

Story 2019 (1996 Tape 5)

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Location: Yeşilova village,
Acıpayam kaza,
Denizli Province

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Prayer Scheduled to Prevent Forbidden Act

In the time and place of our Prophet there was a man who attended the morning prayer service at the mosque every day. He would arrive at the mosque well before the service started, and he would not leave it until everyone else had gone. He wanted to hear as much as he could of whatever Mohammed had to say.

After awhile, however, that man changed his pattern of attendance. He no longer arrived at the mosque early but got there just as the service was about to begin. When the prayer service had been completed, he was now the first to leave.

Our Prophet noticed the change in that man's behavior. One day he saw the man as he was hastily leaving the mosque. Our Prophet said to him, "Your coming to and departing from the prayer service has been different recently. What is the reason for this?"

The man answered, "O my Prophet, what you say is quite true. I was formerly the first to reach the mosque and the

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last to leave it. But now I cannot come ahead of time and I cannot leave late. My next-door neighbor has a date palm tree which is now bearing fruit. Some of the limbs of that tree hang over my property, and fallen dates are strewn about in my garden. When I get up in the morning, I pick up all the dates on my property and take them over to his garden. One result of this is that my neighbor does not lose anything that is his. Another result is a benefit to my children. If they do not see the dates lying in our garden, they will not be tempted to eat what to them would be haram.¹ When the children were born, I promised myself to do everything possible to keep them from doing what is haram. That is the reason for my coming here later than usual and leaving earlier than I had done formerly. If you will permit me to leave

¹Helal and haram are Muslim religious concepts. That which is helal is that which is permissible according to canonical law. That which is haram is forbidden. There is no obligation or restriction or penalty for doing or taking whatever is helal, but there will be a penalty on Judgment Day for doing or taking what is forbidden. To accept something from a donor is helal; to take it or steal it is haram. To do anything morally or religiously improper is haram. Dying or endangered people often declare helal anything they have given to or done for another person so that No. 2 will not go to Judgment indebted to another (which may be haram unless declared helal by the benefactor). A mother can force any child to do her bidding by threatening not to make helal the milk with which she nursed him or her.

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now, I must rush home before my children rise so that
I can return to my neighbor any dates that may have
fallen since I left."