

Story 2039 (Transcribed from
tape of Atatürk İlk-
okulu,)

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Çekiç, 10

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town of Bursa
Province

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One Who Harms Another Harms Himself¹

There was an old man who kept walking around and saying, "Anyone who wishes to harm others harms himself." He kept saying this over and over every day. This annoyed a certain woman, and after she had heard him saying it many times, her annoyance turned into anger. She became so angry, in fact, that she finally decided to poison the old man.

She went home and baked some çöreks² with strong poison in them. Returning into the street, she found the old man and gave him these pastries. He thanked the woman and put the çöreks in his bag. Then he continued walking on, saying, "Anyone who wishes to harm another harms himself."

After awhile a soldier approached the old man and asked him for some bread. Reaching into his bag, the old man took a çörek and gave it to the soldier. But right

¹This is a Turkish proverb. Yurtbaşı, Metin. A Dictionary of Turkish Proverbs (Ankara: Turkish Daily News, 1993), p. 596.

²A round cake or sweetened bread; it is sometimes like a breakfast bun.

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after the soldier had eaten that çörek, he collapsed on the ground and died. The old man became very frightened by what had happened, more frightened than he had ever been before.

Several women who had witnessed what had happened went to the mother of the soldier, told her of her son's death, and took her to the place where he lay

The old man recognized that woman as soon as she arrived there. He said to her, "Listen, my daughter. I took the çöreks which you gave me and put them in my bag. While I was walking along here, your son appeared before me and asked for some bread. I took a çörek out of my bag and gave it to him. Right after he ate that çörek, he died. I wonder what was in that çörek that caused him to die?"

The mother thought to herself, "This old man has long been saying, 'Anyone who wishes to harm others harms himself.' I tried to harm him, but instead I poisoned my own son." She cried as she thought about this, and she decided not to act in such a way again.