

Story #672 (1974, Tapes 23,  
24, 25, 26, 27, 27-A  
(5 hours, 20 minutes)

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Location: Erzurum

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Asıl, Nesil, Katmer<sup>1</sup>, and Sinan

(century -- cycle of

Every night is the cycle of a century, May this night become the  
#672 cycle of (Asıl) and (Nesil).

Gentlemen, under the dome of heaven, a time long past, in the land  
of (Iran), at (Tehran), (Lâtif Shah)<sup>2</sup> rules. Lâtif Shah had two sons and  
one daughter. The name of the girl was (Katmer), the name of one of the  
boys was "Asıl," and the name of the other was "Nesil." Gentlemen,  
this man, together with his three children, controlled the throne of  
Iran. The world makes laughers of some and leaders of others.

Gentlemen, while he was ruler, an old man came wandering along  
shouting, "I am selling a (rose)." He passed before the (harem) section  
of the Lâtif Shah calling, "I am selling a rose!" He had a flower in  
his hand, just one rose, and he wandered about calling out this way.

Katmer, the daughter of Lâtif Shah, looked out of the window before  
which passed the old man shouting, "I am selling!"

"Girls!" Katmer called.

"Yes! How may we serve you?" her servants asked.

<sup>1</sup>Asıl and Nesil are personal names. The meaning of Asıl" is  
"origin"; the meaning of "Nesil" is "generation, descendants." "Katmer"  
means "folds of the petals of a flower."

<sup>2</sup>Lâtif can mean fair, pleasant, slender, witty, or elegant.

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"You are to call the man who is selling that flower."

"Flower seller! Flower seller! Come! The Shah's daughter wants you!"

"Only one rose. That is all." he said.

"Father, how much do you want for this rose?"

"My daughter, I shall sell it to you for whatever price you will pay. Pay only what it is worth to you."

The girl inserted her hand into her purse. Because of being a ruler's daughter, she could not help noticing the old man's shabby appearance. But who in fact was the old man who looked so shabby? He was Hazreti Hızır.<sup>3</sup> She took some money from a knotted cloth and gave it to the old man, who, in turn, gave her the rose he held in his hand.

*Take rose to be kept in woman's bosom and not shown to anyone* "O lady, my daughter, do not show this rose to anyone. Do not let anybody know about it. Hide it in your bosom," he advised.

"All right!"

*Pregnancy -- induced by smelling a rose*  
As soon as the old man had gone outside, Katmer smelled the rose in her hand, and then hid it in her bosom. At that very moment, she became pregnant. She grew pregnant when she smelled the flower, though neither she nor anyone else knew it at that time.

*Fortune -- wheel of* Gentlemen, the wheel-of fortune<sup>4</sup> is turning at all times. Yesterday, today, again it turns.

<sup>3</sup>Hızır, though called the "Blessed Hızır" and though referred to as a Moslem saint, is neither named in the Koran nor accepted by the Moslem establishment. He is the last-minute rescuer from disaster, the granter of wishes, and, in rural areas a water deity and fertility god.

<sup>4</sup>The word used here is felek, meaning literally destiny.



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After a little time--two months, three months passed--aha! Who is there capable of understanding such things? The mother of the girl? At last her condition showed, and her mother observed this. daughter, what is going on? Your belly is swelling a little!" she said.

"I am aware of this, mother, but I do not know what is wrong with me. No man has forced himself upon me," Katmer replied.

After the sixth month had passed, her mother had her examined. The midwives decided, "She is six months pregnant."

The mother of the girl wondered, "Should I let Lâtif Shah know about this or not?" She began to grow anxious about this hidden secret. Although the mother of the girl tried to conceal this secret, she could not do it. She was afraid both for herself and for her daughter.

But strangers! You may conceal a secret yourself, but others have no interest in concealing it. The girl's servants let <sup>rulev</sup> council-of Lâtif Shah hear this news. "Lâtif Shah's daughter is pregnant! It means that she is not chaste!" --Once gossip has started, then others repeat what you have said. Does the mouth of the outsider stay shut?

At last, when the child was about to come forth into the light, news of this reached Lâtif Shah's ear. "Oh, my shah you are sitting on the throne, but you are aware of nothing. If your daughter is so promiscuous, what will ordinary people do?"

The father of the girl took two executioners under his command

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Seven viziers

as soon as he heard this. This council understood when he looked at the harem side. ~~Viziers~~ -- ~~Savahy~~ Seven viziers also went behind him. He reached the harem quarters with the executioners, held his daughter by her hair, and beat her against the ground. When he took the sword from an executioner's hand, they stopped him, holding him from behind. "Stop, my Shah! Do they make a man an executioner with evidence or without evidence? Let us see what is what, what there is to say about this. Who is the man who loves her? Let us find this out and see what is beneath all this. Why do you kill two souls--the one in her belly and her own? Stop!" They took the sword from his hand.

"Isn't this child mine?"

"Yes, she is yours, and you may kill her, but let us get to the root of this."

The girl was on the ground. She said, weeping, "O Father Shah, do not spill by blood for nothing. I do not know what has happened. I do not know how I have become pregnant!"

(This was a fact. The girl herself did not know that she became pregnant when she smelled the flower. What happens if you smell a flower?)

"Father Shah, either forgive me or execute me. I do not know what has happened to me. If you kill me for nothing, I shall be repaid by you at the court of the next world. Never have I even once been with a male! The hand of a male has never touched my hand. I too am baffled about how I have become pregnant with this child."

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Gentlemen, who believes simply in what is said? You know that there is a reason for everything. As we said yesterday, there is no explanation for just two things in the world: Destiny and death. For all other things a reason can be found. And there is also some explanation for this.

He had the girl examined to determine whether she was a virgin. They reported, "She is but there is child of eight months in her belly." Others said, "Stop! Since she is a virgin, there may be a miracle in this!"

But Lâtif Shah did not accept any of this. "My eyes do not see! If this child comes into the world, I will be like honey that has been smeared on the finger—always at the mouth of the people. Why did I feed this child! My eyes do not see!" he roared.

The council insisted on not killing her: "Do not violate the decision!" But her father, who was the ruler, insisted that she be taken to some other land, outside the laws of Iran, and that there she be killed and her bloody clothing be brought back to him as evidence of her death.

*Clothes -- bloody -- brought back by executioners as proof of condemned person's death*  
Cavalrymen -- four  
 Four cavalrymen grasped the girl, barefoot and with unscarfed hair, and started dragging her away roughly. The girl was screaming, "You are becoming murderers! But who understands my scream, my lord, who understands?"

They took the girl out of Iranian territory. Four cavalrymen, swords in their hands, fastened her feet and hands after they had taken

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her into a forest in the land of the padishah of Fers.<sup>5</sup> But these four men consulted each other and took a look at the girl, just a young girl at the age of eighteen. Her name was Katmer! They pitied her and said:

"Is there any use in shedding the blood of this girl? We have come to the land of the padishah of Fers. Iran is far away. Let us soak her dress or any other garment in blood. Let us dye it with blood for Lâtif Shah. Lâtif Shah has no magic merits. We shall take the dress which she is wearing and smear it with blood. Then we shall take this bloody garment, lay it before Lâtif Shah, and say, "Yes, your majesty, we have carried out your orders."

Thus the four of them agreed to take pity and not kill the girl. Perhaps they pitied her youth; perhaps they pitied her because of her crying. Whatever their reason, they left the girl still fastened. a short while, one of them said, "Let us go back and release her hands and feet. There is no good in leaving her hands and feet fastened. us unfasten her. Maybe then she can get under a tree. Maybe then she can pluck grass and put it in her mouth. Hungry, thirsty, hands tied, arms fastened--would that be right?"

They came back, and one of them unfastened her feet. "Oh, my girl, do not curse us. We are persons working under orders. What do we do?

<sup>5</sup>Fers (more often Fars) lay in the southern part of present-day Iran, along the Persian Gulf.



Justice, early or late, some day, finds its place!" Saying this, they left her in the forest and departed.

The four cavalrymen mounted their horses and rode back. They soaked a dress with blood, placed it before Lâtif Shah, and said, "Here, your majesty. Your order has been carried out. Following your order, we took her to the land of Fers and killed her in a dense forest. Here, we have brought her bloody dress to you."

"Well done," he said.

But oh! What went on inside of Lâtif Shah and inside of his wife? When he shut and opened his eyes, his daughter Katmer was all that he could see. But what is the use? The whole family was in great grief. The brothers of the girl cried bitterly. The heart of her father also cried. Let us leave them in their anguish, and discover what has become of the girl

This girl remained there one month and ten days. How did she survive? While she was wandering in the forest, she saw a huge hollow pine tree. The inside was so large that a man--even ten men--could enter it and lie down. Allah gave her this tree for protection from wind, rain, and snow. The girl, <sup>guess -- eaten by human being</sup> by eating grass, managed to survive until the time of her delivery. <sup>-- of child</sup> Nine months, nine days, nine hours, and nine minutes finally elapsed,<sup>6</sup> and from the tree a boy came forth into the world.

The girl cried. The clothes had been torn on her back as she had

Formulaic description -- for length of pregnancy

<sup>6</sup>Regardless of what biologists may say about the length of the period of human gestation, this 9-9-9-9 formula prevails in Turkish folktales.

Pregnancy -- length of in folk medicine (9 months, 9 days, 9 hours, and 9 minutes).

Gestation -- human -- length as in folk medicine (9 months, 9 days, 9 hours, 9 minutes).



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wound in and out among the trees of the forest. When the child came into the world, crying and naked, the girl said, "O Creator of the universe, who produces all from nothing,<sup>7</sup> how did I sin against you? What was my black destiny? You created this child. Now either find help for it or find me a way to death. I refuse to see him suffering."

The newborn child, still blood-covered, cried loudly. This poor young woman tore the rest of the clothing from her back, crying and saying, "I wrap you in these. Let us wait and see what we will see in the turning <sup>turning</sup> mirror of the world." This is a mother's heart which would take the rest of the clothes from her own back and make swaddling garments for the baby. Because there is no water with which to wash the baby, she cleansed the child with grass and swaddled it with rags torn from her own back. She hugged him and said, "Hey, my child, what I eat will go to my breasts so that I can feed you. By grazing—that is how I can feed you from my breast! Thank God for this too!" This girl accepted her situation. What is found in the forest? Grass. By grazing on non-poisonous plants, by the help of Allah, she enabled this child to suck.

As day followed day, she said, "O trees! You are my neighbors! O Flying birds! You are my comrades! I am helped by your chirping, your whispering.

<sup>7</sup>The narrator's exact words here were ". . . who makes the absent present."

Consolation -- from *whispering* of trees

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Consolation

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birds -- chirping -- console person

trees -- whispering -- console person

She took refuge in the whispering trees and in the chirping birds.

Katmer spent three years securely inside of this tree. Her child was by then a boy and she wondered what she should name him. She thought to herself, "What should I name this child but <sup>#672</sup>Hikmet?<sup>8</sup> There is really a hikmet involved here. Never, not even once, did a hand touch my hand. I cannot know how it happened, from where this child came. I do not know the reason for it. That is why I am going to name him Hikmet."

The child was three years old, but he was naked, barefooted, bare-headed. His mother was also naked. The swaddling clothes were torn, and the woman had taken the garments from her own back to cover the new baby.

Let us now give the news about someone else. About whom? There was a son of the Padishah of Fers whose name was <sup>#672</sup>Sinan. He was a strong and handsome young man, also about eighteen or twenty years of age.

One day while he was hunting, he pursued his quarry all morning. From morning till noon he followed this game, and by noon it had brought Sinan to the place where the girl lived. Did he come knowing she was there? He came without knowing. He was following the game, but when he looked, he saw a naked little boy. Hikmet's mother had taught him to speak, but he has not seen other human beings. The child saw

<sup>8</sup>The word hikmet means Divine Wisdom or the ultimate hidden cause for existence or occurrence.

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the man on the horse, though he did not know what a horse was. Sinan also saw the child. The child turned back and ran away, and Sinan galloped after him. He left the chase and forgot the game. "What is this?" he asked himself. "In this forest a naked child!"

The child ran away, reached the tree and climbed into it. "Mother, something strange is coming!" he said. He has never seen either a man or a horse. Sinan saw the boy enter the tree, and then--oh!--he saw a naked woman too.

The woman said, "Young man, if you love the being who created the earth and sky, do not look at me. There is no earthly dress on me." When she said this, Sinan observed the woman with just half an eye. As he approached the tree and saw its interior, the woman said again, "There is no earthly dress on me. Do not look at me. Do not look if you love the being who created the earth and the sky!"

The young man turned his back. He turned away, but he had fallen <sup>love-- at first sight</sup> in love at the first glance. He turned his back and said, "My sister, are you a jinn or something like that. What are you living under this tree? Tell me. I have forgotten the game out of interest in your situation. Who are you? Why are you living here?"

<sup>formalistic query-- about identity (inmisiin jinmisiin) Cinnmisiin</sup> The girl: "Young man, I am neither a jinn nor anything like that <sup>formalistic query: Are you jinn or other creature?</sup> I also come from Adan's descent. I am a lonely woman. This is my child." <sup>Adan</sup>

"Well, who brought you in this forest? What are you doing in the forest?"

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"Young man! Do not ask me about that. Do not ask it. My only wish from you is that if you have bread, give me a piece. For four years not a piece of bread has entered my belly. We have been grazing on grass, I and this child.

The saddlebag of the prince was full. He took off the saddlebag and said, "Sister, here I am leaving a felt coat<sup>9</sup> without turning toward you. Take the coat and put it on. The two parts of the saddlebag, which I have taken from the horse, are full. There is everything in it, including bread. Come, take the saddlebag and empty it. Then leave it on the ground, and I shall get it."

When Sinan threw down his felt coat, the woman descended from the tree, took the felt coat, and covered herself with it. Then she took the saddlebag and removed from it enough food for herself. "Oh, young man, let me take only enough for myself. I shall manage for a few days. Emptying the saddlebag would not be good for you. Perhaps you too will get hungry. Who will give you anything? I am used to this strange place of Allah, but you are not used to it."

When she said this, the young man advised her, "Sister, now eat. Fill your stomach. Also, make your child eat. I shall dismount, tie the horse to a tree, and rest a little. Fill your stomach. As I am a human being, I cannot accept your living in the forest. It is not

<sup>9</sup>The best known type of felt coat in Turkey is the kepenek, traditional outer garment of the shepherd. The felt in some of these coats has been fulled to a very great degree, making the fabric as much as a half inch thick. Long shepherds' kepeneks are warm enough and protective enough so that they serve almost the function of a tent as well as a coat. On snowy frozen terrain shepherds can safely sleep in them.

good to live in this forest. If you will come with your consent, I shall take you to my father's capital. If you should say, 'No, young man, leave me alone,' then I shall act as if I had neither seen you not heard you. I shall mount my horse and go away. The responsibility for you welfare lies wholly with you."

The woman thought for a while. She recognized that he was a conscientious and thoughtful young man. He had said, "Come if you come of your own accord. I shall help you and present you to our society. If you say, 'No,' then I shall go away as though I had not seen you." Then to Sinan she said, "Young man, I have liked your words. I am not committing myself yet, but whose son are you?" asked she.

"The padisah of Fers's. They call me Sinan."

"Well, young man, if you assist me, and if you take me to your father's palace, your father and mother will see me, the viziers will see me. Or neighbors, servants--all of them will see me. They will ask you, 'Where did you find her?' You will say, 'In the forest.' What is there in the forest? Savage man! Wild animals! Your relatives, your parents will criticize you. They will say to you, 'You are the son of a padisah. Shame on you! You have found the savage, the forest dweller suitable for the palace, and you have brought her to the palace!' They will say this to you. Tell me your real purpose in taking me. Tell me what there is in you heart."

He said, "This is what is in my heart: I shall marry you, by the will of Allah. If you come with me, I shall marry you. If you do not, I shall go away. But let me return you to human society. I shall



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marry you if you see me as suitable for a husband. If you say no, then I shall give up."

Katmer said, "Young man, you have spoken very well. But both your mother and your father would blame you for this. They will say, 'You are the son of a padisah. How did you come to find a savage suitable to accept as your wife?' Neither your father nor your mother nor anybody will accept this. They will not consider me suitable for you. Making me a vagabond is not necessary. If you were to accept their word, then it would have been better to have stayed in this forest, for here virtue is with me."

(Let us understand this clearly, gentlemen. Hear what she says: "To live in this forest is very good. Why? Because here virtue is with me." The holiest thing in the world is virtue. It is too holy to be thrown away. Virtue is not to be sold, and it is not to be given up. Virtue is what lives within the conscience.)<sup>10</sup>

The girl told everything to the young man, except that she did not say that she was also the child of a ruler. She did not say this. good would it do to say this, for she lives now, after all, in the forest and not in society. And when the young man asked her about this, she only said, "Do not ask about this part. We are only what we are!"

<sup>10</sup> Such moralistic interpolations are not uncommon in folktales. This particular narrator is especially prone to such moralizing--perhaps a reflection of his background and training in the bardic tradition.

The young man asked, "Where are you from? Who are you?"

"Do not mix this into it," said Katmer.

"Why did they expel you to this forest? What is the reason?"

Sinan then made this statement: "In the present situation you are my sister, and I am your brother. I am looking at you with a brotherly

Your words are well spoken, but am I not the one who will marry

If that is the case, then if my father loves me, he will also love you. And if my father does not love me, then he may not love you. By the will of Allah we shall be married. You will become my legitimate spouse; I will become your legitimate spouse. If my father condemns this, I am ready to be the man who will earn bread that you may eat."

Katmer considered what he was saying. She felt that his message was this: "Even if my father and my mother do not approve, am I not the one who will marry you and love you?" Katmer found his words entirely proper, and she responded, "Very well, young man. I do not have any objection to what you say. I cannot. If we are affectionate to each other, they let the people say whatever they will say. All right, young man, though we are not legitimate spouses until our wedding ceremony has been performed."

"That is correct."

He dismounted from the horse and helped the woman, who was wrapped in the heavy felt coat, to mount. Throwing the saddlebag on the back of the horse, he took the reins and led the horse, pulling it along until they were out of the forest. He was leading the horse on foot,

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while the woman rode on the horse, the child in her lap. He did not require her to sit behind the saddle.

By moving along this way, they came to the halfway point in their trip across the land of Fers. There was a caravanserai on the way, and within its walls there were also private rooms. Travelers going and coming used to stop at that caravanserai, staying as long as they wished and leaving when it pleased them to do so. It was the kind of caravanserai where, with enough money, one could have even bathing and laundry service. That is to say, it was like a hotel. This is the kind of rich inn there was on the way.

When this Sinan, son of the padisah, came along and arrived at the inn, he gave orders to a horseman, sending him to his father: "Go in through the main door of Fers palace, and tell my father that I have gotten married. I found a princess as a spouse for myself. Perhaps my father will not come to my festivities, but he is still my father. Tell him to send a military band, some soldiers, twelve viziers from his council, and a decorated carriage.

In the carriage there should be two compartments. All the treasure of my father should be applied to the carriage of the bride. The carriage should be covered with jewels. Such a glorious carriage should be sent." These were the orders he gave the man.

When this man reached the padisah, he repeated to him all he had been ordered to say. "Here, sir, he also wrote on this paper what I have just told you. He said, 'Take this letter and give it to my

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father!"

His father read, "O padişah father, I was hunting in the forest, <sup>Destiny -- written by Allah</sup> and the situation is this. Allah had written my destiny, I found my destiny during a hunt. I fell in love, alone from one heart to another heart. <sup>Allah -- will of -- required for marriage</sup> We decided to wed each other by the will of Allah. You are my father, and I cannot expect you to come and meet me. Do not come to meet me, but send the viziers, a military band, some soldiers, and a decorated carriage." After the paper had been read, the padişah said, "Strange! He says he found her in the forest. How can a woman be in the forest? Can this woman be a human?"

There were many wise men at the court. One of them arose and <sup>Advice -- to padişah -- in form of proverb</sup> spoke: "My lord, take advice from this proverb: 'In the caravan there may be a fine stallion, but judged by the saddle on its back, it may not be apparent that it is a stallion.'<sup>11</sup> This, our prince, is a very wise, very mature boy. He would not take for himself every person who is found in a forest. She is probably <sup>not</sup> a native of the forest. Her fate may have thrown her into the forest. Let us investigate this. My padişah, she may be a suitable bride. You are a ruler, and she, in turn, may be the daughter of a ruler."

"Very well," said the padişah, and he gave orders to fulfill his son's request.

That great entourage arrived outside the gate of the caravanserai.

<sup>11</sup> Not familiar with this proverb, we are not certain that it is here rendered in its most effective form.

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The padişah of Fers had had a carriage richly decorated, and there were other carriages too. The city residents who had heard of this carriage decorated for the padişah also had their own carriages decorated. For the gratification of the padişah they too made the journey to the inn. From that carriage which had been decorated in Katmer's honor the aunts<sup>12</sup> called her, "Come, my girl," and received her. The military band played in great splendor. And Katmer, viewing all this, rode in the carriage from there to the gates of the city.

Now, let us pause a little. In glory they were brought to the padişah's palace, but the padişah did not know about the child. His son had not written about it in the letter which he had sent to his father. He said only, "I have found a woman, I have decided to marry her. people to meet me." But, ah, now they saw the child too. "By Allah, this woman has been given to a husband already. Look! She also has a boy at the age of three!"

The padişah, together with his wife, had Sinan called secretly to the harem part of the palace. "Come, my son, sit here. You sent me a message, and I complied with you wish. But the woman whom you have brought has had a husband, and she also has a child. You said nothing about the child. Did you ask the woman about this child? Who is her husband? What is her husband? Perhaps tomorrow the husband of this woman will come asking for his wife: 'Come, young man! Whether you are the son of a padişah or not, how come you take my legitimate wife?' asks he. My son, is this in keeping with the law of Allah?" asked his

<sup>12</sup>"Aunts" here is a figurative term for female attendants of a bride.



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father and mother.

"Oh, my padisah father! No, I did not ask about this child. The woman was naked. First, I gave her my felt coat, and she clothed herself with that, but I failed to ask about the child. Let me ask!"

"Ask, my son. Let us know what lies beneath this matter. We may agree to accept her, but on what basis do we accept her?"

Sinan went to the girl and had her called aside privately behind a curtain, where he said, "I found you in the forest. Yes, I promised you that my father, mother, friends might blame me, might tell me not to marry you, might say evil things. I told you that I would be the one who would love you. We talked about this, but I did not ask about this child. Now tell me, are you married or unmarried? Is the father of this child dead or alive? Answer me! My father wanted me to ask, and, of course, I cannot refuse this request of my father. Why not? Because it is not a request that can be refused. He is correct in saying that perhaps tomorrow your husband will come, saying, 'This woman is mine. This child is mine. Who gave them to you?' Even if I tell him that I will not give you back, there will be a dispute."

(This is because, gentlemen, Allah does not give us three right ways. Everybody knows that there is just one right way for the man of God. A man of God does not commit a breach of trust.

For this reason, I beg you, gentlemen, do not go close to the window or to the chimney of another person. If you do, there will certainly be one who will come to your window or chimney.

\* Chimney to go near [someone's] - figurative  
expression for eavesdropping

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Summani<sup>13</sup> has said this: "Cowardly persons praise themselves but at the final reckoning they submit. There is no doubt that someone will come and abuse you<sup>y</sup> door if you have abused the doors of others."

If you damage the door across the way, then certainly there will be one who will damage your door. That is why; let men do what they do, but let them not be misled by the notion that there are three right ways. Everybody--the child at seven, the old at seventy--knows this.)<sup>14</sup>

At this moment Katmer said: "Young man, the words of your mother and father are well spoken. But I told you in the forest, 'Look, I have a child in my lap. Perhaps your father and mother will object.' But you may not have understood. There is no father of this child of mine. I do not comprehend the mystery of this either. Do not try to make me explain the mystery. All that I know is that there is no father of my child, and I have never had a husband. The hand of a man did not extend to my hand. Nobody can claim this. If I marry you, I swear, I am a virgin. I am still the same as I was born. But you may say, 'What kind of a girl is this? Is not this child her offspring?' Yes, I bore him; he is my child. But the hand of a man did not touch my hand. Go and tell this to your father and mother."

The prince went directly to his father and mother and gave this information. But the girl had not told the rest of her story. There

<sup>13</sup>The Summani to whom the narrator here refers was apparently a Turkish minstrel.

<sup>14</sup>Parts of this interpolated homily are not entirely clear but its overall meaning is clear: He who breaks faith and abuses another will, through divine justice, have the same abuse visited upon himself.

was truth in what she did say: "I did not have a husband."

When this was discussed by the padişah and his private counselors, someone suggested that the girl might have been impregnated by a nomadic Turk. The padişah also thought so. "Yes, this child probably was conceived from a Turk."

(Here is something that all men should tell their wives. What is it that I am going to tell you? When you go to the public bath, do not sit down without first pouring water over the marble seat. This is true for either man or woman. If you are given a wet towel—it happens to me almost every time—pour hot water over it and then squeeze it out. If you do not pour water over it, then some unpleasant thing may happen to you. Even in our law<sup>15</sup> it says, "Be aware of dangers." Maybe the man who used it before you has a disease. Maybe it is a contagious disease. Know this well.

If you go to a cook, do not eat a cold dish,, Do not drink cold soup. If it is hot, drink it. Do not drink cold water. Many people say, "I cannot drink anything hot, I drink what is cold," and they drink something only after cooling it. If you do this, be sure that tea or soup cools after you receive it. Let it cool before you, and then drink it because heat kills germs.

Do not spit when you are upset somewhere. When you spit, you may be sick with a disease. Someone else may catch it. You may say, "Brother, do not speak of such things," but I am going to speak of them because it is for your welfare. Do not spit! Swallow it! I know this from

Spitting

<sup>15</sup>The reference here is to Moslem canon law.

experience.)<sup>16</sup>

Yes, now let us continue our story. But what I just said also has a point. Now, what has this girl said? "I told you! Yes, I have a child, but I do not have a husband. I was not given to a husband. It is not that my husband died and the child is living. The hand of a man never touched my hand. But I do not know from where I gained this child."

Sinan gave this information to his father and mother. He told everything just as he had gotten it from the woman.

The padisah said to his wife, "Lady, I believe this may be true.

There may be something to it. Let us believe this."

Now, sirs, two scholars had once 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 meaning 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 <sup>a</sup> monastery<sup>17</sup> in Bagdad owned by an

<sup>16</sup>In an edited version of this tale, this harangue on sanitary practices might well be omitted. The effort of the Archive is to preserve the narration exactly as it occurred.

<sup>17</sup>The text says tekke, which means a dervish seminary or monastery.

Predetermination  
nature of



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

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

*Paraphrase -- in interpolated story pp. 71-76*  
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,<sup>18</sup> 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.

*embracing -- of feet*  
*embracing -- of hand*  
*foot -- embracing of hand*

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

The 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."

The 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!"

<sup>18</sup> Zillullah means the shadow of God on earth, an epithet often applied to the Caliph.

*Shadow -- of God -- on earth*  
*God -- shadow of -- on earth*

*Incest -- Oedipal*  
*Oedipal incest pattern of*  
*pp. 71-75*

*Riddle -- One man is son, brother and husband to same woman*



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

The woman explained. "Oh, scholars! The owner of this monastery 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 spills 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 neighbor questioned me. They made me take an oath: 'If you are a Moslem, then swear that you have not had any relation with any man! God 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.

child -- cast out into wilderness

"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 <sup>baby -- new born</sup> new-born 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 <sup>millar</sup> man had been the operation of a mill. He was a miller.) He said to

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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!'

"'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.' *Hero--Oedipus-type--leaves foster parents and travels to capital city*  
*Oedipus-type--same at also*

"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 left<sup>19</sup> 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,<sup>20</sup> 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

<sup>19</sup>The narrator's exact words were he takes his head (and) goes away.

<sup>20</sup>The Turkish text here reads My father's blood boiled toward him.

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you and whose son are you?'

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

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

"I 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, some 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 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 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,

Father -- of Oedipus -- dies at shock -- at discovery

Oedipus -- mother incest  
Oedipus -- father of -- Same or close

Oedipus-type -- goes mad -- upon discovery of incest with mother  
Oedipus-type -- self-exiled to mountains -- upon discovery of incest with mother

Exile -- self-imposed -- by  
into mountains -- upon  
Oedipus-type -- upon  
discovery of incest  
with mother

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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 say?

"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.' *Determinism -- of human action (by God)*

"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."

Well, now I must bring my story back to Sinan. The son of the padişah said to his father, "This three-year-old boy is Katmer's, but Katmer was not given to a husband. No man's hand had touched her. The child was borne by her, but there is no father." The padişah and his wife agreed with this.

(Look, now I am going to tell you the way something like this happens or is possible so that you too will say it happens or is possible. There are many acts of fate. Someone may say, "Friend, I thought that you were wise, but there had been no wisdom in what you have done. teach everybody wisdom, but here you have lacked good sense." Many might say this. Why? Perhaps because you did not seem to inquire and ponder and weigh the matter. Why did you do this job this way? But you could answer, "It was not because of knowing or not knowing. It had nothing to do with asking or not asking. Fate will enter even if you have the wisdom of fifty.)

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"Shah father, I am going to marry this woman. Yes, there is no one who owns her. This is our destiny. We are going to provide for this child."

"Very well!" said the ruler, and he gave orders to have the marriage act recorded according to the traditions of this period. <sup>Marriage -- by will of Allah</sup> By the will of Allah they took Katmer to Sinan. A great wedding festival was held in which they gave two youths, two lovers, to each other. It was a very benevolent occasion.

But the rose remained in Katmer's bosom. She did not show anybody this flower. The rose which she had received from that old man remained concealed in her bosom.

Gentlemen, let them stay here. Come now, let us hear the news about another place. News about whom? About Lâtif Shah, about Katmer's mother, and also about Katmer's brothers.

The father of the girl, Lâtif Shah, had intended to kill her when she was eight months pregnant at the age of eighteen. His council had not allowed him to do this, and so he had exiled the girl to the land of Fers. This girl now has become the legitimate wife of the son of the padishah of Fers. Thus we come to the news about the father of the girl, about Lâtif Shah

Lâtif Shah also had two sons, Asil and Nesil, and a wife. This man had had three descendants: a girl and two boys. He exiled his girl, and so only his sons remained in his household. Asil was now fourteen years old and Nesil was sixteen.



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When Lâtif Shah lay sleeping and was in the <sup>dreams -- world of</sup> world of dreams, an old saintly man with a <sup>beard -- white</sup> white beard came into his dream. He said, "O Lâtif Shah, you have a <sup>ordeal -- of seven years' duration</sup> seven-year ordeal to endure. It will be a great ordeal for that length of time. Do you wish to suffer it in this world, <sup>choice of suffering ordeal in this world or next</sup> or do you want to leave it for the other world? Which do you want?"

Dilemma

Lâtif Shah woke up and realized that it was a dream. "Allah! There is some providence in this dream. Such an experience was not something passing through my mind. It was a dream!" said he.

At last that day passed and again it became night. He lay down and fell asleep. For the second time, that man with the white beard appeared. He was the saintly old man who had sold Katmer the flower.<sup>21</sup> "O Lâtif Shah, you have a seven-year ordeal to endure. You will suffer this destiny at one time or another. Do you want it in this world, or do you want to leave it for the next world? Which do you want?"

This man woke up and again found that it had been a dream. As before, he did not say anything about it to anyone.

On the third night he had the same dream. The white-bearded man spoke sternly, "I am speaking to you! Why do you not heed? You have coming an ordeal which you will suffer for seven years. Do you want this ordeal to occur in this world, or is it to be left to the next world? Why do you not heed?"

Lâtif Shah awoke. "There seems to be no way of escape from this.

<sup>21</sup>This was Hızır. The dilemma he poses for Lâtif Shah is common in the folktale: whether to suffer some ordeal now or later. The "later" is not always in the next world. Just as often the choice is between the present time and the time of one's old age. See Archive tales #93 and #205.

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Look! This is the third time it has happened," he thought to himself. It was midnight, but nevertheless he gave orders that his council assemble. He called also for a team of theologians.

When they had gathered, he said to his council, "I have been hearing a voice from the invisible world for three nights. For three nights an old man has appeared before me, and said, 'You are to suffer a seven-year ordeal. This will affect not only you but your children as well.'<sup>22</sup> Will you suffer it in this world, or will it be left for the other world?' He said this each of the three nights. What is your opinion of this?"

His council said, "This is not a material problem but a spiritual one. Only theologians can interpret this. It is not our work."

The theologians had gathered by now, and he consulted them. "Which choice should I take?"

The theologians said this to him: "My Shah, you have seen this dream three nights. Your dream has come from Allah, not from the devil. The devil comes just once. This is third, but he will come once more into your dream. Realize that he is waiting for an answer from you. For this answer he will come into you dream a fourth time and say, 'Which one do you want?' The ordeal of the other world is harder to endure than is this world's ordeal. Let him make you suffer in this world. Say, 'I shall suffer in this world.' In the other world you could

<sup>22</sup> On none of the three nights had the bearded man mentioned Iltif Shah's children.

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not endure it."

Their advice was like that which Behlül Dane once gave to Harun Regit.<sup>23</sup> In spite of all his endeavors, Behlül could not awaken his elder brother, who was like a padişah, to his own situation.

He saw his brother's many wrong-doings, but he was unable to make his brother fully aware of them.

One day Harun Regit saw this blessed man of God<sup>24</sup> coming along the street toward him. "Where are you coming from?" he asked Behlül.

"From hell!"

People who heard this laughed. They said, "Ah, this is the business of a lunatic! What does he mean by saying this?"

"Well, why had you gone to the hell?" asked his brother.

"To get warm! I felt cold. I went to get warm," said Behlül.

"Well, did you feel warm there?"

"No, I could not find any fire."

"Why?"

"Because everyone else who had gone there had taken his own fire."<sup>25</sup>  
Not even a single spark fell upon me."

Look, look! I see what he means. What he is trying to say is this:  
"Open your eyes!" They [the theologians] said [to Iâtif Shah], "Choose

<sup>23</sup>Harun Regit (Haroun al-Raschid) was the Caliph (spiritual leader) of Islam at Bagdad at the end of the eighth century and the start of the ninth. According to legend, he had a brother or half-brother named Behlül Dane, who was a saintly fool who used his assumed madness as a cover for his berating of the powerful and all-too-worldly Caliph.

<sup>24</sup>The Turkish here is evliya-i-ullah.

<sup>25</sup>That is to say, the flames of hell that sinners suffer in the afterlife are the results of their own wrongdoings while upon earth.

to have your ordeal take place in this world."

"All right."

When it became night, Lâtif Shah took his ablutions and performed his evening prayers. After that, he lay down on his bed. As soon as he had gone to sleep, the white-bearded man came again. "Oh, sir, this is the fourth time. Which do you choose? You have a seven-year ordeal to suffer. Do you want to suffer it in this world, or will it be left for the other world?"

"Let me suffer it in this world. The other world's ordeal is harder, heavier. This world comes and goes, anyway. But the torture of the other world is too hard!" (This was what the theologians had told him.)

"All right, it has been so written! You will suffer your ordeal in this world. But do you know why you must suffer this ordeal? is the reason? You had your daughter at the age of eighteen unjustly exiled. That is why. It is to avenge and satisfy the curse of this child, that you, along with your children, will suffer seven years so that your punishment will not remain for the other world. Get up! Morning is almost here."

Lâtif Shah arose. He saw that the sun was rising. He and his children put on their fine clothes. He looked out again and saw a great crowd rapidly approaching the palace on all four sides. "What a crowd that is!" thought Lâtif Shah. He looked again and saw that they were his own people. At last they surrounded the palace and went



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round and round it. Some of them attacked the palace with swords in their hands.

"Stop!" What has happened? What do you want?"

"We do not want you! The people do not want you, and we too do not want you!"

They stripped all the fine clothing from him, his wife, and his two children, leaving them clad only in their undergarments, and then drove them away barefoot, bareheaded, deposed. Observe the ordeal. Because he wanted it to be in this world, within less than twenty-four yours, it all commenced. After having made his choice during the night he was surrounded in early morning and driven into exile. Another padishah became ruler and sat on the throne in his place. Just as he had had his daughter exiled, so he himself, together with his children, was also driven out, in the same way, into a forest. Horsemen took them away, unfastened their arms, and left them within a dense forest. Then the mounted men returned.

They were hungry and thirsty. As I told you, Katmer, the daughter, had also remained hungry and thirsty in this forest for three years. The children cried a little for bread. But from where could he get any? He would like to give them bread, but there was none. They had been driven away barefoot, bareheaded. Why? And what would happen to them they did not know. After all, there were no other people there, and no travelers, so that they would continue to want

To the cries of the children Iâtif Shah said, "My children, stop



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this. It has become night, but the owner of the night of course brings day too. My children, by the time the sun rises, other things may happen. When it becomes morning, perhaps we may come to the edge of this forest. There are many people of benovolence who will hand out bread among travelers. My children, be patient this night!" advised their father and mother.

One of the children said, "I must answer the call of nature and relieve myself."

"Go ahead, my boy! For such natural need there should be no shame. Go behind some tree and relieve your distress.

The boy went behind a tree to relieve himself, with the intention of returning. But, he went toward another tree, and then, going and going, he walked on and on in the forest. The boy went to the depth of the forest, crying, "Mother! Mother!" No voice came from his opposite side.

His father and mother saw that the boy had gone. Lâtif Shah said, "What has happened to this boy?" He got up and went to that tree, but when he left it, he also became lost. Soon the woman and the second boy also started looking for the others. As it grew darker and darker, they all lost contact with each other in this forest.

Asıl was crying on the one side, "Mother, father, brother!" Nesil was crying at another side. Lâtif Shah was looking for them in one direction, "Son, wife, son!" And the woman searched in another direction. In this great forest they became separated from each other. This was

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dispensation -- divine

epithet  
God -- explanation for -- "owner of power and weight"

divine dispensation of the owner of power and weight.

Come, now, from whom shall we get news? Let us have the news from the woman.

That woman, who was the wife of Lâtif Shah, cried until morning:

"Oh, my son! Oh, my son!" The sun had already risen elsewhere, but in the forest there was still no light. While this woman was sobbing, some people of the city and nearby villages had come to cut wood with wagons -- forty or fifty wagons. One of them said, "Wait, father! Wait a minute! A voice is coming toward us."

They too listened. Yes, a voice was coming, sobbing, "My son!"

Three or five men ran toward the voice. At last they came to the woman. Her head was bare and her feet were bare. Sobbing, she pounded her knees, <sup>26</sup> and pulled out her hair. She was wandering in the forest. They grabbed the woman.

"Oh, mother, who is your son? What is your situation? Why are you crying?"

"Oh, my sons! I lost my sons. I lost my husband! Where should I look for them? Where can I find them?"

"Come, mother! Although mountains cannot meet mountains, human beings may meet each other again just so long as they do not die. We cannot tell you where to look for and find them in this forest. would be impossible. Come, mother, come! Let us take care of you. Let us take you into the city. Perhaps your husband and sons have been found, just as we have found you." They took care of the woman.

<sup>26</sup> Although striking one's knees while one is sitting may be a fairly general gesture of grief or despair, it is usually not protracted or emphasized. In Turkish tales it is carried on at length and with vigor.

dove  
↓

Knees -- striking  
of -- as sign  
of grief

Grief expressed  
by striking  
one's knees

Grief -- expressed  
by pulling of  
one's hair

Hair -- pulling  
of -- as sign  
of grief

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Alas! What would the woman do? Some of them had the woman dress in a pair of their <sup>trousers -- baggy -- [savar]</sup> baggy trousers. Some of them had the woman wear one of their <sup>head scarf</sup> head scarves. They brought her to their wagons and made her enter one. They came to an inn on their way. They tied their wagons in front of the inn. They said to the innkeeper, "Innkeeper father, this is an unfortunate woman. She has bloody feet. We found this woman within the forest. The sons and husband of this woman have been lost within the forest. Give a room to this woman. Take care of her. Give her bread and bring other dishes. Whatever the cost, it will be paid by us. Give a room to this woman. We shall stay here this night, and in the morning we shall take this woman with us and go."

The innkeeper gave a room to the woman and took a look at her. "I seem to know this woman," he thought. She seemed to be a mature and sophisticated woman, although she has fallen into poverty or some misfortune. He said, "Sister!"

"What?" she asked.

"Well, what is your relationship to these people?"

"Nothing! I do not know them."

"All right, I suppose then, that they probably cared for you for the sake of Allah. But now they are going to take you off. In the end, someone will take care of you for the sake of Allah. Are they taking you somewhere to be married?"

"No! I have a husband, but I lost him. I also have children whom

Allah! -- action taken  
for the same

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I lost. I cannot be given to a husband because I already have a husband. Perhaps he has been found, and I shall have what I long for. It is forbidden for me to be given to another husband."

"Very well, sister," said the innkeeper who was a perceptive man.

"You cannot be given to a husband. If you were to go to a husband, I would marry you by the will of Allah. If not, if you do not marry, very well. But these people are peasants. They may take you along and make you work. They may not leave you a shred of dignity. I call you sister, and you may call me brother. That is what is done in the country to travelers. Oh, you need food, and so let me give a salary to you. For this salary you can work in this inn. Here is this room for you. Lie down, get up, eat, and drink. A woman is needed for work in this inn. I have seen that you are clean. If you stay anywhere stay in this inn. Some day he will come. I am an innkeeper and your husband is a traveler. Certainly one day, sooner or later, your husband will come along, and become a guest here.

The woman was mature and sophisticated. She saw that this would be quite proper. "All right, brother. Since you call me sister, I shall call you brother. The meaning of brother and sister is deep. You are my brother, and I am your sister. I shall work in this inn, and I do not want anything more than food for filling my stomach. Oh, let us see what will happen in the end. Only protect me!

"All right, my sister."

When it became morning, those men [the woodcutters] harnessed the horses to their wagons. Those forty or fifty men, who had been steal-

Marriage -- by the  
will of Allah



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thily cutting wood, said, "Innkeeper, give us the woman whom we found. How much do we owe you, for the woman too?"

He said, "Brother, I have made the woman my sister, and she has agreed to be a sister to me."

"Oh-h-h!"

"Let it go. If she wants to go with you, let her go. If not, then she will stay in this inn, and I will win her."

"All right, innkeeper. It is well. Let us go to her first. If she accepts your offer, very well, let her stay!"

They went to the woman and said, "Mother, you have used the name brother to this innkeeper. The innkeeper has also called you sister. You have become sister and brother. Will you stay in this inn? Do you accept this arrangement?"

She said, "Yes. The innkeeper is a very mature and honest man. Let me stay in this inn as my destiny."

"So let it be, my mother. Stay! Innkeeper, first to Allah and then to you she is trusted. Goodbye!" These men then mounted their wagons and departed.

Now, come, let us give the news--from whom? Let us give the news about Sinan, the husband of Katmer and the son of the padişah of Pers. This prince had married Katmer. The son of Katmer grew and became seven years old. His name was Hikmet. Sinan had had him <sup>Circumcision</sup> ~~him~~ <sup>27</sup> ~~circumcised~~ and had put him into school. The boy had become such a strong boy--I cannot

<sup>27</sup> This is a rather early age for a Turkish circumcision with all of the ceremony and festivity that accompany it. Nowadays, at least, boys are usually circumcised at the age of nine or ten, seldom before the age of seven.

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tell you just how strong.

This prince again mounted his horse and went out to hunt. After hunting he was on his way back, when he passed in front of the inn as the day was sinking into darkness. "Darkness has fallen, whatever happens or does not happen. [He had hunted rather successfully]. night I shall stay in this inn and depart in the morning," he said.

"Innkeeper!"

The innkeeper came out and saw the son of the padişah of his own country. "Yes sir! Yes, my prince!"

"Innkeeper, give me a place to stay."

"Yes, yes, please come in, my lord!" Since he was the son of a padişah, the innkeeper gave him a private room. He pulled his horse into the stable and fastened it.

"Innkeeper, bring me breakfast."

The innkeeper went to his sister and said, "Sister, look here. I am urgently in need of your help.<sup>28</sup> There are plenty of travelers, but there is one who is the son of a padişah. He wants breakfast. Now fix such dishes that he will not become angry, for that could be damaging to us. What are we going to do?"

"All right, brother. Do not worry."

The woman fixed a beautiful breakfast tray. She had been the wife of a padişah, but since she had fallen, she was serving travelers in the inn. She said, "Brother, take it to the prince."

<sup>28</sup>The Turkish expression here is I have fallen into your furnace.

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The innkeeper looked and thought, "Ah, the dishes on this tray are beautiful. Oh, there is much merit in this woman. May Allah grant that she stay permanently."

He brought the tray to Sinan's room. Sinan, being the son of a padisah, examined the arrangement of the tray. He looked at the dishes and at the way in which the napkin was folded. After Sinan had finished eating his meal, the innkeeper came in to remove his tray.

"Innkeeper!"

"Yes, sir! Yes, my prince!"

"Innkeeper, who set this tray and who fixed these dishes?" said he.

"I have a sister," said he.

"Is she your actual sister?"

"No, my lord. Some travelers brought her here. So, she became sister to me, and I became brother to her. She is working here."

"Innkeeper, this woman is a refined person. What a pity that she has fallen to working in an inn."

"Yes, my prince."

The prince paused. Sinan was a wise boy as well as the son of a padisah. He had spare clothing, and he now changed his dresses.

"Innkeeper!"

"Yes!"

"Innkeeper!"

"Yes, sir! Yes, my prince!"

"Take this handkerchief of mine, these under garments, and these socks. Take them to your sister and have her wash them tonight so that

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I may have them back again by tomorrow morning."

"Right away!" He took these things and brought them to the woman. "Sister, the prince changed his clothes from his handkerchief down to his socks. You wash all these and have them ready by the morning.

"All right, brother, I shall get them ready." That night the woman washed, dried, and folded the clothes beautifully. She folded the handkerchief as a handkerchief should be folded; she folded the socks as socks should be folded, and the under garments as they should be folded. She wrapped all of these up in a neat bundle and had it ready in the morning. She said to the innkeeper, "Take this."

The innkeeper picked it up and took it to his guest. "Here, my prince," he said, placing it in his room.

"Innkeeper, have breakfast brought!"

"It will be brought," He went to the woman and said, "Sister, he wants breakfast. He will mount his horse and go then. Sister, again dependent upon you for help." The innkeeper was nervous.

The woman furnished the tray carefully with breakfast, and then she said, "Take it, my brother!"

The breakfast was placed in front of Sinan. This he looked at with interest. He opened the clothing bundle and found that the socks were folded as socks should be, and the handkerchief as a handkerchief should be. "The person who folded the handkerchief," he thought, "must also be the person who folded the socks." He ate the breakfast. Looking again at how these things had been folded (the handkerchief, the socks, and the rest), he called, "Innkeeper, come!"



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"Yes!" said the innkeeper.

"You are to give this woman to me. I shall take this woman with

me, on horse back to the palace."

What could the innkeeper say? "Well, sir, I am obligated to you.

Let me kiss your hand, your feet!"

"Look here! I do not understand this sister and brother and so on.

You are to give her to me."

The innkeeper said to himself, "Alas, we did this by our own hand.

All right, son of a dog, why have you appeared?" He went to the woman

and said, "Sister, there is no help for it. It is a thing that just

happened."

"What, brother? May it be auspicious!"

"The prince liked your service. He said, 'You are to give me this

woman. I shall take her to my palace.' There is no way out of it despite

my begging. He will take you whether or not you want to go. I did not

give you; he is simply taking you. Both the cannon and the gun are in

his hand. He is a son of a padishah. He could say, 'Destroy this inn!

Destroy, destroy! Give it to the fire! Burn this inn!' Sister, they

would also then take you and go."

The woman saw that this was true. "Brother, again I am sister to

you, and you are brother to me. In any case, we are sister and brother.

Wherever I go we shall remain sister and brother still. I drank your

water, and I shall not forget. The time may come when I can save you

from innkeeping, Allah willing. But in this too there is some divine

dispensation."

Dispensation -- divine

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"This is the situation. Whether or not you agree to go, he will carry you off anyway. He is the son of a padisah, and even if you do not consent to go, he will take you along with him."

"All right, innkeeper. May no harm come to you. The harm which would come to you would come to me too. Go and say, 'She will go with you.'"

She went with him to the prince. What could the innkeeper say? Of course the innkeeper is not willing to have her go. But an order is an order. He was the ruler!

Sinan took the woman up onto the horse with him and returned to the city.

Come. let us hear the news from someone else. From whom?

On the night when the prince did not return, Katmer was in the palace with her child. Her father-in-law was in one room; her mother-in-law was in another room. <sup>Slaves -- female</sup> The female slaves and harem concubines swirled around Katmer like moths. <sup>swirling -- like that of</sup>

That night the old, white-bearded, Hazreti Hızır, the one who had said, "I am selling a flower," and whom Katmer had seen once in her father's palace, came into her dream now.

"O my girl, be happy. Good news! Tomorrow afternoon your mother will meet you. But, my daughter, for a while do not acknowledge her as you mother."

Katmer woke up and realized that it was a dream. "Let us see. Destiny is to make my mother and me meet in the mirror of fate -- Allah willing." Katmer was watching the route of the padisah's son, sitting

Fate -- mirror of

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by the window. In the afternoon she saw that the son of the padişah, on horseback, had emerged from the distance. Also, there was a woman on the horse that was coming. She was pleased. "My mother is coming!" she said to herself.

Sinan called as soon as he had dismounted in front of the door, "Katmer!" Katmer, with her female slaves, went down. "Katmer!"

"Yes, son of the padişah."

"Katmer, I have a mother, but you do not have a mother. I have brought you a mother. [Look, look at the one about whom he is talking. Oh, he does not know! How could he know her mother?] I brought you a mother, Katmer. You will not be bored in the palace now. She can fix such fine dishes! She can set such a table! Other employees in my palace are not of such merit. I liked very much the way in which this mother folded my handkerchief and under garments, and I liked too the way in which she prepared the food and set it forth. I considered her suitable for your service. Now that she is your mother, you may sit together."

"You have done very well, son of the padişah!" Katmer said. She had recognized her real mother just as soon as she had seen her, but in the presence of Sinan, son of the padişah, she did not acknowledge her by saying, "This is my actual mother!"

And so too with the mother. When the woman had seen her daughter, her heart had ached. She recognized the daughter at once, but she said to herself, "She does not recognize me, and perhaps I had better not give her any hint of my identity." This is the son of someone who

Recognition -- of relative from whom  
one has been separated

Recognition scene

Heart -- aching  
of (figurative)

## Story #672

is a stranger to me. If the young man learns of our relationship, he may wonder, 'What sort of a woman have I married if her mother is a creature of the forest. Let us go slowly in this matter.'

"You have done very well," Katmer said again to Sinan.

Then Sinan, having delivered the woman, went to his padişah father. "O padişah father!"

"What, my son?"

"Today at an inn I found a mother for Katmer, and I have brought her here to the palace."

"My son, first you found a wife in the forest, and now you find her mother at an inn. We shall have to see about this."

"O padişah father, this woman I found barefooted, bareheaded at an inn. But, padişah father, if you send your soldiers around the whole world, could they find such a mother as this one is? She is suitable as a servant for Katmer, for the palace, and for you and my own mother too. I discovered and brought here this gray-haired woman."

The wife of the padişah said, "Our Prince Sinan is certainly praising this woman whom he has brought home. First let me observe her behavior and see if it is as good as it is praised to be. We shall determine whether this is so."

After she had observed the woman closely for three days and three nights, Sinan's mother said to herself, "Oh, my son is indeed a clever man. He may have brought this whitehaired woman from an

Cleverness



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*hand [of superior person] — unfitness [of inferior] to hold*

inn, but she is such a one that I cannot hold her hand." 29

[Sir, it is a very distinguishing thing to be well-bred. Nobility is a thing quite unique!]

Sinan's mother said to her husband, "My padişah, our child is indeed a very sagacity person. Look, look at this towel which that woman washed! Look at the way she has folded this handkerchief!"

The padişah gazed at these things and said, "Yes, a great many towels have passed through my hands, but never before have I ever seen anything like this. Why, lady, she has even more ability than you do!"

"Yes, my padişah, that is obvious!"

On the fourth night the son of the padişah was again away from the palace. Katmer was lying down, and for a while she had slept. The older woman did not sleep at all, and after a while she went to the side of the bed, took Katmer's head, and put it in her lap. She wept as she looked into Katmer's face, and as she wept, she recited this poem:

Lullaby

pp. 94-95

I have lost my spouse  
And your brother too.  
Sleep my child, sleep my child,  
Sleep, O baby!

What would you do  
Now your mother has come?  
Wish now a wish,  
Katmer, my girl.

29 To compete with her.

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There is still in my heart  
 An aching for you.  
 Sleep, my child, now sleep,  
 Sleep, baby, sleep.

Sleep while I say "Nenni," <sup>30</sup>  
 Now little, you will grow,  
 For that you must sleep much--  
 Sleep, my child, now sleep.

Actually, the girl had awakened when her mother had first cried out, but she had not opened her eyes. She was keeping her eyes shut, but her 366 blood vessels had become weak. <sup>31</sup> But Katmer opened her eyes when the tears of her mother fell on her face. She opened first one eyelid and then the other when her mother started to weep.

"Mother, why are you crying?" she asked.

"For nothing, my girl."

"Oh, yes, mother, you are crying for some reason. What is it?"

"My girl, lie down again and sleep. Do you ever ask yourself where you were born? Did you come from a hold in a wall? Or did you just grow up somehow in the forest? I once bore a girl and two boys,

<sup>30</sup> Expression used in many Turkish lullabies. The word itself, spelled nenni or ninni means lullaby.

<sup>31</sup> In Turkish folk physiology the body has 366 blood vessels. There are many beliefs about them. Behçet Mahir, narrator of this tale, for example, told us in Summer 1964 that he could perform well only while standing, for then his 366 "veins" could all vibrate freely. It was only after he reached 70 that Behçet Efendi sat while narrating.

and I once had a husband. We fell in such a way that Destiny scattered us in different directions, and that is why I weep, my girl."

Katmer arose and embraced her mother's neck. "Oh, my mother! I could not stand your crying. Just a little while before Sinan, the son of the padişah, brought you here, I saw in my dream a saintly old man. He informed me that you would be coming soon afterwards. You are my mother, and I am your daughter! I did not let the son of the padişah know it, but I recognized you at once even though you did not realize who I was."

"Don't say that, daughter, for I had also recognized you. I known you were my daughter since I arrived. That is why I wept. I thought that you were asleep, I could not help myself. But, my daughter, let us recognize each other only secretly, not before anyone else." *Recognition -- secret*

Katmer asked, "Where is my father? What has happened to him? What became of my brothers?"

Just as I have related that whole account to you [the listeners], so the woman now related it all to Katmer. <sup>32</sup> "Oh, my girl, it is

<sup>32</sup> Truncating has apparently occurred here in the failure of the narrator to repeat the entire adventure of the family cast out into the forest. Was the truncating done by some predecessor of Behçet? Did Behçet abbreviate the tale here? Did he do it just for this telling—possibly to save tape or because he supposed that we had less time for repetitions than do coffeehouse audiences? Comparison of this text with other renderings by Behçet which may have been taped, might reveal answers to some of these questions.

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vomiting -- of blood -- [es figurative  
expression for suffering]  
Blood -- vomiting of = same as above

your ordeal which has caused us all to vomit.<sup>33</sup> I lost my two sons, Asil and Nesil, in the forest, and there I lost my husband too. I was crying and sobbing there in the forest when the peasants found me and took me to an inn along the road they traveled. For a while I worked at that inn, but then your husband became a guest at that inn. In response to my services to him, he said to me, 'Let me take you to the palace where you will serve as a mother.'

"As soon as he arrived before the palace door, he said to you, 'Katmer, I have brought you a mother. I have a mother but you do not. Now I have found a mother for you too, and I have brought her here.'"

Katmer said, "The one who made him utter such words must have been God himself, for what he spoke was reality. Here is my mother with me. It is you!"

"My daughter, he is the son of a padişah, and this is a padişah's palace. Thank God who made you meet me and me meet you. But let us not reveal our relationship. Yes, we have acknowledged each other, but let this remain for now something just between us. Let us see what the mirror of destiny will reveal to us in the future.

Destiny -- mirror of

Ask your father; do not cry.

Time passes; do not cry.

Who shuts the door today may later

Open it. Do not cry.

<sup>33</sup> The expression in Turkish for someone's behavior under excruciating duress is to vomit blood. Listeners to this tale would clearly interpret vomit that way. To vomit blood is an ancient Turkish expression, appearing several times in the ninth-century epic The Book of Dede Korkut. This expression may at one time have been meant literally.

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The moon goes for thirty days. Fifteen are in whole or partial darkness, but the other fifteen are in light

Leave them now where they are. Come, let us give some other news. About whom? About Hikmet!

This boy reached his fifteenth year, but he was a very strong young man for that age. His name was Hikmet, and he had been borne by Katmer. "I once sniffed a flower. No one knows whether or not he came from that flower, but all of a sudden God placed him in my womb. This is Hikmet's <sup>34</sup> child, and so I named him Hikmet."

One day the Council of the Padişah of Fers (the viziers and the wise men of the capital city) went to their ruler and spoke to him in this manner: "Our good padişah, we wish to say something about Destiny. Your son found a bride in the forest and brought her here. Very well! This bride already had a child whom she has now reared to the age of fifteen. The name of the child is Hikmet, but who is his father? Have you asked this?"

"I asked my son about this, but the woman has not told him anything about it."

This was the way in which the Council spoke to the padişah about this matter. They felt compelled to ask this question when they saw the boy go often to his grandfather, the Padişah of Fers.

"Did you not inquire about him?"

<sup>34</sup> See footnote #8 of this tale for the traditional meanings of Hikmet.



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"I asked my son, but the woman had not told him anything about it."

"Oh, your majesty, it would be good to learn the secret of this woman. There may be something important about what she 'has not told.' There is definitely some cause behind this Destiny. Why is it that you, as padişah, have not investigated this?" They spoke in this way to the padişah.

He realized that what they had said was quite appropriate, and so he called Şinan to his presence. "My son," he said, "you once brought a strikingly beautiful woman from the forest. Although we wished to speak of this, you instead spoke to us, saying, 'I am the one who shall marry this woman!' I accepted this. Now you have been married for twelve years, and her son is fifteen years old. Let us now call this woman and learn from her what her secret is concerning this boy.<sup>35</sup> He is her child. What does she mean by saying, 'I cannot tell how or from what origin this occurred'?" This is something which must be explained. I cannot account for Destiny, but there are always certain known facts connected with any act of Destiny. If you exert a little force, the truth will be revealed."

The padişah thus called his son to him and advised him of the decision of the Council. "My son, there may be some inconvenience in

<sup>35</sup> There is an unintelligible sentence at this point. It seems to be a distortion in the taping. Perhaps with some special audio expertise we may be able to recover the sentence. It may not be very important, for the logical flow of narrative does not seem to be disrupted without it.

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this for you, but we must have an explanation of the secret of this woman."

The result of all this conferring was that all of those concerned finally went to the room of Katmer—the son of the padişah (her husband, Sinan), her mother-in-law, her father-in-law, and the viziers. mother was already there.

Sinan spoke, "Katmer we talked of this matter in the forest. It may have been Destiny's doing, but there are always some known facts connected with the acts of Destiny. This boy has now grown up to the age of fifteen, and my mother is applying pressure on me about this; my father is applying pressure about it, and so is the Council. Do not conceal or deny. Your virtue is still alive. This is a matter of Destiny, and we do not have anything to say to you about it except to inquire how this child came into being."

Katmer saw that there was no way for her to avoid any longer telling the truth about herself. "O son of the padişah! First of all, this woman here whom you brought to me from the inn is my actual mother who fed me while I was in her womb for nine months before she bore me. I am telling this in front of my mother, but until now neither she nor I acknowledged each other publicly."

But the boy was also there, he whose name was Hikmet, standing beside her and listening to her explanation.

"I am the daughter of Lâtif Shah, and my name is Katmer. This is my mother, but my father and my two brothers are still lost somewhere

## Story #672

in the forest. This news of them my mother has given me.

"One day when I was eighteen years old, I was looking out the palace window. An old, white-bearded man with a single rose in his hand was shouting, 'I am selling a rose!' I said to my odalisques, 'Call that man selling the rose!' When the old man came, I bought the rose he held in his hand. I sniffed the rose and placed it in my bosom where from that day to this one it has remained."

They all said, "Well, take it out so that we may see it!"

As Katmer was removing the rose from her bosom, the fifteen-year-old Hikmet exclaimed, "No, mother! Do not take out the rose!" He went to stand by the window as he said this.

The woman took out the rose and said, "Whatever it was that happened somehow happened after this."

The boy said, "O mother, I told you not to take out the rose. You have disclosed this secret! See--the rose has faded!"

The rose has faded,  
The nightingale flown!  
Laugh now, mother, laugh  
Or sadly moan!

Uttering these lines, Hikmet leapt out the window.

So that is how matters stood, gentlemen. The rose had faded and the nightingale had flown, and whether people laughed or cried, there was no changing that fact. Because she had reared the child with such great difficulty at first, the woman cried out with more than usual sorrow. The mother of Katmer also began to cry, and soon a general

Jeboo (secret of  
miraculous conception)  
brother  
transformation--boy becomes  
bird--when secret of his  
miraculous birth revealed by mother  
Nightingale--boy transformed into--  
when mother reveals secret of  
his miraculous birth

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sound of grief arose from throughout the whole palace. And now the mother and father of Sinan regretted what they had done.

In the midst of all this anguish Sinan tried to console Katmer. He tried to reduce her great grief. "I cannot cease grieving, son of the padişah. Either I shall find my child or I shall die trying to do so." *Quest -- by mother -- to find son transformed into nightingale after taboo violated*

"I cannot let you go, Katmer. We are each other's until death, and I cannot be parted from you." Sinan was so much in love with Katmer that the palace would become a dark prison for him if he could not see her there.

Katmer considered her situation. She said to herself, "This son of a padişah will not permit me to leave. That is evident. He [my son] became a bird and flew away. I must search to find him. Can I find him? Our ~~ancestors~~ *God - will it* said, 'Nothing is really found by searching. If two meet, it is only because the will of God makes them meet.' I could take Sinan with me on my search, but in strange lands there are all kinds of things that might happen to my beloved. It is better that I go alone. It was I, through the action of my own hand, who made the child fly away."

It became midnight, and Sinan had no way of knowing that while he slept Katmer would remain awake and then leave him. They lay with their heads on the same pillow, while her mother slept in an adjacent room. Sleeping the sleep that was like death, Sinan never imagined that Katmer would leave him.

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Katmer arose and went to her mother, speaking in a whisper to the sleeping woman who heard nothing. "Mother, though I longed for you for fifteen years, I am now parting from you. My nightingale has flown and my rose faded." She then wrote a note to her mother: "Mother, do not curse me for going to strange lands to seek my nightingale. I shall either find him, mother, or I shall die."

She also wrote lines to Sinan and left them on his pillow. "Oh, Sinan, know well that my love for you has not ended. I once told you not to ask me to speak of it [the origin of Hikmet], but now I have spoken of it. There is nothing I can do now but to put on iron slippers and take up an iron cane,<sup>36</sup> O son of the padişah, because my rose has faded and my nightingale flown, I shall wander the earth. Forgive me for parting with you!"

Katmer dressed herself in shepherd's clothing, disguising herself as a man, and then she left the city. Those times were different from today, for then when brothers parted there was no certainty that they would ever meet again.

After a short while Sinan, for some reason, awakened and discovered that Katmer was not with him. He thought that perhaps she had gone to

<sup>36</sup> Iron shoes and an iron walking stick symbolize a very long and wearying journey in quest of something. Often the protagonist must wear out a pair of iron shoes before he/she attains his/her goal. This is a very common motif in Turkish folklore.



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the toilet. He called, "Katmer! Katmer!" but there was no answer. He went to her closet and found that some of her clothing was no longer there. Returning to the bed, he found on the pillow the message which she had written to him. After he had read her words, he could say nothing but "Alas! Alas! Alas!"

*turning around 2d sound*  
*--as emotional response to great loss*  
 Hearing this repeated cry from their son, the Padişah of Fers and his wife rushed to Sinan's room. There they found the young man turning round and round like a moth. "What is it, my son? What has happened?" his parents asked him. *Mo-A -- circling line 2 -- as emotional response to great loss*

"Oh, my padişah father, why did you have to become so particular about this matter [Hikmet's origin]? Now Destiny has taken my beloved from my arms. Oh, padişah father, after such a beauty as Katmer has

left me, this world will be nothing but a dark dungeon for me."

*Dungeon -- devil -- world as a -- to deceived person*  
 "Son, I understand what Katmer meant to you, but what can be done about it? It was just something that happened!"

"No, padişah father, Katmer had warned me not to ask her about this matter, but when I insisted that she tell me, she did. Now I must find my beloved or I shall die. Farewell!"

"Do not forget us in your prayers!"

"If we all live, we shall meet each other again," said Sinan.

The people of the city said to him, "O Sinan, what has happened to you?" Thinking he was mad, the people would not let him leave. He was only one man, and they were 100,000, and so at first he could not prevail against them. For three days they detained him, but on the fourth day he found a means of escape, and he too left, like Katmer. He left

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his father and mother and that old woman who was the mother of Katmer.

Gentlemen, let us now hear some other news. About whom? This time about the mother of Katmer.

This woman said to herself, "After fifteen long years I finally found my child again, but now, partly through my own fault, I have lost her again. My only daughter set her soul upon the recovery of her son, and she has gone. Why should I remain longer in this palace? Who of all my kin is now in this place? Let me go after my daughter, pursuing my children." And thus one night, without letting the padişah know, she said farewell, and the following morning the people arose to find her also gone.

Come, now let us hear some other news. From whom? From those other two children, Asil and Nesil.

After a while the two brothers found each other in the forest, but no one else found them. They were both crying, "Mother! Father!" but neither mother nor father came to them. They wandered about crying thus for forty days, but it was a very lonely place, this forest, in which there were neither dwellings nor travelers.

Asil became so <sup>hungry</sup> hungry that he said to his older brother, Nesil, "My brother, I am so hungry that I have not enough strength to go on." He was fourteen years old, and Nesil was sixteen. These two brothers, most of whose clothes had been torn from their backs, supported each other as much as they could. They were bareheaded, barefooted, and almost completely exhausted.

Re-  
separate  
lost brothers

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"Here, brother," said the older Nesil, "put your head in my lap."  
There he cried himself to sleep as his brother gazed at his face. This older boy looked about them in all four directions and realized what their situation was.

*Pigeons -- Three*

Three pigeons came along at that time and landed on a branch of the tree under which the boys lay. One of these birds said, "What a pity! Look at those two youths and see what an unfortunate condition they are in!"

*Pigeons -- speaking human language  
Birds -- (Sens or abur)*

One of the boys was sleeping and the other was awake. This latter was amazed to discover that the three birds above his head were speaking in human language. Lifting his head slightly, he listened to their conversation.

One of the birds said, "They are young! What kind of sin could they have committed? Their mother, father and sister are crying out elsewhere, in some strange land. They are suffering their ordeal. Let us die for them." *Pigeon -- sacrificer self to provide food for starving princes*  
*Sacrifice (self-sacrifice) -- pigeon willingly becomes food for starving princes*

"Yes, I shall now kill a bird and throw it in front of them."

Which ever of them eats the head of that bird will become a ruler, and he who eats the body will always find a bag containing 100 pieces of gold beneath his head wherever it is that he awakens from sleep."

They threw the pigeon down from the top of the tree, and when it struck the ground, Nesil awakened. <sup>37</sup> "How strange! Brother, wake up!"

<sup>37</sup> Who threw down the bird? Did one pigeon willingly have himself literally sacrificed (as the one said he would)? Then was it the other two pigeons who threw the body of the third down close to the boys? It seems too casual. If a creature actually offered itself as food, the significance of this ultimate sacrifice demands more attention.

*Boy -- to become ruler -- as  
result of eating head  
of sacrificed pigeon  
to require 3 bags  
gold each  
ing -- as result of  
body of  
fed pigeon*

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he said. The elder was wide awake but the younger was still sleepy.

"Get up, brother! I have hunted down a bird for us. Shall I be the ruler or you? Which of these two parts do you wish, the head or the body?"

"Brother," said Asil, "I am so hungry that I shall take the body and give the head to you!"

"All right, then, brother, take it!" said Nesil. "We are so hungry that we will not have the strength to cook this bird." They just cleaned the bird and pulled out the feathers. As Nesil ate the head, he realized that his doing so would make him a ruler some day. But the other one was to be very prosperous, as if every morning he had inherited a bag containing 100 pieces of gold while he had slept. For a short while they felt better, for their stomachs were full.

After a while Nesil said, "Look here, brother. Let us not take any chance of becoming separated again here in this dense forest. When you have to relieve yourself, do not go any distance to do so. Simply go around to the other side of the tree we camp beneath." But Asil went in the opposite direction from the tree, and when Nesil could not find him, he lamented, "Oh, woe, woe! Where has he gone? How can I find him? Such bad fortune!"

Finally the elder brother came to the edge of the forest, still crying out and shouting for his brother. The night had now almost passed and there was a mark in the sky in the direction of the dawn. A few <sup>woodcutters</sup> peasants cutting wood at the edge of the forest heard Nesil's cry. Some of them came running toward the sound. "Where is the sound coming from?"

Flesh -- new --  
by prince's  
weak from  
own it

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they asked each other. At last they found this sixteen-year-old boy wandering about along the edge of the forest. "What, brother? What is the matter?" they said to him. They seized him, took him back to where the rest of their group was working, and they set food and other things before him. These peasants had come from the land of the Padişah of Fers.

The Padişah of Fers himself had become a changed man, for his thoughts were always filled with the loss of his son. His son had left the land. At the time that the padişah died, there was no heir to the throne, and so the people chose a new padişah by means of a bird election.

A bird was released, and the person on whose head the bird settled would be the new ruler. <sup>38</sup> Bird election -- of padişah -- when released bird lands on head of someone  
Election -- to position of padişah -- as result of released bird's landing on head of person

It was to this place that the peasant woodmen had brought the child whom they had found on the border of the forest. It was a very <sup>Tâlih</sup> important occasion, and to indicate that, no one had gone to work that <sup>Kuşu</sup> day. All the men (no women) gathered together in one place. When they freed the bird from the top of a tower, the bird circled around and fortune -- settled on the head of the child. It turned about on his head, flapping <sup>selects new</sup> its wings. <sup>padişah by landing on head of person</sup> <sup>destined for</sup> <sup>role</sup>

<sup>38</sup> This electing bird is known as the Tâlih Kuşu (Bird of Fortune). In Turkish folk tales at least, rulers have been chosen by such a bird for many centuries. In real life such cranial landings are considered omens of good luck for the person so honored.



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When the people reached the place where the bird had descended, they found that it had landed on the head of this unknown boy. "What a thing!" <sup>39</sup> Who is this boy? Where did he come from?" they all shouted.

The woodcutters explained, "This boy we found crying in the forest, and so we brought him here."

"Oh, may God take your souls! From where did you bring this disaster?" These were some of the things these men said before they took away the bird to have it make a second attempt to select a new padişah. But again, when the bird was set loose, it circled around and then landed on the boy's head

The people were so angry now that they took Nesil out of the city and placed him in a distant mill. They freed the bird one more time. It rose in the air, circling around in wider and wider turns until it came to the mill. There it swooped down, flew through a window, and landed a third time on the head of the boy.

When the people reached the mill and discovered that the bird was sitting on the child's head, they said, "Stop! This is enough! There is some <sup>mystery -- divine</sup> divine mystery involved in this. This is the third time the bird has selected this boy, and there must be some divine providence in it. It is our kismet to have him as our padişah." Right away

<sup>39</sup> The text here uses the word ulan, an exclamation of wonder. The term is often given some slangy equivalent in English, such as "Man alive!" as it is in the Langenscheidt Universay Dictionary.

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they lifted him to their shoulders, holding him by his arms. Taking him directly to the bath house, they bathed him. This boy who had wandered lost in the forest was now clothed with <sup>robes -- royal</sup> royal robes and seated on a throne in the palace. "O man, you are our padişah. We are at your disposal! You are our destiny!"

Nesil sat on the throne but his heart was uneasy. "Oh, Destiny, you still hold the mirror. I have been searching for my brother, my father, my mother. But where do you have me sitting? Why am I doing this? Arrange it that I meet my father, my brother. Do I want sovereignty from you? But that is what has happened!"

Gentlemen, they have told me to "let him keep his sovereignty for now." <sup>40</sup> The other brother is still wandering in the forest. On the other hand, Katmer has gone off to a strange land in search of Hikmet Sinan is looking for Katmer. The woman [Katmer and the boys' mother?] is seeking for her sons.

All of them have fallen into strange circumstances and are in strange places. Is there any way to gather them all together again? Our task of bringing them all together again remains for tomorrow night. We can do no more tonight. Tomorrow night (Inşallah!) <sup>41</sup> we shall tell the other half of the story.

<sup>40</sup> Behçet Mahir, the narrator, had received notice that the coffeehouse was soon to close for the night.

<sup>41</sup> If Allah is willing.

42

God has given to us many a beautiful saying.  
 May it be the will of God to forgive our past offenses.  
 O faithful heart! Shift not out of your course.  
 The Devil will not heal or even intercede.  
 Move away from, linger not with those  
 Who leave the path of righteousness. *Righteousness -- path of*  
 Speak not with those perverted or corrupt. *perversion* *Corruption*  
 Give no assurances for lands you have not seen.  
 A loss of credibility will bring you woe.  
 And worse, a woe with which no one will sympathize.  
 When money has grown scarce, do not become indebted.  
 Sell your property in order to eat but starve before selling  
 a secret.  
 To do otherwise may cost you both friendship and respect.  
 A horse frolics most when on familiar plains.  
 The cauldron is that in which water is boiled today.  
 The greatest problem to be faced is that which stands at  
 one's own door.  
 One profits not from another's need for a tombstone.  
 Tell not another of a rumor you may hear.  
 Take not food from the hands of the ignorant.  
 Let no one wish upon another the distress of a stranger.  
 My words are reserved to those who can understand them.  
 If words have opened your eyes still further,  
 Turn not your face from the man you saw before.  
 Destroy no human heart, for it cannot be restored.

<sup>42</sup> This long list of aphoristic sayings serves as an "attention getter" (in a noisy coffeehouse) in preparation for the renewal of the tale. As such, it serves much the same function as does a tekerleme. The translator, Dr. Bedia Kiran, was neither a literary person nor one particularly familiar with Turkish proverbs; the translation, therefore, is quite literal, and anyone editing this text for publication may well wish to provide his/her own translation. We have used here Kiran's literal translation, though we have regularized the rhythm somewhat.

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Keep not company with him who has no values.  
 If you drink no wine, you will patronize no tavern.  
 Gaze not at beauty with the eyes of ill intent.  
 Let not even the wife of a stranger rouse illicit lust.  
 Praise not yourself by flaunting your possessions.  
 Speak not the names of those you view as equals,  
 And keep your secrets safely to yourself.  
 Whatever choice you make, confer first with yourself.  
 Listen long and carefully before you speak yourself.  
 There won't be anyone to sway a heavy man.<sup>43</sup>  
 Name what you will, it cannot be improved by poverty.  
 Cook it as long as you will, alum will not turn into sugar.  
 An evil origin may bring forth evil people.  
Jewels come not from an origin as base as iron ore.  
 Our ultimate home is in the grave.  
 The curse of the innocent against the cruel  
 May shake a shah down from his throne.  
 The sin of anyone is his alone.  
 Whoever feels the fire of love,<sup>44</sup>  
 Whoever follows the path of right,  
 Will step by step, like dervish, find true harmony.  
 What shall I say to you, my heart?  
 The nightingale may fly forth from its cage,  
 But you must stray not from the truth  
 Revealed by the Mirror-of Destiny.  
 Let me watch you now, my heart,  
 I who am named Behçet Mahir.  
 Our being came here from the spirit world;

<sup>43</sup> A person with dignity and good reputation.

<sup>44</sup> God.

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Life on earth -- as prison

You made this life on earth a prison.

What can I say to you, my heart?

Every night is like a whole <sup>Time--cycle of</sup> cycle of time to the minstrel. May this night be the cycle of Asil and Nesil, Katmer and Sinan, and Hikmet. In our story told yesterday, Lâtif Shah had seen a man who asked, "Do you wish to suffer your ordeal in this world or the next?" Theologians and astrologers had cautioned him: "The ordeal of the next world will be harder to suffer," and advised him to choose his ordeal in the present world. Doing so, he had been driven from his throne within a day to become destitute and miserable, wandering with his wife and children in the forest. Worse yet, each of them had soon been separated from all the rest.

Hikmet who had said, "Oh, mother, do not tell," was by then fifteen years old. The ruler and the viziers had gathered together around his mother to learn this secret. The woman, because she could now do nothing else, had taken the rose from her bosom and had thus at last revealed the source of the mystery. At the moment that she did that, the boy, standing before an open window, had said, "The rose has now faded, mother!" --and the rose in his mother's hand had indeed faded. The boy had then said,

The rose has faded,  
The nightingale flown.  
Laugh, mother, laugh,  
Or make sad moan.

He had then flown as bird from the window and disappeared.



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There was great grief for the loss of the child. His mother grieved for him and vowed to pursue him. Sinan, her husband and the son of the Padişah of Fers, decided to accompany her. "O my loyal beloved, I shall go with you. I may die, but I shall not let you go without me. Can two lovers part from one another?"

But the woman had departed while he still slept, setting out to find her child, though she might have to cross strange lands to do so. Sinan, discovering this, had said, "Either I shall find my beloved or I shall die on the way," and he had departed, leaving father, mother, and country one night.

Gentlemen, a tongue is needed to outline all of these events. Yes, and silence from the audience is needed <sup>45</sup> to allow me to tell, one by one, the catastrophes which fell upon their heads. <sup>46</sup>

This part is the most vivid, most burning, and most interesting part of our story. Gentlemen, let us now hear some news. From whom?

Nesil had become a ruler and Asil had the reward he had been given by the "Three." <sup>47</sup> The prince would find three purses of gold beneath

Three -- "The Three" -- most powerful group of immortals controlling universe -- in Moslem mysticism  
<sup>45</sup> The narrator is asking for silence enough to permit him to renew the story.

<sup>46</sup> Occurred to them.

<sup>47</sup> This is part of Moslem mysticism. Many believe that there are groups of immortals -- akin to saints, if you will -- who implement God's will on earth. They are referred to as "The Three," "The Twelve," and "The Forty." The smaller their number, the greater their power. In folktales (and often in actual life) their numbers are pluralized, even though the numbers are already more than one. Hence they may be called "The Threes," "The Forties," and so forth.

Three purses --  
 of gold

Purses -- three  
 of gold

Gold -- three  
 purses of

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his pillow each morning wherever he slept. The giving hand had given.

Gentlemen, there is never any business at <sup>Court -- of law</sup> court for the people who accept their right, for you all know that another name for God <sup>Justice -- as one of the names of God</sup> is Justice. If two Moslems agree with each other and take only their rights, they go neither before a judge nor the door of the courthouse. Everyone knows this. But the doors of the courthouse have been opened to those who do not accept only their rightful share, and to those who do not come to the correct way. <sup>48</sup> Courts have been established to teach the unjust justice at the hands of the judges. All of them are administering the law. Do not say, "In the old days it was that. Why has it now become this?"

Before asking a single question nowadays, what does the judge say to us? He says, "Do you swear on your virtue and conscience to tell the truth? See to it that you answer accordingly!" --So, first consider your virtue and conscience. Your brother cannot save you! Your father cannot save you! Your mother cannot save you! Nobody can save you!

Gentlemen, in yesterday's part of the story, the Padişah of Fers had changed his world. <sup>49</sup> Nesil, bareheaded and barefooted, had come out of the forest, and he had come to the land of Fers. He knew these facts: "I ate the head of the bird, and my brother ate its body. Ruler-ship fell to my lot, but whether it occurs today, or whether it occurs

<sup>48</sup> <sup>Death -- of person -- euphemized to "changed his world."</sup>  
<sup>Euphemism -- for death of person: "changed his world"</sup>  
 This is Sufi terminology, the "way" being their pursuit of God's design for man.

<sup>49</sup> A euphemism for had died.

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Death -- emphasized to withdrawn his hand from this world

Euphemism -- for death of person: "withdrawn his hand from this world"

↑

tomorrow, only God knows."

This youth of sixteen had come to the country of the Padişah of Fers. But this padişah had withdrawn his hand from this world, and

his son [Sinan] had already gone to a strange land and had disappeared.

State bird -- which selects new padişah -- by landing on person's head  
People allowed the state bird to fly, and it had landed on the boy's head. In three flights it had consistently landed on his head. They

Providence -- act of  
had finally agreed, "Yes, this is our kismet, and there is something providential in all of this." They had then taken him to the bathhouse and bathed him, and finally they had clothed him in royal garments. Placing him upon the throne, they had said, "Our padişah, we are at your disposal!" They had held their hands on their breasts as they had said this.

Now he had become padişah, but his family was still all missing. They were not dead--or so he continued to hope--but they were lost.

His father, mother, brother, and sister were absent. What was the heart of Nesil wishing? "What am I doing with this power? What am I doing with this treasure? I should prefer to sit on a straw mat if only my father, mother, brother, sister were with me. That world

would be better for me than this one!" Although he had much gold, his heart was vomiting blood. But how helpless was this desire of the

heart! The secret power is not in the hands of human beings. What could he do? "There is a divine mystery, a providence in everything.

blood -- vomiting of -- used figuratively -- to describe suffering

50 Was suffering greatly.

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Let us see where our heads will reach at the conclusion of all of this!" <sup>51</sup> Nesil submitted to all of this because it was caused by the power that came from God.

Gentlemen, after ascending to the throne, Nesil managed well to distinguish the just from the unjust. The people of the land of Fers recognized this and said, "Yes, he may be very young, but the way he is walking and the justice he is dispensing are very mature." Maturity makes it possible for human beings to confront whatever they must. Everything may come under this heading.

Gentlemen, you pay me 100 kurus <sup>52</sup> for good reason. Is it not because oral art is necessary for you? Meaningful stories are necessary for both you and me. Today there are corners of scholarship, our universities. Foreign languages and other subjects are taught there. And the greatest professional skills are taught there too. The state was paying me a salary yesterday, as it still does today. The state does not say, "How many people believe you and listen to you?" But still it pays me for the words which come from my mouth. The microphone is in

<sup>51</sup> Let us see what will come of this or where this will lead us.

<sup>52</sup> This is the narrator's invitation to the audience to pay him a small amount for his storytelling. Behçet Mahir is not really a minstrel, for he does not sing, and his narratives are mainly prose. He is more a meddah, a coffeehouse entertainer carrying on a tradition that goes back to early Ottoman times. Meddahs often used to take recesses from narration at "cliff-hanger" points in their stories. Eager to have their curiosity satisfied, audiences often contributed generously during such breaks in order to have the raconteur continue. The contribution here is apparently small. The kurus is 1/100 of a lira, and a lira at the time of this performance was worth seven U.S. cents.

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my hand both night and day. 53

Maturity allows human beings to attain everything. There are two stories on my tongue. First I am going to tell you a parable. Then I am going to finish our larger story tonight, no matter how long it takes.

*Mohammed -- disciple of  
disciple -- of Mohammed*

While one of the disciples of Mohammed was going on a journey, he saw that a boy was crying beside a wall. He was crying, striking himself and throwing over himself soil which he picked up from the ground, but nevertheless he sometimes laughed, as if he were quite delighted. there he was, covered with dirt and pounding himself but alternately laughing and crying. The disciple observed that the boy was no more than seven or eight years old. He said, "My boy, who has abused you so badly that you cry in this way?"

But there was crying, there was crying! He wailed bitterly. caused such crying? It was an internal pain, not a beating, which made him cry so.

*Uncle -- term used to indicate respect rather than kinship*

"Uncle, no one has beaten me. I strike myself and cry because I wish to do so."

"My boy, why do you do this?"

"Uncle, what will my situation be? I am crying because of whatever errors I may commit. I am thus punishing myself."

53 Mahir was actually an odacı (custodian) at Atatürk University, Erzurum, for many years before he retired around 1980. He was never actually paid by the state specifically for his storytelling, but his supervisors at the Faculty of Letters permitted him to narrate for collectors and scholars on his work time, and there were many days when he, in fact, did little else.



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"My boy, goodness and badness are still not fully meaningful to you. You are still not even in adolescence. What is your sin? Why are you crying and striking yourself in this way? Nothing can be that meaningful to you yet!"

Gentlemen, let us listen carefully to the answer that the boy gives. Hear what he says! The words are not mine.

"Uncle, you have spoken very well. But when my mother lighted the fireplace, I watched to see what happened. I saw that she lighted the smaller pieces of wood first. She then laid in larger pieces on the smaller pieces. Those smaller pieces flared up and ignited the larger chunks. From this I concluded that sin may be like this. It may progress from small offenses to larger ones. I myself may cause my sins to increase in size by allowing them to grow from small sins in my childhood."

Just hear these words! A little boy at the age of seven or eight said this!

The disciple was astonished. He said, "Very well, my boy, this observation of yours is very wise indeed. But, tell me, why do you pour this soil over your head?"

The boy said, "Uncle, sooner or later, but eventually, they will put me into the soil. (Hear, hear! Hear these words!) Naturally, sooner or later they will put me, you, them, us into the soil of the earth. There is a saying in the language of the minstrels that applies to this. I have asked many people about it but they did not know it.

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I know it and I do not know it. What it means I know, but I cannot repeat the exact words. It means that mortals all know they will die, but no one knows in what way he will die. From now on I should become more familiar with the soil and the soil with me, so that tomorrow when I enter the earth, the soil will not be strange to me, nor shall I be strange to the soil."

The disciple was again amazed. "Oh, very well said, my boy, very well said! But tell me now, what was the meaning of your laughter amidst all this?"

"Do you ask me this seriously?"

"Yes!"

"There is the Right, <sup>54</sup> the owner of Power, who created this universe from nothing. He has made a promise to us. When I remember and think about that promise, I laugh, for it is happy news for us. a great Padişah <sup>55</sup> you are! What a wonderful promise you have made to us! 'Come with everything that you are, and I shall forgive you.' I am laughing because of the delight one experiences in knowing that God -- forgiveness at promise!" Forgiveness -- O + God

"Yes, this is wonderful, my boy. I agree! Now let us play hide-and-seek for a while. Shall we?"

"All right, uncle. Let us play!"

<sup>54</sup> God.

<sup>55</sup> God.

"Now you hide yourself, as if you were lost, and then I shall find you."

The child said, "Uncle, I am younger than you are, and my body is much smaller than yours. If I hide myself first, you may look for me for a long time. Perhaps you will not be able to find me at all. --first you hide yourself, and let me find you. Afterwards, I shall hide myself, and you can find me."

The disciple realized that the boy was better advised here too. Hear what he has said! "You are bigger; my body is smaller. If I hide first, you may look for me for a long time. Perhaps you could not find me after all!"

"All right, my boy," said the disciple, "let me hide myself first, and you must find me. Shut your eyes, for now I shall hide myself!"

The child covered his face with his hands, closed his eyes, and said, "I have shut them!"

*Namaz -- Great -- Declaration of God's Unity  
Prayer -- Great -- " " " "*

The disciple recited a prayer, the Great Namaz, <sup>56</sup> climbed up into a hiding place, and shouted, "I have hidden myself!"

The child opened his eyes and saw at once where the disciple had hidden. He extended his hand upward and grabbed the disciple's foot. "Keep clear!" said the disciple, "for I may fall on your hands."

"Come, come, uncle, we bargained to play hide-and-seek on this

<sup>56</sup> It is not clear here what prayer is meant by the Great Namaz. It may be the Kulhuvallahi, "The Declaration of God's Unity," found in Chapter CXII of the Koran.

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*kissing -- of eyes -- of child  
eyes -- kissing of*

world. I did not tell you to ascend!" 57

The disciple saw that the child was also very mature. He embraced him and kissed his eyes.

"Stop, uncle, stop! Let me hide myself. Then you can search for me, and when you find me, call out. Now shut your eyes," said the child. Immediately the child went to him, entered his heart, and shouted, "I have hidden myself!"  
*Heart -- hiding in that of another person  
Hiding -- in heart of another person*

The disciple searched and searched but he could not find the child. He searched the sea and he searched the mainland. He searched both Yemen and Damascus, but he could not find him anywhere. He said, "My boy, where are you? What has become of you? I cannot find you!"

"Find me, uncle!" he said.

The disciple looked to see if he could determine where the voice was coming from. The voice was close, but the boy himself was not there. He shouted, "If you love the one who created you, then come out from wherever you are. I cannot find you."

The child came forth from his heart and said, "Uncle, you are still not mature. I came and entered your heart. Human beings should always first search within themselves before searching the outside world. You were wandering in all four directions! Shame on you! Now drink the soup which you have not drunk before, and grow up!"

*Heart -- searching of*

57 Apparently the disciple had, by some mystical power, actually ascended into the air, not merely climbed to a high point of ground. Various mystical cults claim to have the power of levitation, and the "ascent" here may be related to that.

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Yes, listen carefully to these words. I keep shouting my message, but out of 100 men only three may understand--perhaps only one! secret of the universe is within you. Do not wander about. Search for whatever you seek within yourself. God has given it all to The whole secret lies within you!"

Now, Nesil had become a ruler, but his heart sought the other members of his family. The people, his subjects, saw that the child was young, but the work he executed was perfect.

Gentlemen, that city where he ruled used to be ravaged by a <sup>Years -- seven</sup> dragon. Once in every seven years the dragon would come forth from its lair and attack the city and its people, causing great destruction before it left. This was well known to the viziers of the padişah, and one day they spoke to him about it.

long!

your head, and you became padişah.

the problems of this city. Oh, yes, you know of some of its troubles, but there is one particular problem, a most miserable situation, of which you are still not aware.

"Once in every seven years a dragon comes forth from its den and attacks the city and its people. The padişah who was your predecessor could find no remedy for this situation. Now it is just three months to the day from the time that that dragon will again come forth. Now that you have that information, we want you to know that we are at your disposal in taking the precautions you think suitable. But



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no ruler up to this time has ever been able to stop this dragon."

Nesil thought and thought about this problem. He realized that the dragon was not a son of Adam<sup>58</sup> and could not be handled in any ordinary way. He would issue a decree, and he would have it announced by a town crier. He said to himself, "I may be able to find in this way a loyal worker that I could not find any other way." He had the crier announce this: "I want twelve men to guard this city. Let them come from wherever they will when they hear this announcement. Whoever kills the dragon, I shall make him my vizier. I shall dismiss my present viziers and make these guards viziers: First, second . . . twelfth vizier. If one of them should say, 'I do not wish to be a vizier,' then I shall give him whatever he wishes of worldly goods, and I shall not interfere with his other pursuits."

*Adam -- son of -- epithet for human being*  
*of -- epithet for human being*  
*Vizier -- position of -- as reward for killing dragon*

The town crier made this announcement not only in the capital but also in all of the other cities. Among those who came from various places were men whose interiors were filled with jewels, with not a black stone among these jewels. The ruler made it clear that he especially wanted men who would work eagerly. Perhaps there may be among them those who know many things that I do not, he thought.

*Jewels -- of human interior -- as figure of speech for virtues*

Gentlemen, he wanted twelve men to guard the city. If these men should kill the dragon, he would make them viziers, if this was their wish. Those who did not want to take such positions would be paid in worldly goods of their own choosing. Twelve good men came forth

<sup>58</sup> A human being.

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~~12~~ Guardians -- twelve -- of cityTwelve guardians -- of city

and reported to the padişah, "Your majesty, we are prepared to serve as guards." They were, in other words, willing to look death in the eye. "We shall be most successful if we manage to kill the dragon," they said among themselves. "And if we cannot do this, we shall burn, but we should burn anyway.<sup>59</sup> Why does the poor man cry? For the thing in the cooking pan to be in his stomach. For the clothes that hang in closets to be on his back.

The padişah appointed a leader for these twelve guards, and so there were thirteen in all who, night after night, would be guarding the city. It had always been during the night that the dragon had attacked the city. They watched from the city tower, and they began their work three months before the dragon was due to appear.

Now let us turn to other news. About whom? About Asil, the brother of Nesil, he who was given three small bags of gold per day. He was fourteen years old. He had encountered peasants who had rescued him. It was true that three bags of gold appeared beneath his head wherever he slept, but he was not aware of this, and so he would go away leaving the gold behind.

It happened that the night on which Asil came to the gate of the capital city was the very night on which the dragon was expected to

<sup>59</sup> The suggestion is that the monster was a fire-breathing dragon, and so the guards might literally be burned in encountering it. But they would be burned anyway, in a figurative sense, by the ravages of poverty if they had no jobs which would reward them with food and clothing.

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attack. When he reached the gate, he called out of the darkness to have the gate opened to permit his entry into the city. But the twelve guards and their leader refused to open the gate. "No, it cannot be done, for this is the night when the dragon will come!" they said. Their leader issued the following order: "Do not open the gate to take in this child." And this order was obeyed, gentlemen. matter how the child begged to be admitted, his pleas were useless.

At midnight a loud noise was heard, and the guards and their leader in the tower, their swords in their hands, began to cry out in fear. But they were so frightened that what was in their hands was quite useless to them.

Outside the city wall across the way from the gate stood a building which was the water depot for the city. When the noise of the approaching dragon had frightened the child [Asil], he had run into this depot and hidden himself there. The dragon had not seen the child enter the building, and so he had not seen that he had a sword in his belt.

The dragon raised its body to climp the wall at the point where the gate was and where, inside, the tower stood. The guards were now so terrified that they all ran away. The child observed the dragon and realized that he would destroy the whole city if he were not stopped. Saying to himself, "Such an opportunity will not fall in my hands every day," he drew his sword from his belt and rushed out of the water depot. The head of the dragon was climbing up the tower, but most of the body and the tail still lay on the ground. Swinging

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his sword, the child cut the body in half. With the body of the dragon cut apart, the child quickly ran back into the water depot.

The guards now returned, opened the gate, and saw the parts of the dragon writhing on the ground. They went to the depot, where the child was wiping the dragon's blood from his sword. Their leader said, "If we take this child before the padişah, the padişah will give us nothing. He killed the dragon, and so what could we say? This boy will say, 'I killed the dragon!' Our bread will disappear. But a head that has been cut off cannot speak. Come, let us kill this child and report that in this encounter it was we who killed the dragon."

"Can this be done?"

"Why could it not be done?"

The child observed them standing about and talking among themselves. After all, he was but one person, and they were thirteen. They wounded the boy in <sup>seven wounds</sup> ~~seven~~ places and left him in a pool of his red blood. Then they reported to the ruler and the people the following good news: "The <sup>-- of dragon</sup> ~~corpse~~ of the dragon lies over there!" They reported to the padişah, "Yes, my padişah, we have killed the dragon. Come and examine it. Your order has been carried out. Now will you make us viziers, or what will you do?"

"Very well! I have given you my word on this matter."

The corpse of the dragon was examined. The people of the city from seventy years of age down to seven were delighted: "We have been delivered from this cruel dragon!"

*Seventy to seven -- years of age -- figurative expression for all of the people*

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The twelve guards became viziers, and their leader became the grand vizier. Even though you might become padişah, how could you know that the basis for their position was false? Nesil gave them so much. They were traveling about the land of Fers by orders of the padişah.

Come, now, let us give the news from the child who was wounded in the water depot. When the people of the city had heard of the death of the dragon, the gates of the city had been opened. Everyong was celebrating in a great festival. People prayed for the guards: "May they have the right to rule, for they have saved us!" But what did the people really know about this?

Gentlemen, there were seven persons who used to come periodically to gamble in the water depot. They were like vagabonds in the city. They were not really harmful people, but they were addicted to gambling. After the gates had been opened when the public was celebrating the death of the dragon, these seven gamblers came out and went to the water depot. It was because gambling was illegal that they were in the habit of coming to the water depot.

When they entered the building, they saw--alas!--that there was someone lying there in a pool of blood. The persons who had wounded the child was not there, and the child himself was not able to speak. Forgetting about gambling and about everything else, they started running away. But one of them said to the rest, "Madness"<sup>60</sup> Where

<sup>60</sup> The word used here is ulan.



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are you going to try to escape? You are not to blame for this, are you? Are you not Moslems? Look, he is still alive!"

"Oh, alive, yes, but what can we do for him? If the people hear of this, we may be the ones who will pay the penalty for it. The ruler may say, 'You were the ones who wounded him!' So, why should we not escape?"

The result was that six of the gamblers fled, but the seventh did not. He said to himself, "My mother is a healer. I shall carry him on my back and take him to her. If anyone observes me, I shall swear, 'Never! I was not the one who did this!' I shall say that it was not my work. But I shall see what has been written on my forehead. <sup>61</sup> Forehead -- one's destiny written upon one's forehead. What a pity this is, but he is alive. This child is like a growing plant, and it would be unworthy of me to leave him here." So, he lifted the child to his back and carried him to his own house.

This man was a bachelor, having in this narrow world no relatives but two sisters and a mother. But he lost almost everything that fell into his hands by gambling it away. His mother was a woman doctor, <sup>doctor -- female</sup> and when he appeared now, she said to him, "My son, what is the matter?"

"Mother, the situation is such and such. Why should I deny this business which God knows about? You know very well that when five kurus come to my hand, I go and gamble it away. As usual, we seven

<sup>61</sup> It is believed that though it is visible only to people of religious insight, one's destiny is written on one's forehead.

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entered the water depot to gamble. The dragon had been slain, and the city had been saved from its attacks. But someone had stabbed this child in the water depot, and he lay there wounded. I looked and saw that he was alive, and so I brought him here. Mother, if you will treat this child, I shall stop gambling. I shall mend my ways and not gamble again. Mother, I could not run off and leave him there still alive!"

His mother was a merciful woman. "All right, my son, but if it is heard about, one of his relatives may come here."

"Mother, God is mighty. Only God knows about this. I brought this child here for the sake of God."

The woman said, "My son, you brace yourself against the door so that there is no danger coming from that direction. Repent and give up gambling. I want from God the power to heal. The hands are mine, <sup>Haaler -- pro-</sup> but the healing they may do will come from God. I shall make the effort <sup>vider hand, but</sup> to save him, and he will either die or live." <sup>God provides cure</sup>

This woman was a doctor, but she had very little money. And what does a gambler have? But the boy said to his mother, "Give my bed to this patient, and I shall sleep on the ground."

She spread out his bed for the patient. See what mercy there is here, gentlemen! The doctor woman then put the child in this bed and applied to his wounds whatever kind of ointment she thought helpful. Then she wrapped these with a cloth.

The child lay in bed without eating anything, unconscious. When

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morning came, the city was still rejoicing. The woman came to straighten up the bed. Lifting up the pillow, she saw that there were three small bags of gold beneath it. Surprised, she called, "Come here, my son!" When he came, she asked him, "Did you search the pockets of this young man?"

"No, not at all, mother. I did not put my hand in his pocket. He was already wounded. I just picked him up, put him on my back, and carried him here to you."

"My son, he has three bags of gold. The bags are full. I know because I took them and looked in them. But, of course, this boy must know how much he has, though we do not know how much it is all worth. My son, it is <sup>Forbidden (haram) money</sup> forbidden to us,<sup>62</sup> and so let us not even touch it. If he should die, we can spend a little of it for his sake, and then some will be left for us, a gift from God. If not (if he lives), then the money will be his."

Money -- which  
is haram  
(forbidden) to  
someone

"Mother, I have given up gambling, and I do not intend to do anything forbidden. Hide it, mother. But I did not touch his pockets."

Well, that day passed, and the next morning, she was straightening the child's bed. When she lifted up the pillow, there were three bags of gold again. "Very well," she thought, "yesterday we agreed that the bags of gold found were his, but after I took it away, there was nothing

<sup>62</sup> The money was not theirs, and thus it was haram, forbidden to them.

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left under the pillow. I searched his bosom, his underarms too, and there was nothing at either place. What is there now but three more bags?"

To her daughters and her son she said, "My children, there is something strange going on here! But let us wait and see what it is. Put these three bags in the chest too." They did not touch any of the gold or even count it.

Gentlemen, when the third morning arrived, there were three more bags of gold. Not to make all of this too long--finally when twenty days and nights had passed, sixty bags of gold had arrived and been stored in the chest. By now that old woman, along with her son and daughters, realized that some great <sup>mystery -- divine</sup> divine mystery was involved in all this. She said, "How remarkable! My son, do not let this secret go beyond our own door. Let us be sure first that he regains his health. Then we shall make him talk and tell us about this." <sup>63</sup> They had sixty bags of gold in the house but they did not spend a single piece of it even though they were poor. "This money is his, not ours," they said. "Without having some explanation about it from him, this money is forbidden for us." The son had reformed and given up the practice of taking money that he had not earned. He now did any kind of work available and brought home untainted bread. <sup>64</sup> His mother remained at home

<sup>63</sup> The narrator's words, literally, are "tell us what is and what is not behind this."

<sup>64</sup> This refers to the halal/haram distinction: what is lawful or permitted vs. what is forbidden.



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in order to care for the patient.

By this time the wounds of the child had begun to heal, and he was able to walk about the room. Again on the twenty-first morning the woman found three more bags of gold beneath the patient's pillow. And there were already sixty bags in the chest. The woman said to Asil, "Sit here, my child." She took three bags of gold and placed them before the boy. He thought that this gold must belong to this woman and her three children, who were also sitting near him. "My child, what is your name?" she asked.

"Grandmother, my name is Asil."

*Grandmother -- term used to show respect rather than kinship*

"My child, where are you from?"

"Grandmother, do not ask where I am from. But let me say this: Benevolence is sometimes repaid with evil!

"Grandmother, what saved this city from the dragon was first God and then I. They wounded me. Of course such persons will not prevail in this world, for they too will lie in their own red blood. I finally opened my eyes and recovered with your help."

She said to the boy, "My boy, this young man who is looking at you, there beside you, is my son. He was one of seven persons who used to go to the water depot to gamble. On the night that you were wounded there, six of them ran away in fear when they saw you wounded, but this one, moved by mercy, did not flee. He brought you here, carrying you on his back. This is the twenty-first day that you have been in our house day and night. During this time I have found three bags of gold



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beneath your pillow every morning. Sixty bags of this gold are in a chest, and the three bags that arrived today are here. My boy, all of these are yours. There are a great many things in the treasury of God. May God give to us too. Now if in your mercy you were to give us a few bags of this gold, you would not really feel any loss. But if you do not wish to give us any, they are all yours."

The boy laughed. "Why do you laugh so, my boy?" the woman asked.

"I shall tell you something, mother."

"What is it, my boy?"

"For twenty-one days I have been lying here inside your door and in your bed. You did everything for me. Now you are my mother, and I too am your son. You have not just one son but two sons now. If you will permit me to do so, I shall become one of your sons. Do not tell me to go away from your door.

"Mother, understand thoroughly this fact: Until my death, I shall always find three bags of gold in whatever place I lie down and sleep. My brother once told me, 'Wealth has fallen to your lot, and rulership has fallen to me.' Grandmother, this means that I have probably left many bags of gold in strange lands, for I was not aware before that this gold was actually arriving in this way. But do not tell anyone about this mystery."

The woman said, "My child, since you have chosen to become a son to me, these daughters of mine are now your sisters. Now I have not just one son but two. You are one of them, and the other is this young

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man. Very well, my son!"

Asil called, "Brother!"

"Yes?"

"Come, take this gold and stuff your pockets full of it. Take all you wish from the gold in the chest too! Give first to my sisters and my mother, and then to yourself. Use it to buy clothing or whatever else is needed. You are now my <sup>brother -- elder</sup> elder brother, so go right ahead!"

Gentlemen, this young man delightedly took one bag of gold and handed two to his mother. He went into the city, and now all the carriages followed him.

"Where did you get all of this gold?" the neighbors asked him.

"A rich boy became a son in our family. He has a great amount of money. We have made him a son. This fortune is first the property of God and then of this boy."

"Ah, so that is it!"

Gentlemen, gossip comes and goes. Every morning three bags of gold arrive, and the chest is full. The child and his brother bought horses, one for each of them. Every day they would mount their horses and ride forth hunting. For what? Asil was searching for his real brother. His brother is the padişah, the ruler of the city. How does he know this? And Nesil knew also that his brother was somewhere in that city, but he did not know where. So, we shall leave them this way.

Come now, and let us have the news from someone else. From whom? Gentlemen, let us have the news about those twelve new viziers and the

viziers -- twelve  
twelve viziers



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grand vizier.

Those twelve viziers and their grand vizier encountered Asil and the other young man as they rode about searching on their horses. grand vizier said to his companions, "Do you see that boy on horseback?"

"Yes!" they all said.

"It is needless to say anything more."

All of them recognized the boy. "This is the young man who struck and killed the dragon. We wounded him in the water depot and left him there for dead. But now, mounted on his horse, he seeks us to challenge us. Sooner or later he will come and announce, 'My padişah, it was I who killed the dragon!'"

They went along behind, following these two horsemen to their door. Who has the <sup>at office</sup> seal? His is Solomon.<sup>65</sup> They came to the door of the house where Asil now lived, dismounted, and gave orders to many guardsmen. The order was, "Surround their door!" The padişah himself knew nothing about this.

They captured the boy, tied fast his arms and his legs, and fastened him to the back of a horse. They did the same with the old lady doctor and her son and her two daughters from that house. took all of them but the boy to a prison. Instead of throwing him into the prison with the rest, they took him outside the city some distance, by a creek, and wounded him severely. Then they threw soil

<sup>65</sup> Apparently a figurative way of saying that he who has the emblems of authority has the power to carry out his will.

*Here wounded is buried alive while  
Burial - at last still alive*

upon him until he was entirely buried in it, and then they rode back to the city leaving him there.

But think of <sup>66</sup> the divine <sup>Misery -- divine (suffering of God at sight of human sin)</sup> misery of the creator of the universe! The body of the boy was concealed in the soil, but his feet had not been covered, and they remained exposed, both of them.

Now let us give the news from someone else. In that neighborhood there was a small town, and living in that town was a young man who sold firewood which he brought from the forest every day. One morning his wife said to him, "Fellow, there are but <sup>Days -- three</sup> three days left before the holiday begins. Everyone's tobacco will be smoking but ours. <sup>67</sup> What are we going to do? These children are stark naked!" <sup>Smoking -- of tobacco -- as symbol of well-being</sup>

Among their five children, the youngest was a daughter of seven. This child said, "Father, the holiday is coming! Henna my hands and bring me a new dress."

"My daughter, pray that I shall be able to buy these things tomorrow." <sup>Kolay gelsin -- May it go easily! -- form of well-wishing for men work</sup>  
"Father, may God make your business go easily!"

Gentlemen, this man went directly to the forest and began to cut wood. The sticks that he cut he made into a bundle that he could hoist to his back and carry. When the bundle was completed and loaded on his

<sup>66</sup> The text says look at, though this must be taken figuratively--probably for consider or think of.

<sup>67</sup> A figurative expression for enjoying or celebrating.

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back, he started his return trip to the town. Because he was cutting this wood illegally and smuggling it into the town, he did not travel on the main road for fear the watchmen would catch him. He traveled through the fields, and finally he came to the bank of a stream where he decided to rest. He lowered his load when he came to the creek, setting it on the ground so that he could rest for a few moments. Did he know what was there? No, he was just setting down his load to rest for a while. But when he looked about this place as he rested, he saw two human feet sticking out of the ground. He was surprised at this, but he was even more surprised to see that the feet were moving. Leaving his load where it lay, he went to that place and started throwing aside the soil with his hands until he had unearthed the body and pulled it out of the ground. He looked and saw that the body had been wounded but that it was still alive. The boy had not died. He looked at the place where the boy had almost been buried, and he saw that beneath the spot where the boy's head had lain there were three bags of gold. "Ulan!" <sup>68</sup> he said to himself, "they wounded him in trying to take this gold away from him, but they also buried the gold when they buried their victim. Or, perhaps they had not even known about the gold but injured him anyway."

The woodcutter placed the three bags of gold inside his shirt. Then he picked up Asil, put him on his back, and carried him to his

<sup>68</sup> Equivalent to "Heavens!" "Wow!" "Oh, man!" or some similar exclamation.



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home. He left the wood lying where he had put it down by the bank of the stream.

The woodcutter's wife and his children all asked him, "Who is this person you have brought home?"

"Hush, wife! I encountered such an odd situation! Someone had wounded this young man in an attempt to take from him his money. Whether they were his friends or bandits or someone else I do not know. I found him almost completely buried beneath a heap of soil. Only his feet stuck out. Spread out a few blankets and put him to bed. Here, take these bags of gold, and I shall go and bring back my bundle of wood."

He returned to where he had left the wood and recovered it. Taking it to town he sold it as quickly as he could, and then he returned to his own house. He brought some kind of ointment with him and this and that, and with these, they wrapped Asil's wounds and returned him to his bed. The woodcutter said to his wife, "Look here, wife, do not dare to open any of these bags of gold and take anything out or there will be trouble between us! This gold was apparently not helâl <sup>69</sup> for him, and if that is the case, then it surely would not be helâl for us either. The money which I earn cutting wood is more helâl and blessed than this."

Helâl | gold -- got paper passed  
and blessed to one's use

<sup>69</sup> This is again the concept of helâl and haram, what is lawful, permitted, blessed to one's use, as opposed to what is forbidden, unlawful, cursed and unlucky to one's use.

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The woman replied, "No, man, no--do not worry about me! I was going to say exactly what you have said. May God be generous to us too!"

And so, gentlemen, Asil stayed in the home of the woodcutter that night. When morning arrived, the woman went to straighten out his bed. When she looked under the pillow, she saw there another three bags of gold. "Hey, my man," she shouted.

"What?" her husband asked.

"Did you run your hands through the pockets of this boy when you brought him here?"

"No, wife, I simply raised him to my back after I had removed him from the soil and carried him here."

"Well, three more bags of gold have appeared."

"You do not mean it!"

She said, "Somehow these must have been in his pockets."

"See if there is anything else there."

"No, for I have searched. There is nothing more."

"Oh, oh--put them over there with the first three."

Soon it was the morning of the third day, and the man was going to carry wood again from the forest. When three bags appeared again that morning, the husband and wife paused in what they were doing. "Man," said the woman, "there is some kind of mystery connected with this!"

"Wife, it is something that I cannot understand."

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"Look here now, husband. God may have given this to us. The first six bags of gold were apparently his, but after they had come, I searched all of his clothing, and there was absolutely nothing else there. These three bags of gold that have just arrived must be ours! As a matter of fact, he does not know a thing about them, even if perhaps he does know about the first six. These three should be ours. Take one of these bags. Tomorrow is the holiday. Go buy with it the things that we need!"

Just as his wife had directed, he went and bought everything that his wife and children needed. When he returned with them, he said, "Wife, these are all presents from this person lying here. It was he, not I, who bought them."

The fourth morning arrived, and this was the first day of the holiday. Again there arrived the usual three bags of gold, but by now they were no longer surprised by this. They understood the situation now. "By God, we seem to have found a treasure."

Gentlemen, what has been said here about what happened today will be said also tomorrow about what will happen then.<sup>70</sup> At the end of thirty days, ninety bags of gold had accumulated, and all but one bag of this had been stored in a closet.

<sup>70</sup> In other words, when the same thing happened in succeeding days, one could say the same thing about it each day.

By then the boy had recovered enough so that he moved about some. When he first opened his eyes, he said, "Oh, I am in a house, but it is not the house in which lived the young man and his mother."

They brought food to him and said, "Come, my boy, sit down here and eat."

"Uncle," said the boy, "where am I? Woman, from where have you brought me to this place?"

"My boy," said the woodcutter, "first eat some food and fill your belly! I shall then tell you all about it."

"Now, before I eat! Tell me right now!"

"Young man, while I was carrying wood from the forest, I found you beneath a heap of dirt. Only your feet were sticking out of the soil. I looked and noticed that your feet were moving, and from this I realized that you must be alive. Someone had wounded you. I removed you from the ground and brought you here on my back. Since the day you arrived, you have been here exactly a month. We did all we could to make you recover. But, young man, every morning we have found three bags of gold at the head of your bed. One of these bags we opened and with the gold it contained we have been buying food. The others are all here. But the money which I have spent will be judged according to the goodness of your heart.<sup>71</sup> Whether or not this money

<sup>71</sup> What the woodcutter says here literally is "We are dependent upon your milk." This is a figurative reference to the breeding and upbringing of the young man.



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will be made lawful and filled with blessings for us depends upon you. <sup>72</sup> All the rest of the money is here awaiting you."

The boy said, "Uncle, all of this money is yours. Just allow me to remain here behind your doors. Do not order me to leave! Permit me to live in the comfort of your home."

The woodcutter replied, "Young man, consider us as your parents. Even if I had searched for you, I could not have found you. It was the will of God which made our paths meet. Indeed, even if you were to say you were going to leave, I should not allow you to do so. Our souls-- mine, my wife's, my children's--have reached out to you."

God--will!!  
or

Gentlemen, this is the way that matters stood there. But things were not so favorable for the other old woman who had helped him. Both she and all her family were in prison.

This young man [Asıl] stayed there with this family for three months. But one day it became necessary for them to go to the city of Fers. Oh, they were rich now! They rode horses to the city, and there they bought many kinds of things for themselves. Once they came to the city and returned; twice they came and returned; but on the third time that they entered the city, the cruel viziers encountered them. "Ulan," they said. "We killed him, but see his power again! Follow

<sup>72</sup> If the young man freely gives them the gold they have used, and if he declares that there is no indebtedness to him, then he will have made the gold lawful and void of all evil for the woodcutter and his family. He will, in other words, have made it helâl to them.



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him!"

They sent a group of soldiers to follow the boy and his friends from a distance so that they would not be aware of what was going on. Again Asil and his friends bought whatever they wanted and started back toward home. They had no way of knowing that they were being pursued by a band of soldiers. They got back to their small town without incident, but an hour after they had passed through their own doors, they were surrounded by the soldiers.

"There is a murderer here!" the soldiers announced. They gathered together all the members of this household, tied them all to one another, and took them to the prison. So, that is where we shall leave them--in the prison.

But come, let us now have the news about someone else. About whom? About the ruler.

The ruler observed how the mirror of Destiny behaved and how life was passing along from day to day. "But, alas, I have not been able to find either my brother or my sister, either my father or my mother."

In one section of that city there was a cemetery. One day as the ruler was passing through this cemetery with his viziers, he took a look at the corpses lying in the newly made graves. As he viewed them, he began to wipe tears from his eyes.

Noticing this, his viziers asked, "O great sultan! Why do you weep?"

He said, "Oh, viziers, I have survived my family into this time

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of years. When they were still on earth, no one asked me, 'Whose son are you? What are you? Who are you? Where did you come from? Where are you going?' In the whole ordeal I was favored by having the state bird <sup>73</sup> land on my head, but I lost my brother, who was very close to me, and I lost also my father and my mother. I cannot help wondering if mother, father, and brother are lying in the <sup>Sel - - 1207</sup> black soil like these people."

They tried to give him hope. The viziers offered their consolations to him.

Finally Nesil said, "Oh, viziers, I am going to travel for a few days--just wandering along to see if I can discover anything about my family."

After he had been traveling for several days, just wandering wherever he felt inclined to go, he came upon the inn where Sinan had found his mother. He asked those with him, "What kind of a place is this?"

"My padişah," his attendants said, "this is an inn. It is like a big caravanserai. Inside it there are many very fine rooms. The innkeeper here is a very refined man. Travelers coming and going stop here and stay at this inn."

<sup>73</sup> The "State bird" is not any particular species, nor is it state property or in any way connected with the state until it is selected to choose a ruler and actually lands on someone's head. These were usually tame or domesticated birds, in some cases pigeons.

## Story

After he had looked about the place for a few minutes, he ordered,  
"Call the innkeeper, the man who owns this inn!"

They called the innkeeper, and when he approached, the padişah  
greeted him, "Selâmlaaleyküm!"

"Aleyküm selâm" <sup>74</sup> my lord! Yes, my sultan? What can I do for you?"

"Can you bring us something to drink?"

"Yes, yes, my padişah! May you live long!" He had chairs brought  
and placed on the grass in front of the inn, and then he had coffee  
served. They all sat around in a circle and drank coffee. As the  
innkeeper looked around, something caused him to groan slightly,  
"Oh-h-h!"

As soon as the padişah heard this, he called, "Innkeeper!"

"Yes, my padişah?"

"Tell me this: Are you or am I the person with the greater  
anguish?" <sup>75</sup>

*wound -- of the heart*  
*heart -- wound of*

"How can I know, my padişah? The wounds of the heart cannot be  
seen. Perhaps I suffer the greater anguish."

"No, innkeeper, no! I am sure that your wound cannot compare with  
what I suffer. What was the reason for your exclaiming, 'Oh-h-h!'?"

<sup>74</sup> Traditional Moslem greeting and response: "Peace be with you!" is  
answered by the remark "And may peace be with you likewise!" Once  
completed, this exchange assures two strangers that neither will be  
hostile to the other.

<sup>75</sup> The speaker asks literally which has "the greater wound."



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"My padişah, are you going to compel me to tell you about this?"

"Yes, and I want you to tell the truth about it!"

"My padişah, I have been guarding the door of this inn most of my life. Well, one day as I was looking out from this door a woman came along. I received her from the hands of peasants driving a wagon. My padişah, there were many things which happened. I made this woman my sister, and I became her brother. Although I have been doing business here for forty years, <sup>76</sup> I was forced to let such a sister slip from my hands. The son of the Padişah of Fers, Sinan, came along and caused this. Before you became padişah, his father was the padişah who sat on the bench of justice. Now I am at your disposal. This is your land, my padişah!" *Justice - bench of*

"Tell me more about this, Innkeeper. You have opened my wound greatly." <sup>77</sup>

"My padişah, Sinan took this woman from my hands, but it was against her wishes. She went unwillingly. Oh, if a padişah like you were to order that this inn should be destroyed, your order would be carried out. If you ordered that it should be burnt, your order would be obeyed. For such a reason the woman departed, crying, from me. He separated the sister from her brother, the brother from his sister."

<sup>76</sup> Again he says, literally, "I have guarded this door for forty years," but he is clearly referring to his having been proprietor of the inn for that long.

<sup>77</sup> Perhaps "You have touched my emotions" would be a better translation here.

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"What was his reason?"

"Oh, my padişah, eyes have never seen any other such woman. No one could fold handkerchiefs as beautifully as she, nor could anyone prepare such attractive dishes of food. Where can I ever again find a sister with such merits and fine manners?"

"Did you have this woman tell you anything about herself?"

"Yes, I asked her to tell me her background, but when she did this, the tears flowed from her eyes with such anguish that the sight of them pained me more than tears from my own eyes would have pained me."

"Why did she cry so?"

"She had had two sons who had somehow become lost in the forest."

"Remarkable, innkeeper! Sit here and tell me the rest of her story."

"I asked her for the names of her children. One of the names she spoke was like that of your great worthiness, my padişah. Nesil and Asil. Her husband had also become lost, and before that her daughter, Katmer, had disappeared. Her husband had caused that daughter to be driven away into exile. It was not known whether the girl was alive or dead. Therefore, we entered a brother-sister relationship with her. But destiny was not unchanged for him [Sinan] either. His father moved from this world to another. But, my lord, what sultan has ever remained here permanently until the end of this earth? You know well

Earth -- end of  
End -- of earth



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that we are all merely transients in this world. Now that Sinan himself is lost. One day he had brought from the forest here a girl whose name was Katmer, and he had loved that girl."

"Oh, innkeeper, tell me more!"

"My lord, the girl has now also gone, leaving her husband while he slept. She departed in this way in pursuit of her son Hikmet who had flown out of a window and disappeared."

Gentlemen, the innkeeper related the whole story to the padişah, without omitting any of the details. 78

"Innkeeper!"

"Yes, my padişah."

"Innkeeper, I am going to give you an order, a written command to be given priority at your inn. Every week you are to come to my palace and you will provide me with certain information. People who come to this inn will reveal something about what they are thinking. Make these people God's guests, 79 giving them whatever they wish to eat and drink and whatever they wish to wear. Each month I shall pay you a sum from my treasury for this. Listen closely to whatever affairs seem to be of concern to them, and bring a report to me every week."

78 The narrator says literally, "He related everything from needle to thread."

*God -- guest of -- receives free lodging*  
*Guest -- of God -- receives free lodging*  
*Payment -- to inn-keeper -- by padişah -- for accepting as God's*

79 In Turkey if you are accepted as the "guest of Allah," you are accommodated in a private home, with all amenities and luxuries available, at no cost to yourself.

*Guest -- all travelers who stop at his inn*

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"I shall be pleased to do this, my lord. I am at your service!"

"Innkeeper, I am especially interested in the person who called you brother and whom you called sister. I have two eyes in this head of mine, innkeeper, but from now on you are to be the pupil of one of these eyes. Keep me informed about which travelers look upon you with benevolent gaze and those who cast evil glances at you."

To himself the innkeeper said, "I wonder if his mind has grown confused." But to the padişah he said, "With pleasure, my lord."

Gentlemen, come now and let us have the news from someone else. From whom? Let us have the news from Lâtif Şah, the father of this prince. He had lost both his sons and his wife in the forest, as we heard yesterday, because he had chosen to suffer in this world the ordeal that Fate had in store for him. Now he had been wandering about here and there for sixteen long years. With hair and beard uncut and all mixed together, he looked like a saint. He still bore the burden of grief for his lost children and family. His thirty-two *Grief causes* teeth were all gone, for he had gradually ground them down to nothing *deposed under* in his grief, and his hair was now completely white. *to wear out his teeth grinding them.*

Finally, toward the end of a certain day, his earthly ordeal came to an end. Before he reached the inn, there had been thirty or forty travelers staying at that inn every day. They were constantly coming and going, and pursuing the orders of the padişah, the innkeeper extracted from each something of his life-story. "O traveler brother, what interesting things have you seen during your life? Tell me what



## Story #672

you have seen, what thoughts came into your head, what events took place. Regret is free, but do not refuse to recount your experience." Everyone told his own story with its unique problems. The innkeeper would then pass along all of this information to the padişah. Some of the stories were about poverty, some were about loneliness, some were about other troubles.

Gentlemen, in every heart a lion lies waiting; in every heart a as type of beautiful woman Leyla makes her appeal. <sup>80</sup> In every heart there is a Leyla to some type of male lover Mecnun. There is a Leyla within you too! It is for her that your heart shouts, cries, and wanders. <sup>81</sup>

The list of experiences of these travelers would always be taken to the padişah, the ordeals that they suffered and the pleasures they had known. But the padişah always thought, "These have nothing to do with me!"

One day, however, Lâtif Şah came to the door of that very inn

<sup>80</sup> Leyla was one of the two lovers in a romance of great age which is known throughout the Middle East. Long before the classical Turkish writer Fuzuli and the classical Persian writer Nizami gave their own renditions of the Leyla and Mecnun story, folk minstrels had been singing of their love.

<sup>81</sup> Not only did Mecnun wander about during his love madness, but so too do the asiklar, the "lover poets," as Turkish minstrels are often called. Mecnun wandered about in dejection after Leyla's parents refused to allow their marriage. Minstrels supposedly wander about part of each year in search of "the most beautiful girl in the world," the girl whom each met in the dream which led to his becoming a minstrel. As a practical matter, minstrels marry ordinary women and live ordinary lives, their annual wandering being more a matter of finding new coffee-house audiences to listen to, and hopefully pay for their sung poems.

stone -- mounting - used by horseback rider

Story #672

saddle-stone -- (= mounting stone)

and arranged for <sup>living</sup> quarters there. But, friends, he was in such miserable condition. Just outside the inn there was a saddle-stone,<sup>82</sup> and he went and sat by it and leaned against that stone. As he sat there he uttered such an "Off!"<sup>83</sup> <sup>as exclamation of fatigue or grief</sup> that the innkeeper inside heard him and came outside to discover the reason for such an exclamation. He expected to find a saintly person at the saddle-stone, for his hair and beard had both grown long.

"Innkeeper!"

"Yes, father?"

"If you love your and my Creator, fix me a cup of coffee and bring it here."

Oh, he had once been a padişah, and in the royal palace, it had been a common thing to have coffee set before him all the time. But now he had been suffering hardships in strange lands for sixteen years. He had wandered over much of the world. His empty hearth lay far from that place where he now was. Neither coffee nor anything else came easily to his hand after his hearth had fallen. His exclaiming "Off!" was the result of his ordeal of losing both his children and his family

<sup>82</sup> This apparently a mounting stone,

<sup>83</sup> The ultimate cry of despair in Turkey is not "Oh!" or "Alas!" but "Off!" There is a special demon or jinn who sometimes appears to aid the sufferer, a creature known as the "Off Jinn" or "Off Genie." Whether he is benevolent or malevolent in given cases, this jinn is large and formidable enough to strike terror into the hearts of the mortals who call him up with their exclamation of his name, "Off!" In this tale the Off Genie does not appear, but he is a definite part of the folklore about this exclamation.



## Story #672

some sixteen years ago.

The innkeeper took his hand and said, "Come, father, not just one cup of coffee but five cups are ready! I have come, and I shall go. What does one need? For the love of God let the hearts of saintly mortals like you be delighted!" Taking him by the hand, the innkeeper led him inside. There he got a pillow and placed it upon his chair, saying then, "Sit, father!"

*Missing -- of hand -- as gesture of respect*

The innkeeper seated the fallen man, kissed his hand, and then gave orders to his own men as to what they should do. When the coffee of İâtif Shah was cooked, the innkeeper brought it with his own hands and filled the cups. He still did not know, however, who his guest really was. After the guest had drunk his coffee, the innkeeper said, "Boys, bring in various dishes [of food]."

After filling his guest's stomach, the innkeeper brought out his list. "Father," he said, "can you read and write?" --things that he would be able to use if he had been a padişah.

"Innkeeper, what is your wish?"

"Can you read this list?"

"Innkeeper, do not show me such a list. I have read the list of Destiny, and that is what was written. What are you asking of me?"

\* \* \* \* \*

Gentlemen, I shall tell of the thing which passes through my head. <sup>84</sup> I used to carry loads [of wood?] on my back and sell it,

<sup>84</sup> This interpolated story is apparently the narrator's own early biography. The narrator names himself Behçet. Lines of asterisks mark the start and finish of what we interpret as Behçet Mahir's own story.

*Interpolation  
of account of  
narrator's death -  
more for Pp. 153  
15*



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and with the money I made this way I was able to feed my only brother and my only sister. When I was twelve years old, my father died, and so I became fatherless. Poverty, loneliness and other temporary troubles beset me. <sup>85</sup> Three or five <sup>conventional expression for "a few"</sup> of our neighbors there are still alive, and one of them lives here.

Such were the things I then knew in my early life. I used to <sup>kissing -- of</sup> arise each morning, kiss my mother's hand and foot, and leave. I <sup>mother's hand</sup> would not return until after the evening <sup>Ezan -- call to prayer</sup> ezan, <sup>86</sup> and I would usually <sup>kissing -- of</sup> find my mother outside our front door asking the neighbors about my whereabouts: "Have you seen my son?"

The woman of the Hacıgondol family used to make my mother drink water during the late afternoon. One day when I was in the coffeehouse at Yenikapı, there was a blinding snow storm blowing outside. <sup>87</sup> At a certain moment someone said to me, "Go home!" Indeed, earlier that very day one of the neighbor women had given my mother her blessing.

My mother had said to that woman, "Tomorrow may be too late!"

<sup>85</sup> The narrator says, literally, "many stones touched my head" as an indication of his youthful troubles. Behçet Mahir is given to such figurative language, especially metaphors.

<sup>86</sup> The ezan is the call to prayer, and the evening ezan is the call to yatsı, the evening prayer, which takes place shortly after sunset.

<sup>87</sup> The narrator's literal description is "Eye could not see eye because of the snow storm."

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may not be able to see me tomorrow." <sup>88</sup> I did not know about this, but in the late afternoon I went home. My mother was not at home. I discovered that she had gone to the home of the Hacigondol family, and so I immediately went there too.

"Mother!"

"My son!"

"Mother, give me the key to our front door so that I can open the house."

"My son, have you not returned early?"

"Mother, I could not remain at the coffeehouse any longer."

"My son, you have done well. Go and open the door, light the fire, and let the room warm up. Then I shall come." To her hostess she said, "May you and your sons, Tarık and Hacı, remain long in this life. Sıdıka Hanım, tonight my condition may deteriorate rapidly. When I send Behçet here for you, take the Koran <sup>89</sup> in your hands and come to me. Do not even lie down tonight." --Although the woman had been waiting at home, I still did not understand.

<sup>88</sup> Giving a dying person one's blessing is partly a matter of canceling any indebtedness he or she has to one. Unless a dying person has received this release for indebtedness from all relatives and friends, their relationship will, at the bar of judgment, be judged by God to be haram (evil or unacceptable) and thus punishable. The dying wish to have all their various forms of indebtedness blessed or made halâl by his/her creditors (not only financial creditors but also familial, social, psychological, and spiritual creditors).

<sup>89</sup> The word Koran is not used here. Each time it is mentioned, it is referred to as "The Great Word."

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My mother said, "My son, you are to sit opposite me, taking the guilt upon your back. I shall be staring at your face, but you are going to fill the pitcher---it was a bronze pitcher coated [presumably with tin] on the inside---and the mug will be with you. You are not to get up but remain seated there. When I want water, give some to me."

Yes, my neighbors, I am telling you of the things that pass through my mind. I am telling you all this because you too know the value of your own father and mother. In your more mature years you recognize that there is unlimited meaning in all of this. Know it well!

My mother said, "Go, my son! Here is my door; there is their door. Tell Sıdıka Hanım to come!"

I said, "But, mother, by now they will be asleep."

"No, my son, no! I told them that she was to be waiting."

I therefore went to their window and shouted to them. Sıdıka Hanım answered, "I am coming right away." In fact, my mother had warned her not to lie down at all, and so she was ready. I looked and saw that the Koran was in her hand. She asked me, "How is your mother?"

I replied, "Well, she is in bed."

She came to our home and entered the room where my mother was lying. My mother said, "Come, Sıdıka Hanım, come. This may not be that day, but open the Koran and read it to me, my girl, read it!"



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She read a passage from the Koran to my mother.

Then my mother said, "Now, go, my girl. Go to your children."

"Sister, receive my blessing."

"Oh, my girl, I received your blessings this morning." Then to me she said, "My son, my child! Come, my lion!" *lion -- as complimentary epithet*

I approached.

"Behçet!"

"Yes, mother?"

"Give me water, my son!"

I gave her some water, but she took just three sips of it. Then she stretched forth her hand, like this, and passed the guilt on to me. "Off, Destiny," she said. "I made a home but I could not make a nest. My child, I am departing from you. To whose care do I leave you as I go? I leave you in the care of God, my son! God is your benefactor." *transfer of guilt from dying parent to child*

\* \* \* \* \*

Lâtif Shah said, "Innkeeper, Destiny had me read its list for sixteen years. Why should you wish to have me read this other list? What are you requesting of me?"

"Father, this is an order from the padişah. Travelers before you have told about the things which went through their minds. Now, following the order which I received, I am asking, 'Who are you? Where have you come from? Where are you going?'"

Lâtif Shah gave another exclamation of "Off!" And then he said, "Sit down, innkeeper, sit down. I am so miserable that I have been



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seeking a Lokman,<sup>90</sup> for only a Lokman can prescribe a cure for my troubles."

Gentlemen, if we were to have Lâtif Shah and all of the others tell all of the things that passed through their minds, we could never finish this story. Very briefly, Lâtif Shah acknowledged that he was Lâtif Shah, that he had been parted from his children and his wife, that he had wandered day and night in forest, mountain, and rocks for sixteen years. "But now, at last, today is today, this hour is this hour, and I am sitting opposite you in your inn." Then he told of the sufferings he had endured from the beginning to the end. He told about his having been a ruler and what his name was. "But observe the mirror of Destiny. Who believes that I was once a padişah? Here, <sup>Testing of mirror</sup> now, I have come this day, this hour before you saying 'Fix me a cup of coffee for the love of God.'" God -- love of

"Very well, father, but I shall not let you go anywhere. You have only just arrived, and already you are thinking of going." But the innkeeper did not understand the whole situation. How could he know? True, this stranger said, "This is our story. I am a shah, a ruler." But the innkeeper had no way of knowing that he was the father of their present padişah.

Did he not deliver this account in writing? He had prepared a written report, following the padişah's order that, "All travelers

*Guests -- at inn -- required, by law to recount life stories to innkeeper*

<sup>90</sup> A legendary physician of antiquity. He is mentioned in the Koran.

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who stop at the inn will tell of the things that run through their minds." The innkeeper also tried to give his interpretation of the events, but in this case he knew nothing about the fact that the present padişah was the son of Lâtif Shah, for the padişah had never told the innkeeper, "I am the son of such-and-such a padişah. So-and-so was the name of my father." Instead, he simply issued an order: "Take down the life-story of travelers who come to this inn after having them tell the things which pass through their minds." <sup>91</sup>

"Father, remain here. You do not have any place to go, and you are old. Stay here in this inn. You will be a father to me and I shall be your son."

"Very well."

Gentlemen, that week was finally finished. The innkeeper had written down the experiences of this man [Lâtif Shah] on a separate list. From week to week he used to go to the palace of Nesil. <sup>92</sup> He used to place the list of the comings and goings of travelers before the padişah, and the padişah used to look them over and then say,

<sup>91</sup> The padişah wanted to know about the things with which the travelers were preoccupied, but the literal statement of this idea is here given in the Turkish in a less abstract fashion.

<sup>92</sup> There is some confusion through much of this tale concerning the identities of Asil and Nesil. Nesil, the older of the two boys, was said to have eaten the head of the bird given to them in the forest, and it was thus he who was destined to become a ruler; Asil had eaten the body and was thereby destined to be the daily recipient of three purses of gold. Most of the time the present padişah of Fers has been called Nesil, but here he is referred to as Asil. Which son is the ruler in other texts of this tale?

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"These have nothing to do with my losses." No, these did not, but he kept hoping that some day this would occur.

Gentlemen, the innkeeper came to the palace of the padişah and said, "Yes, sir, here are the lists for the past week."

The padişah read the accounts of their lives which the other travelers had given. He then asked, "Do you have any others?"

"Yes, I also have another list."

"Give it to me!"

(Before he had gone to visit the padişah, the innkeeper had been asked by Lâtif Shah, "O innkeeper, where are you taking this account which I have given you?"

"My father, I am taking it to the padişah at our head. You should write your name right here."

"Give it here, then, and let me do it." Lâtif Shah wrote his name on the report and beneath his name he placed his sign.)<sup>93</sup>

"I have here another paper, my padişah."

"Give it to me!"

The innkeeper drew the paper from his right pocket and placed it in the hand of the padişah.

<sup>93</sup> This seven -line parenthetical comment contains information which the narrator had failed to provide immediately prior to this point. Realizing his omission, he here inserts the needed data re Lâtif Shah's signature and sign.

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Gentlemen, the padişah's eyes became wet just as soon as he unfolded that paper. "Innkeeper!" he said.

"Yes, my padişah?"

"Who is this Lâtif Shah? Whose sign is this? Who is this old man?"

"My padişah, please do not ask me who he is. The old man whom you inquire about is now sitting at our inn with a cushion placed under him. I made him my father, and he has called me, "şon." He will remain at our inn until the time of his death. Here is the list for him."

Asıl [Nesil] looked at the writing one more time and said, "Innkeeper!"

"Yes, sir?"

"The horses will be made ready!"

"My padişah," said the innkeeper. "My tongue could have ordered that the old man be brought here at your order."

"No, innkeeper, no! I do not have the tongue to tell you to bring him here." To himself Asıl [Nesil] was saying, "See how God has revealed him to us! All my searching was in vain, but God makes the discovery and makes our paths coincide. The innkeeper arrives and says, 'He is sitting at our inn.' How could I say, 'Go and bring him here?'"

"No, innkeeper, no! I should go there!" The innkeeper did not understand this.



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They mounted their horses and rode to the inn in half an hour's time. A short distance before the door of the inn, the padişah jumped down from his horse. "Alas, Great Sultan, what is the matter?"

"Gentlemen, do not be concerned about me. Riding up to that door on horseback does not seem suitable to me. Oh, innkeeper, you may not know the real identity of that old man staying at your inn, but to visit ask my heart about this." Speaking thus, the padişah folded his hands across his chest.

*Padişah -- dis-mounts and walks last few steps his father-in-law's gesture of respect*

Here, gentlemen, you can see the respect that has traditionally been paid to parents. When you were still in an infant's clothes, perhaps three years of age, you would run to your father when he entered the door to receive candy from his hand. Now the back of your father is bent and his teeth have fallen out. Now that you are mature, your hand picks up the trade which his hand has laid down. Do you not think that this is quite fitting? Know well that tomorrow your own child will do for you what you have done for your father today.

*Respect -- for father*

With his hands folded across his chest, the padişah entered the inn. The old man sat inside with his face turned toward Mecca.

Kaaba stone

<sup>94</sup> The narrator says literally that he was facing "the Kible." The Kible is the Kaaba, the small chapel (within the Great Mosque at Mecca) which contains that black stone which is the most sacred object of Islamic faith. It is toward this stone that Moslems everywhere turn when they pray.

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When he saw his father, he threw himself, weeping, at the feet of Lâtif Shah. The viziers, coming along behind, stopped when they saw this, frozen where they stood, like poplar cranes.<sup>95</sup> "Allah! Allah! What does this mean?" they said. *Cranes -- looking like poplars*

The padisah picked his father up in his arms as if he were a *Reunion* -- of child. "Oh, my son," said Lâtif Shah, "I thought you were probably *long-separated father and son* in a distant land and suffering even greater poverty than I, but in fact Destiny has made you a sultan!"

"Innkeeper!" called Asil [Nesil].

"Yes?"

"Leave this inn in the care of some Moslem and come to live in my palace." Taking the innkeeper's hand, he said, "You have made me attain still greater sovereignty by reuniting the child with the father, the father with the child. Should I leave you in this inn where again you would supervise travelers passing this way? You have become one of my eyes! No, no, you can stay here only over my dead body." <sup>96</sup>

But, gentlemen, now let us hear news about some other people.

<sup>95</sup> The crane, like the great blue heron, often stands in shallow water totally immobile as it awaits fish or other prey to come within its grasp. We are unacquainted with the reason that this bird is here called poplar crane. It may be metaphor to describe the crane, for like a poplar tree, it is very tall and very thin.

<sup>96</sup> The narrator says, literally, "over my head."

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The padişah asked Lâtif Shah about his [the padişah's] mother and siblings.

"My son, do not ask me about that. All that I can tell you is that I do not know where they are. I myself was lost in the forest."

"Oh, father, why do you not ask news of my brother from me? My brother and I became separated. But you can be consoled by the thought that my brother is probably very rich. As you taught us to do, we prayed to the "Three," <sup>97</sup> and we were rewarded for doing so. They <sup>Three -- "The</sup> gave us a bird to eat, saying that he who ate the head of the bird <sup>powerful group</sup> should become a ruler, and he who ate its body should find each <sup>of immortals in</sup> morning beneath his pillow three purses of gold. And these things <sup>Moslem mysticism</sup> actually came to pass, but, alas, I lost my brother."

"This has affected me, too, son. The Mirror of Destiny <sup>Destiny - mirror of</sup> revealed that you would find me, and let us hope that it will some day show how I shall find your brother, sister, and mother."

One day as the padişah and his viziers were riding about in the city, their course took them past the prison. As they were passing this prison, they could hear someone inside crying. As he sat on his

<sup>97</sup> The "Three," the "Seven," the Twelve," and the "Forty" are groups of human spirits elevated, because of their great virtue and purity, almost to the level of saints. Usually they are thought of as the souls of dead mortals, but in some instances they may be the spirits of the still living. These groups are thought to control or at least influence the course of Destiny. The smaller the group, the greater their authority, and thus the "Three" are the most powerful. This is all part of Bektashi and Alevi mythology in Turkey.



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horse listening to this bitter complaint, the padişah ordered, "Call the chief warden of this prison here to me." *Warden -- of prison*

When the order reached the head warden, he came at once and said, "Yes, Great Padişah?"

"Who is that person crying out so loudly before the window of this prison?"

"My padişah, it is some young man. Although we have ordered him to stop making such a loud lament, he refuses to stop. How is it that he does not stop? Although he himself may wish to stop, his heart will not permit him to do so."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, my padişah!"

"I shall now return to my palace, but I want you to send me the complete file on this crying prisoner and also the files on all the other prisoners as well."

"By my head I shall do so," said the warden.

Gentlemen, who was the person whose file the padişah ordered sent to him by the chief warden? Who was it that was crying before the window? It was Nesil [Asil?]. What did he [the warden] say? (What have I said to my listeners here--some of whom may have understood and some of whom did not?) He [the warden] said, "He himself might have wished to stop [crying out], but his heart would not let him do so." --Observe this answer, for there is no escaping its meaning.



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The chief warden appeared before the padişah, bringing with him all of the convicts, including the young man [who cried so loudly]. He brought with him the files on all of these prisoners. Present also were the twelve viziers and the grand vizier. As soon as these men saw the boy, they were greatly alarmed, but to arise and flee was something quite impossible. One of them said, "My padişah!"

"What?"

"Please excuse me from remaining here, for I do not feel at all well. I am in pain."

"Sit down!"

It was not just this one of the viziers who wished to leave. All thirteen of them had grown very pale upon seeing Asil [Nesil] appear in court with the prisoners.

Asil [Nesil?] immediately recognized his brother when he saw him sitting opposite him. "Tell me, do you recognize me?" he said to his brother.

Now Nesil [Asil] had also recognized Asil [Nesil] as soon as he saw him. He saw that it was his brother who was sitting on the royal divan. He said, "Oh, my padişah, it is less important that I recognize you than that you recognize me!"

Reunion -- of  
long-separated  
brothers

The two brothers embraced. They were reunited with their father, who was standing behind a curtain. All of the padişah's council was also present on this occasion. The padişah then gave his orders: "Let soldiers in ranks seven deep surround the door of the council

Ranks -- seven deep -- of soldiers

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room. I want two executioners with drawn swords standing here inside."

After soldiers had surrounded the council room door, as directed, two executioners with drawn swords entered and said, "We await orders, my padişah!"

"I want one of you to stand at the right side of the door and the other at the left."

The padişah took his brother to their father. As soon as he saw Lâtif Shah, the brother recognized him and kissed his father's hands and feet. "Oh, brother," he said to the padişah, "I have found my father. I have seen him!"

"Come, brother, " said the padişah, "let us close the account of this imposture [of mine], for our father is here." Then, after having his father placed on the divan beside himself, he said, "Oh, shah father!"

"Yes?"

"Ruling is your right, and so now rule!"

"My child, I do not understand the inner workings of this kingdom. Today you are the ruler, and these people are your subjects. have demonstrated all proper filial respect. I used to wonder, I used to wonder, 'Is there not a secret maturity in this son of mine?' There certainly was, my son, for you had me seated beside you and said, 'Rule, father!' But ruling is now yours, my son! Let me

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listen to your judgments. Let me see whether your justice is complete."

The padişah <sup>kissing -- of hand -- as gesture of respect</sup> kissed his father's hand and then sat down beside him again. Then to his brother he said, "Brother, give us an account of your experiences. Tell exactly the way it all happened, and leave no part of the information hidden. There will be no enmity, for the sword is in the sheath. Any account that reveals anything blameworthy in you will be settled not here but in the Great Court. <sup>98</sup> Give an exact description of all that happened, brother." Great Court -- (Court of God on Judgment Day)

The young man repeated exactly what had happened as he told his story before the padişah. "The darkness of evening had already fallen when I reached the edge of this city. The gates of the city were locked, and on the tower there stood these twelve men who are now viziers and this man who is the grand vizier. No matter how much I begged, they refused to permit my entry by opening a gate. While I was standing there in fear, I heard a great noise, brother. I then saw that a dragon was approaching. Out of fear of the dragon, I forgot about the city, for I saw that there would be no help for me from that quarter; those within the city cared not at all what happened to me. I fled to a hiding place beneath the roof of the nearby water depot in order to escape the ferocity of the dragon. When the monster reached its head toward the tower, I realized that by means of that

<sup>98</sup> The reference is to the court of justice in the next world on Judgment Day.

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tower, it could enter the city and cause great destruction within.

My sword hung from my waist. Saying, 'Such an opportunity shall not escape my hands,' I drew my sword and crept up behind the monster.

Half of the dragon had reared up to the tower, but the other half still lay on the ground. As soon as I reached it, I dealt a mighty sword blow to the dragon, having said to myself, 'Death comes to a person one way or another.' With that one sword blow, I cut the dragon into two parts there beneath the tower. When the dragon was thus dead, I ran back and reentered the water depot.

"These men, your twelve viziers here, and that man, your grand vizier, got out of the tower, opened the gate of the city, and came to the water depot. When they arrived there, I was still cleaning the dragon blood from my sword. That grand vizier said to these twelve viziers, 'If we take him to the padişah, there will be nothing left for us to do now that he has killed the dragon. He would say, "I killed it," and we would have to say, "Yes, he killed it." There would be no way for us to deny it. If we said to him, "Go," he might well do this, but he would probably wander around for a while and then return here again. Sooner or later, he would go to the padişah and report, "I was the one who killed the dragon." So what should we do?'

"I was watching the faces of these men. They said, 'A cut-off head cannot give any evidence!' It did me no good whatever to plead with them, for no matter how hard I begged, they attacked me from all



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sides, inflicting wounds upon me in seven places. By then I was no longer conscious, and these men then left me there, thinking that I was dead."

The padişah listened as he gave this account.

"I did not know how long I had remained there in that water depot. But there were seven people who came there to gamble. When they saw me lying there in my own red blood, six of them immediately ran away. The seventh one asked himself, 'How could I be such an unfeeling person as to go away and leave this boy in such a condition? As he lies here fluttering back and forth between life and death, can I too run away?' He raised me to his back and carried me to his home. After I had lain there for twenty-one days, I opened my eyes and found myself enclosed by four walls.

"The people of that house had taken three purses of gold from beneath my pillow every day. They put the sixty-three bags of gold before me. So, an old woman, a grandmother, cured me along with the help of a young man. The people of that house are here."

"Very well."

All of the inmates of the prison had been brought along and were waiting in a large salon of the palace. One whose name was to be announced was to come forward.

"Do you know his name?" asked the padişah.

"Yes, I know it," answered his brother.

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'All right The open the door and call him here!

First he called the young who had carried him his home  
his back--the who had previously been gamble As he  
forward this young man brought with his mother "He they are  
said Asil [Nesil]

"Very well said the padishah. To the two he said "Come over  
he

became like child to his woman and like brother to her  
The goodness that was in these people had the  
earth all the way to the sky brother There is way in which  
provide reward equal to their merit The placed all of the  
bags of gold before but said give these all to you In  
the morning added three purse gold the total amount  
This daily supply gold had become my lifelong gift We became  
rich But the vizier had seen and my adopted brother as we had  
ridden about town on our horses They had captured and taken  
us at the inn he was the bank ask they  
wounded badly After had lost all consciousness they had covered  
my body with dirt The person who saved from that predicament has  
also been in prison but today he has been brought here according  
your orders

"This person who saved me was a young man carrying wood from the  
forest When he had reached the bank of the creek he had set down his

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load in order to rest. While resting there, he noticed my feet sticking out of the heap of soil and moving slightly. He had dug me from beneath the soil when he had realized that I was still alive and had taken me to his home. I remained in that man's house for thirty-one days. By then I had recovered sufficiently so that I was able to stand up. They brought ninety-three small bags of gold and placed them before me. 'This is all yours,' I said. But my other mother and brother were still in prison, and I did not know that you [the padişah] were the ruler here."

"Brother," said the padişah, "I had searched for you, for my father, for my sister, for my mother. Now I have found you and my father but not our sister or mother."

"Well, anyway, in our new state of richness, we [the wood carrier and his family] used to ride back and forth to and from this city. On one of these trips to this city, they [the viziers] had recognized me again. We bought those things for which we had gone to the city and returned to the town in which we lived. One hour after our arrival home, our door was surrounded. I and the people of that household were all arrested and immediately thrown into prison. Should I now call the members of that household?"

"Call them!" said the padişah. After he had called them and they had come, the padişah ordered them, "All right, come over here." To his brother, then, he said, "And what of the rest?"



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"I do not know any of the rest," Asil [Nesil?] said. "Take their explanations, however, whatever their offense may be."

"Chief Warden!"

"Yes, your majesty?"

"I am herewith pardoning all of these prisoners, whether or not they are guilty. They are now all free." To the executioners he then gave this order: "Bind fast the arms of these twelve viziers and the grand vizier." These viziers were already trembling in fear. To them the padişah now said, "Oh, viziers, I engaged you first as guardians of the city. You killed the dragon, didn't you? Did you not say among yourselves that the truth would be disclosed one day? There is a Mirror of Destiny which reveals all things. And the day finally came when it exposed you."

*Amnesty -- ordered by  
padişah -- freeing  
all inmates  
of state  
prison*

*Mirror -- within  
each person --  
analogous to  
Mirror of Destiny  
-- in revealing  
truth.*

Yes, my friends, both you and I have within us a mirror also. Be assured that when you strive to know yourself, you see yourself and all of your faults within the mirror of your heart.

The heads of the twelve viziers and the grand vizier were all cut off. Asil [Nesil?] said, "Brother!"

*Decapitation -- of twelve viziers  
and Grand Vizier*

"Yes?"

"What about this young man [the former gambler] and that young man [the former wood carrier]?"

"They shall be viziers," said the padişah, "and this one shall be the new grand vizier."



"Good! Good!"

Gentlemen, these three [members of the family] had now found each other. But come! Let us give some other news. From whom? From Katmer, the sister of Nesil and Asil, from their mother, and also from Sinan. Katmer had gone to distant and strange lands in search of her son who had departed by flying out of the palace window. After she had wandered for six years, her ordeal was finished. When she had come to this point, what was it that she saw? A white bearded, saintly mortal, an old man, was standing at that point. Who was it? He was the white bearded, saintly old man who had said to Katmer, Hızır when she was eighteen years old, "I have a rose to sell."

Katmer was wearing male clothes, and she had been wandering about with a pair of iron shoes upon her feet. <sup>99</sup> "Where do I find you now, my child?" the old man asked her. For six years she had become like Mecnun in search of his Leyla. <sup>100</sup> When he arrived at her side, the old man asked, "Come, why are you wandering in these mountains?"

"Father, Destiny has placed me here as a guardian of these mountains and has me wander about them."

Guardian -- of mountains

<sup>99</sup> Those who must go on long quests or search missions are said to travel so long that they wear out an iron walking staff and a pair of iron shoes. Those about to undertake a long, long journey of this sort often buy themselves such shoes and such a stick. Whether or not one envisions the characters' actually using such items, these objects have come to symbolize long and arduous travel.

<sup>100</sup> Katmer is likened to Mecnun (of the famous folk romance cited in an earlier Note) not because she is wandering in search of a lover, but because, like Mecnun, she has given herself completely to the quest of finding someone, in this case her son, Hikmet. Both the love between Leyla and Mecnun and the maternal love of Katmer for Hikmet have a spiritual basis.

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The poet has said this:

From the depth of this heart  
 Destiny has tinted me with love.  
 The truth is that in this world  
 It has made me burn with this woe.  
*Fortune -- Wheel of*  
 It made the Wheel of Fortune, a ring,  
 And it made it turn and turn.  
 His eye is wet, his heart is grieved;  
 It makes one wander, crying aloud.

Yes, it causes everyone to cry some, to laugh some, to wander along  
 the rim of the ring, the Wheel of Fortune.

"Come, my girl, come! When you were eighteen years of age, I was  
 selling roses at the edge of your city. You asked me, after ordering  
 that I come to you, 'Father, what do you want for this rose?'  
 took the rose from me, but the money for the rose remained with you.  
 You reached into your pocket for money with which you could do a  
 kindness to me, but I disappeared before you. My girl, the ordeal  
 which you have suffered has now been completed. Give me your hand.  
 You are searching for your child, are you not?"

"Yes."

"You cannot find him by searching. Come, my girl, come!  
 your eyes and hold my hand."

She shut her eyes. When she opened them, she found herself in a  
 garden. Whose garden was it? It was the garden of the daughter of

*Magic transportation -- over great distance -- in few  
 moments*

*Transportation -- magical* *same as above*

*Daughter -- of Pedigree of Fairies*

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Fairies -- Padishah *gh*

the Padishah of Fairies.

"Oh, my girl, the son named Hikmet whom you are searching for is a real Hikmet. <sup>101</sup> Because you became pregnant with him by smelling a flower, your child comes under the sovereignty of this realm."

The old man pulled back a curtain behind which there was a door. He opened the door, through which Katmer passed. What did Katmer see when she passed through the door? She saw a girl of great beauty sitting on a throne, and beside her sat Katmer's son, Hikmet.

The old man spoke to Hikmet: "O my son! Leave your royal seat. I have brought your mother here!"

"Oh, mother, did I not warn you not to reveal the flower to anyone? We have all suffered an ordeal as a result of that. I know what I have suffered. But see the divine mystery which has made me the son-in-law of the Padishah of Fairies."

The old man called, "O fairy girl!"

"Yes?"

"My girl, this is your human mother-in-law. She is a mortal woman, a descendant of Adam, while you are a fairy."

"My girl," [said Katmer?], "I have come here seeking your

Adam -- descendant of

<sup>101</sup> Apparently this is a play on the definition of Hikmet as "ultimate hidden cause."

Will -- of God  
 Story #672      God -- will of  
                  Prophet (Mohammed) -- permission of  
                  Permission -- of the Prophet (Mohammed)

husband, whose relationship with you was not made by the will of God or the permission [of the Prophet].<sup>102</sup> Lâtif Shah has been recovered, but Sinan has also become lost in strange lands."

"Fairy girl," said the old man, "send out fairies to find Sinan too. This one [Katmer] searched for her son, and he [Sinan] in turn is searching for her."

(Gentlemen, the name of the youngest fairy is Action Fairy.)<sup>103</sup>

Fairy -- of  
 Action

"From Action Fairy," said Katmer, "I wish the recovery of the lost person referred to by the saintly old mortal standing opposite me here."

"I am at your disposal, my sultan. Order what you will!"

Sinan had reached a distant land. He had sat down, leaned his back against a grassy bank, and shut his eyes. He awoke with the awareness that he was being carried away with great speed: "I am traveling through the air! What is happening to me?" He was being carried by a group of fairies. "Katmer is the one for whom I am searching," he said to the fairies.

<sup>102</sup> References to "order," "permission," and "God" here in the context of the husband/wife relationship seem to suggest the ritual initial comment of a Turkish matchmaker: "I have come by the will of God and the permission of the Prophet to ask for the hand of X [female] for Y [male]."

<sup>103</sup> This fairy is here referred to as İcra Fairy. İcra means performance; icra etmek means to act, to perform, to carry out.



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The old man said, "Come, come! Let us see what has happened.

The beloved for whom you looked is here!" In this way Sinan was reunited with Katmer, and the two embraced.

*Reunion -- of  
separated husband  
and wife*

"Oh, fairy!" said the old man.

"Yes?"

"Now the rest of what is to happen is left for me to do. Get up, for you are now going to join Adam's descendants. You are going to leave the jurisdiction of this territory." When the fairy girl had stood up, he said to her, "Bathe in the water with which I rinsed my hands, and in that way join the descendants of Adam, my girl!"

Hazreti Hızır<sup>104</sup> put his hands into a bowl of water and rinsed them. "Bathe in this water and drink some of this water too," said Hızır. The daughter of the Padişah of Fairies did as she was instructed, both bathing in and drinking of the water, and in this way she entered into race of the descendants of Adam

The saintly mortal took Sinan, Katmer, and the fairy girl with him when he left that place. "Oh, Katmer, I shall now take you to a place where you will encounter your mother, who will be weeping when

<sup>104</sup> Hazreti may mean saintly, blessed, or holy. Hızır, though not mentioned by name in the Koran, is the most frequently mentioned divine figure in Turkey after Mohammed and Ali. He is a last-minute rescuer from disaster; he often alters Destiny for or with the consent of Allah. Originally (and still for a vast majority of country residents) he was a fertility god and water deity. Among the various unofficial calendars used by Turkish people, one begins its year with May 6, the day sacred to Hızır. The day is called Hidrelez. It is, in Turkey, the first day of summer.

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you he Shut yo eyes Now pen yo yes

Whe hey opened the yes the large building They

that was an inn along road he old man asked Katme

yo hat ld approaching he inn he opposite direc ion?"

"Ye he

Ka my girl tha woman is your mothe She is looking

you wandering here and there He ordeal is inished and she  
will arrive at he inn omorrow

ery he that inn and ered it What had he  
padişah ordere "F the innkeeper

Ye my padişah?"

Will you bring again he inn

'All righ my padişah Le my head be guarant hat shall  
do his By he ime ha he innkee had urned he

he woman Ka mother] had almost reached he inn doo He

sai himse "Who his ld grandmothe ?" As she drew

lo he sai Le me go and meet this old woman be nt

he place myself --Oh how ime had changed tha woman F. in  
years she had wandered in strange lands The innkeeper di not

ognize he

"Oh grandmother," said he innkeeper "who yo! Wha

you rying bout

The sai herself Le stop his hildish rying

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and explain myself." And then to the man she said, "I worked at this inn for a few days six years ago. Did the man managing this inn die, or is he still alive? The building is still here, but I do not know whether or not the man is still here. I had accepted him as my brother. He and I had agreed on a sister/brother relationship. Call to me the innkeeper who manages business here."

When he heard these remarks, the innkeeper threw himself on the ground at the feet of the woman. "Oh, sister, the innkeeper about whom you are speaking is I. I was the one who had called you sister. Give me your hand!" Taking the woman by the hand, he led her into the inn, but--aha! --it was full. He had left a man in charge there during his absence. "Tell me--who are these travelers?" he asked.

"My dear sir," said that man, "they have only just arrived. After they have rested for a while, we are going to take down their accounts of their experiences. It is better that you have come, however, to write down their adventures and take their accounts to the padişah."

After they had all rested, the innkeeper began to hear their accounts of their lives. "Tell us your experiences. Who are you?" Everyong then told of the experiences which he or she had had.

"I am the daughter of a ruler," [said Katmer]. My father is Lâtif Shah."

"Oh-h-h-h!" said the innkeeper.

"I took a flower, sniffed it, and became pregnant as a result,

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but now, at last, my long ordeal is finished." She told about all of the things that had happened to her, one by one. "At last I became the daughter-in-law of the Padişah of Fers. Sinan, the son of the padişah, took me by God's order,<sup>105</sup> and I took him. After I had revealed what the flower was, and how it was the source of my son, Hikmet, then fifteen years old, the rose faded, and my son flew out the window as a bird.

The rose has faded,  
The nightingale flown!  
Laugh now, mother, laugh  
Or sadly moan!

These were the words of Hikmet just before he flew off. Then for six years I wore the iron slippers on my feet and carried the iron stick in my hand. I wandered and wandered but I could not find my son by searching. Here is my son, and here is my husband, Sinan, but I have still not found my father, my mother, and my brothers."

"Amazing! What good news! Let our padişah know that we have found his lost ones!" The innkeeper went immediately and reported all of this to the padişah.

"Remain here in this palace, innkeeper.<sup>106</sup> Because you have

<sup>105</sup> See Footnote 102 of this tale.

<sup>106</sup> What the padişah actually says is "Remain here, my son." Inasmuch as the innkeeper was approximately the same age of the padişah's mother, it is quite inappropriate for Nesil [Asil?] to call him "my son." We have, therefore, in the translation substituted the work innkeeper for the words my son.



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brought me this good news, you will be one of my viziers. Stay here!"

Again the padişah took out his royal carriage. "This is my mother again. How could I just tell the innkeeper to bring her here? I must go."

*Reunion -- of  
long separated  
son and mother*

Gentlemen, he very soon reached his old mother at this inn. The son and the mother were reunited there, and the daughter and the mother were also reunited. The son gathered those at the inn together and took them at once to the royal palace. There there was a complete reunion of all those who had been separated from one another.

"Oh, Sinan," called the padişah.

"Yes?"

"Come here! My father, Lâtif Shah, has sat here with me on the royal divan. But your father was the ruler here before I was. You are also my brother-in-law. You too are welcome in this palace. Let us remain together until the end of our lives."

[The narrator here quotes three stanzas of verse, mainly concerned with Will and Fate. The taping (or tape) here is defective, and, at this point, these lines seem to be beyond recovery. If, at a later date, an audio engineer is able to recover this passage sufficiently to permit an accurate translation, this material will be "tipped in" later.]

Here our story has reached its end. All of the characters of

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this tale were reunited.

Tomorrow night, gentlemen, I shall tell the story of "Tahir and Zühre." <sup>107</sup> For tonight the performance is finished. Farewell for now!

<sup>107</sup> This is another long folk romance well known throughout much of the Moslem Middle East.