

Story #669 (1976, Tape #19)

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Location: Village of Yukarıgöklü,
kaza of Hâlfeti, Province
of Urfa

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The Wolf for Whom Allah Did Not Provide

This is the way I gather my children around me and the neighborhood children also, and tell them tales.

there was #669

Once, an old wolf who could no longer function very well. He was seventy years old, had lost most of his teeth, and he had very little strength left. Whenever he was able to catch some small prey, the wild dogs usually succeeded in taking it away from him. He thought and thought about his predicament and decided he would have to think of a cunning way to stay alive. After a while he decided he would make his way to Mecca on a pilgrimage, and along the way Allah would have to keep him alive.

He found a piece of green cloth,² wrapped it around his head as a turban, and began his journey. He soon came across a horse who was prancing in a meadow. As soon as the horse spotted the old wolf, he started to run off, for the wolf was his enemy and would devour him. The wolf called out to the running horse and said, "Brother horse, you need not run away from me. I am an old wolf who has lost most of his teeth and strength. I can no longer hunt my prey. Can't you see my

¹The common noun Öğretmen means teacher, but the narrator is not a teacher. Öğretmen is his real last name.

²Green is the sacred color of Islam.

turban -- green

green turban? I have decided to take the holy trip to Mecca, and have sworn off my vicious ways. You need not run away. Stay and enjoy yourself in you meadow."

The horse could not believe his ears and came towards the wolf to see if he was telling the truth. Indeed, he saw that the wolf was very old, and possessed of little energy. So he stayed in the meadow where he could graze and run to his heart's content.

The wolf continued on his way to the holy land. Soon he came upon a donkey, who started running away, as soon as he saw the wolf approaching. The wolf called him back and said, "Brother donkey, what is the matter with you? Can't you recognize a holy man when you see one? Can't you see my green turban? Don't you have sense enough to know what it means? I am too old to hunt for prey. My teeth have fallen out, and my strength fails me. I have given up my old ways. I am now going to Mecca on a pilgrimage, and surely Allah will see fit to provide for me. So do not run off. You need not fear me. Stay and enjoy yourself."

The donkey could not believe his ears, but when he took a closer look at the wolf, he saw that he did not need to worry about him, for indeed, the wolf had only a few teeth and not much strength. So he relaxed and stayed on, instead of running off, and the wolf continued on his journey.

After a while he came upon a stray sheep grazing. The sheep started to run as soon as it spotted the wolf, but the wolf called out, "Brother sheep, brother sheep, do not run off. Can't you see that

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I am wearing a green turban? I am a ^{man -- holy} holy man on his way to Mecca to pay homage to Allah. I have changed my ways. I am too old to hunt my prey. My teeth and my strength have failed me. I am now engaged in the ways of Allah, and have renounced all evil ways. Stay on and graze freely. I will not harm you."

The sheep could not believe its ears. It took a second look at the wolf and saw that he was telling the truth. His teeth were few, and he seemed to have no strength or energy left to him. So the sheep wished the wolf well, and he stayed on to graze at that spot.

The wolf went on his way, but in a few hours night came on, and he became very hungry, for he had not eaten for a long time. He had no energy to go on but stopped to rest and to solve his dilemma. He decided that he would have to go back just a little ways and catch the sheep that was trustingly grazing, since the Lord had not provided in any other way. He went back and when he got to the spot where the sheep was, he crept close and grabbed it by the leg.

The sheep, frightened and surprised, said, "I thought that you said you had given up your evil ways. What is the matter with you? Is this the way for a holy one to behave?"

The wolf replied, "Sin or no sin, I will eat you, for I am hungry and have not had anything for a long time."

The sheep then said, "If I am to die, then grant me a last wish. I took the ^{flute -- shepherd's} shepherd's flute before I strayed, and I would like to hear a melody before I go."

The wolf thought it was not much to ask for, and said, "Yes, I can

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play a tune for you on the flute, but you must keep right under my paw." So the sheep gave him the flute and the wolf put one paw over the sheep and began to play the flute. The wolf became quite engrossed in playing the flute, for he could play fairly well. He was so carried away in playing, in fact, that he did not notice the sheep's getting away from him. When the melody was finished, he looked around and could not see the sheep anywhere. Then he realized that he had been ^{tricked} tricked by the sheep, and he threw down the flute in fury.

He felt terribly hungry. He decided to go back a little farther to where the donkey had been earlier in the day. He gathered his strength and started on his way back. Soon he came upon the donkey and grabbed it by the leg. The donkey, frightened and angry, said, "What do you think you are doing? Did you not say you had given up your wicked ways? Is this any way for a pilgrim to behave? You should be ashamed of the green turban you are wearing!"

But the wolf felt no shame at all, and he said, "Allah did not provide for me, and I must look out for myself any way I can. I am hungry, not having eaten for a long time. I don't care if it is wicked. I have caught you, and you can be sure that I will eat you!"

Then the donkey replied, "All right, you win. You outwitted me, and you have me, and you will certainly eat me. But how will you eat my ^{shoes -- of lead} lead shoes? You must first get my shoes off. The ^{blacksmith} smith did a very good job, and they are nailed tightly. Here, I'll put my foot in your mouth, and you must pull as hard as you can."

But when the wolf started to take the shoe to his mouth to remove

it, the donkey kicked as hard as he could, knocking the wolf off his feet and ~~also~~ knocking out his few remaining teeth. Then the donkey ran off. The wolf realized he had been ^{tricked} ~~tricked~~ again and was very angry with himself for letting the donkey get away. He decided he would have to go back and find the horse he had passed earlier in the day, and this time he would not let the horse trick him, no matter what he said,

So he started on his way back and finally came to the meadow where he had left the horse. The horse was not disturbed by his presence, and he let the wolf get close, thinking he was harmless. But the wolf pounced on him and grabbed him by the leg and would not let go. The horse was angry and said, "I thought you had changed your ways. Do you think you are doing? Is this any way for a holy one to act?"

But the wolf held onto the horse and said, "My holy ways got me nowhere. I thought Allah would provide, but he did not. I have not eaten in a long time, and since I am starving, I shall eat you. Nor shall I let you trick me the way the donkey and sheep did!"

The horse asked how the sheep and donkey had tricked him and the wolf told him what had just happened. The horse told him he could see that he could not trick the wolf after what had just happened. But he did have a last wish too, though it would be safe for the wolf. He told the wolf that he had had a very good owner who had turned him loose in the pasture after he had served him for many years. He just wanted to prance around the pasture for a last run, and the wolf could ride him and hold on to his mane. He could not trick him, for the wolf would have him by the throat in no time if he tried anything. So the

wolf thought he would be safe and consented to grant his last request. The wolf got on the horse's back, and they rode around the pasture. But the horse left the pasture, something which the wolf did not notice because his old eyes could no longer see very well. The horse galloped to the town, and, when he arrived at its center, threw the wolf off his back, hurling him against a wall. Then the horse galloped away.

As the old wolf lay in a heap at the base of the wall, the village children and elders gathered around him, tied him up with ropes, and cried, "Wolf, wolf!" The old wolf lived the rest of his days tied up where he could do no harm. The village children came to see him often and fed him for the rest of his life.