

Story 681 (1973, Tape 3)

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Location: Gümüşhacıköy, kaza
town of Amasya Province

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The Padişah Sends the Farmer a Goose to Pluck

One day the padişah was restless and did not know what he wished to do. At last he said to the grand vizier, "My ^{vizier - grand} vizier, why do we not take a trip somewhere together for a change? We remain fastened here so much that we do not see anything that goes on beyond İstanbul."

"Well, then, let us go somewhere," said the grand vizier. "Where do you suggest that we go?"

"Having ^e some bread and other food prepared so that we can set out somewhere tomorrow."

In those days İstanbul seemed a great distance from our central Anatolia, and it took them all of ten days just to reach this area. One day they looked around in this rural section and they saw an old man plowing in a formulaic encourage him to one working! nearby field. → "May it go easily, father!" the padişah called.

"You are welcome here, my son," the old man replied.

"Father, it looks as if it has snowed on the mountain there. Are you aware of that?" ^{snow -- on mountains -- as figurative description of white hair}

"It is the time for snow, sir. It is that time." ^{Hair -- whiteness of -- figuratively described as snow on}

Then the padişah asked, "Are you doing well now with ^{mountains} three or with two?" ^{whiteness -- of hair -- figuratively described as snow on mountains}

"Now I am doing well with three."

"Father, what is the news about the thirty-two?"

^{Walking} Doing well ^{- with cane - figuratively described as doing well with} with three ^{- figurative description of ~~the~~ three [legs] walking with cane}

Thirty-two figurative description of one's teeth

Teeth -- figurative expression or: thirty two

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"Sir, there is no news about the thirty-two left at all.

As this conversation was going on, the vizier was listening to all of the questions and answers, but he could not understand them at all. He did not even know what the subject of their discussion was.

The padişah continued. "Father, how many times has your property been lightened?" Property lightened -- figurative description of having provided a dowry for a daughter

"Twice, and I shall soon be lightened again."

"How are you managing the distant, and how are you managing the near at hand?" Dowry -- provided for a daughter -- figuratively described as having had one's property

istanbul and near at hand "Sir, I can manage the distant all by myself, but I lightened need help with the near at hand."

imagery of figurative description long-range and up visual ity "Tell me, father, if I should send you a goose, would you be able to pluck it?" plucking a goose -- figurative description of exploiting a simpleton

simpleton -- exploitation of -- described figuratively as plucking a goose "I am an expert in that sort of thing -- a regular expert." Then the farmer said "Ho!"¹ to his oxen and continued

plowing the field.

Visual acuity -- long-range and close-up -- described figuratively as managing the distant and near

The padişah and the grand vizier returned to Istanbul

after that, a journey of about ten days. After they were back

home, the padişah asked his traveling companion, "My

vizier, what did you make of my conversation with that old

farmer? How much of it did you understand?"

¹Since oxen are not guided by reins, they must be directed by some other means. They are directed vocally, and "O" or "Ho" is one of the commands used to make them move ahead -- comparable to the command "Get up!" given to horses in the United States.

"Nothing at all! How would I know what you were talking about, my padişah?"

"If that is so, then you had better go and find out we were talking about and come back and tell me. Otherwise I shall relieve you of your position and hire that man to be my vizier. Learn about this and then return."

Wrapping some provisions in a sash around ~~his~~ waist, vizier traveled once more to Anatolia to talk with the farmer. Arriving there after a trip of eight or ten days, he found the farmer plowing again. "Selâmunaleyküm,"² father.

"Aleykümselâm," son."

"Father, do you know the man who came here and talked to you on that day?"

"How would I know that, son? There are many people who pass along this way and talk with me."

"That was the padişah."

"May he remain the padişah. But of what concern is that to me?"

"Well, you may remember that he called to you, 'May it go easily!' Then he said to you, 'It has snowed on the

²The traditional Moslem greetings exchanged by well-meaning people not well acquainted: "Greetings and peace be unto you," and "Return greetings, and may peace be unto you too."

1 --shrewd
farmer -- to grand vizier explanation of
figurative expression used a previous conversation
at ten red per term 92

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Vizier -- grand -- peasant showed farmer ten
explain figurative expressions used previous conversation
mountain there.' --What did he mean by that?"

"My son, every piece of information costs ten red
liras.³ Give me ten red liras, and I shall tell you."

"Here are your liras."

"He was referring to my gray hair, and that was his
way of saying that I was growing old. Well, I am in fact
sixty-five years old, and so I answered, 'It is time for
snow. It is time for that.'"

"Then he asked you, 'Are you doing well now with three
or with two?' What did that mean?"

"Well, you see, son, at my age I am sometimes stiff
on cold mornings and need a stick to lean on, and so then
I am walking on three legs. But at other times I do not
need the stick and so walk on my own two legs. That was
why I said, 'I am doing well with three.'"

"The padişah then asked you, 'Father, what is the news
about the thirty-two?' What was that about?"

"Excuse me, but for such additional news you will
have to give me another ten red gold liras."

"All right, here they are."

³Peasant narrators very often speak of not just gold
coins but red gold coins, always with the implication that
red gold is more valuable than regular gold. Actually
there is no gold in a pure state that is red. If gold
were somehow alloyed with copper, then it might have a
reddish cast, but it would also then be less valuable
than plain yellow gold.

"When he asked me for news about the thirty-two, he asking me how my teeth were. I replied, 'There is no news left about the thirty-two at all.' I meant that I no teeth left, and so there was nothing to be said about them."

"Then he asked you, 'Father, how many times has your property been lightened?' --What did that mean?"

"The answer to that will cost you another ten liras."

"All right."

"He was asking about how many dowries I had had to provide. I told him I had had my property lightened twice and would soon have it lightened again. I have married off two daughters, and my youngest daughter will be married in a short while."

"Then he asked you, 'How are you managing the distant, how are you managing the near at hand?' You answered, 'I can manage the distant all by myself, but I need some help with the near at hand.' --What were the two of you talking about?"

"Wouldn't that be worth at least ten more red gold liras?"

"Yes. Here--take them!"

"He was inquiring about my eyesight--how good it was for seeing things far away and how good it was for seeing things close to me. I told him that I could see the distant

things but that I needed glasses to see what was closer

"The padişah's last question was even more confusing to me than the rest. He spoke of a goose. He asked you, I should send you a goose, would you know how to pluck

And you said, 'Yes, I could. I am an expert in that of thing.' --Why would he send you a goose to pluck?"

That much more information will cost another ten gold liras, if you really wish to know the answer."

"Yes, I do wish to know the answer, and here are your ten gold liras."

"Geese are foolish, and you were the fool he sent me. I have plucked fifty red gold liras from you."

After another journey of eight or ten days, the grand vizier was once more back in İstanbul. The padişah asked

"How are you? What have you done? Did you discover the information you were seeking?"

"My padişah, I discovered the information I sought, but I did so at a cost of fifty gold liras."

"Remember this well, and from now on, be more perceptive, and then such information will cost you only some thought."