then to his second companion, Basralı Hasan asked the same question, “In whose name did you pray for food?”

“I prayed in the name of the same person,” the second man said.

Hearing that, Basralı Hasan decided to return home. Along the way back he stopped at the shop of a maker of packsaddles. There he selected a very soft packsaddle for his wife.

When he arrived home, he knocked on the door. His wife asked, “Is that you, Husband?”

“Yes, it is.” But as he entered the door, he said, “Wait! Wait! Don’t climb on my back until after I have covered it with this packsaddle. Then you will not hurt your rump as you ride around the house.”

His wife was a pious person favored by Allah. Basralı Hasan knew this, but he had never acknowledged it before. His wife then said, “Since you have now recognized my status, I shall no longer ride upon your back.”