

Story 1643 (1974 Tape 23) Narrator: Behçet Mahir, 65;
odacı at Atatürk
University and
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teur

Location: Erzurum, capital
city of Erzurum
Province

Date:

Virgin Birth and the Oedipus Complex¹

There were two scholars once who discussed a certain matter with each other. One of them had said, "One must first strive before Allah will give one his destiny." The other had said, "Allah gives whatever He had decided. Even if you strive, Allah gives what He has already decided upon." Now the sayings of both are correct, but let us solve the problem. There are hidden meanings in what they said.

Wherever they went, people would say, "Correct" to what both of them said. Different people announced their opinion: "Both of them speak the truth." But there was a tekke² in Bagdad owned by an intelligent

¹This was an interpolated tale used as an exemplum in ATON tale No. 672. Because it is a story complete unto itself, we have given it independent status lest it be completely lost in the extremely long No. 672.

²A tekke is the headquarters and lodging of a dervish order. These are usually established and initially owned by mystics who then become leaders (sheiks) of their respective institutions. Here the tekke seems

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woman. They said, "Let us go and have her settle our dispute."

These two scholars reached Bagdad. They found the tekke and told the woman their problem. She said to them, "Come at night. Then we shall solve your problem."

When it became night, these scholars returned. They saw that more than 100 disciples had gathered together, and when these disciples were starting their ritual with the Zillullah,³ a barefoot, bareheaded young man entered. The woman said to the scholars, "He comes here from the mountains." The woman was standing apart from the ritual, a veil over her face, gloves on her hands, and her body completely covered from head to toe.

This young man went and embraced her feet and hands and kissed her eyes. Weeping, he said, "What am I doing in hell?"

woman answered him, "Go away, my son; go away! It is neither your fault nor my fault. The one who did this was Allah, and the one who caused it to be done was also Allah."

to be owned by laymen. In the Moslem context it is unusual that a woman should either own or be involved in the operation of a tekke.

³Zillullah means the shadow of God on earth, an epithet often applied to the Caliph.

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boy embraced her hands and feet and again kissed her eyes. Then, weeping, he started climbing upward, returning to the mountain.

The woman said to the scholars, "Did you see that young man?"

"Yes."

"He is my son, my brother, and my husband!"

Now observe this turn of fate, what has happened here. Did she not say "my son (whom she bore), my brother, and my husband"? How could this be?

The woman explained. "Oh, scholars! The owner of this tekke was my father. One day my father went to the bathhouse where in the morning he took a bath. His semen spilled on the stone where he sat and bathed. His semen spilled there. My father left, and later I came into the bathhouse. Because I did not know about the spilled semen of my father, I unknowingly sat on it. That semen entered my womb, and thus I became pregnant.

"Time came and time went, but I was not aware of what had happened to me. I was a virgin. My pregnancy was noticed. My father questioned me. My mother questioned me. The neighbors questioned me. They made me take an

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oath: 'If you are a Moslem, then swear that you have not had any relation with any man! Allah forbid!' They had me examined. I was a virgin, but in my womb there was a child. At last they said it was caused by fate.

"When the child came into the world, my father had it wrapped in rags and thrown away somewhere. A passing traveler heard a cry, and following the sounds he came to a trench in which lay a newborn baby. He said to himself, 'This must be a bastard,' for he had heard of many illegitimate children thrown into mosque yards. 'This must be a bastard.' He took the child up and carried it to his house. (The trade of this man had been the operation of a mill. He was a miller. He said to his wife, "Woman, you have been desiring a child. Here is a child. I found it in a trench. If it dies, it dies; if it survives, it survives. It is a boy.

"The miller and his wife fed that child until it reached the age of eighteen. He is the young man you have just seen, who embraced my hands and feet and cried.

"At last the neighbors of that miller said to the boy, 'This miller is not your father!'

'Oh-h-h!'

"Nor is his wife your mother!'

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"'Whose son am I?'

"'We do not know. It is not clear whether you are Christian or Moslem, or to which way of life you belong. The miller brought you from somewhere else, fed you, and adopted you as a son. But it is not known from where you came or whose son you are.'

"The neighbors told him these things. This boy had become fully mature by the age of eighteen, and his pride would not permit him to remain there. 'Since this miller is not my father, his wife is not my mother; this place is forbidden to me.' He left⁴ and came to Bagdad. For two years he served here in my father's monastery. After he had served two years, my father came to like him,⁵ and he gave me to him in marriage.

"Some time passed. One day after we had become husband and wife, I asked him, 'Where are you from? My father gave me to you, but who are you and whose son are you?'

"The young man asked me, 'Will I tell the truth or lie?'

⁴The narrator's exact words were he takes his head (and) goes away.

⁵The Turkish text here reads My father's blood boiled toward him.

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"I told him, 'Moslems tell the truth, and do not lie.
Tell what is the truth!'

do not know whose son I am.'

'Oh!

"'I do not know what place I came from, either. A miller found me somewhere. He found me because he heard me crying as a baby. He took me home and provided for me. When I reached the age of eighteen, people of the miller's neighborhood said to me, "These are neither your father nor your mother. Where you came from is also not known." When I discovered that it was not known whose son I was or from what way of life I came, my pride would not allow me to remain there. I immediately came here.'

"Later, I told all this to my father. My father called to him the miller who had fed this young man. This miller had been keeping the rags in which he had found the child. He brought them and showed them to my father. He also showed him the place where he had found the child. My father looked there and recognized the place. He said, 'I took him to this place.'

"This child is my child. This child is my brother, because he was conceived from my father's semen. This

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child is my husband. My father died from knowledge of this. When the child learned about it, his mind was partially destroyed. From that day to today he has been crying, crying in the mountains. 'How did I become intimate with my mother? Why do I burn in hell?'

"Here he just came and embraced my hands and feet. He embraced my neck. What do I

'Go away, my son; go away, my son; go away. It is neither your fault nor my fault. There is a God who has been doing, acting.

"Now, both your sayings are correct. You must strive, but no matter how much you strive, Allah makes happen what He wishes to happen. Fate becomes part of this."