

Story 2015 (1996 Tape 5)

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Location: Ankaya village,
Besni kaza, Adıyaman Province

Date: September 1996

Patience Is a Virtue

There was once a villager who was dissatisfied with his life. He was not at all happy. There was a wise man who lived in the same part of Turkey at that time, and his wisdom was frequently discussed by the common people. Elderly neighbors advised the unhappy villager to go to that wise man and request his help. "Ask him how your unhappiness can be cured."

As soon as he had received that advice, the villager decided at once to follow it. He left his wife and his children with some relatives and set forth right away in search of the wise man. When he located that wise man the villager explained his dissatisfaction with life. He said, "I am not happy. I keep seeking for more and more, but even when I get the things I have sought, I am not satisfied. Nothing pleases me. Can you advise me how to overcome this problem?"

The wise man answered, "Stay with me for a year, and

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do whatever I tell you to do. At the end of a year I shall provide you with what you need to be saved from your unhappiness." The villager accepted this offer, of course. The wise man then showed him a little shed and said "This is where you will live while you are here. I shall bring you food every day. All that you will have to do will be to clear all the stones from one of my fields and do whatever else is necessary to make that land usable for farming.

The villager began working right away, and he worked very hard day after day. The wise man brought food to him. It was not as much food as the villager would have liked, but he said nothing about that. He continued to work hard anyway, for in doing that. He would learn the answer to his problem.

At the end of a year the villager went to the wise man and said, "My period of work has been completed. Tell me what I should do and then release me, for I have missed my family greatly and I wish to see them again."

Saying, "You have completed your year's work very well," the wise man handed the villager a loaf of bread to take to his family. The villager was not pleased with

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this settlement, for he had not received any of the advice for which he had come. He took the loaf of bread and set out for home.

His village was some distance from there, and after he had been walking for awhile, he became hungry. He had promised the wise man that he would take the loaf of bread to his family, but his hunger became so great that he could not resist the urge to eat a piece of it. When he cut into the loaf, he discovered that it contained gold coins. (In those days gold coins were extremely valuable.

As he thought about this, the villager realized that the wise man had paid him not only for his work but for his patience too. He also realized that patience was the cure for his former unhappiness. There is a proverb which says, "The dervish who can remain patient receives that which he desired." ¹

¹Bekleyen derviş muradına ermiş. Yurtbaşı, Metin. A Dictionary of Turkish Proverbs (Ankara: Turkish Daily News, 1993), p. 277.