

Narrator: Şerif Ayıldız

Location: Şembik village, Belen nahiye, İskenderun kaza, Hatay Province

Date: June 20, 1974

Hâtemi Teyh

Once, long ago, there was a padişah named Hâtemi Teyh. This padişah used to draw 1,000 liras per month from the manager of his treasury, and with this money he would pay his debts. Then the next month he would draw another 1,000 liras, always signing the appropriate papers for the records. One day someone else learned how to forge such papers, sending for 1,000 liras as if he were the padişah. When, after a while, the padişah and the manager of the treasury sat down to settle their financial accounts, it became clear that the padişah had drawn 12,000 liras more than he had actually received.

*He was
creating
the Hâtemi*

"Who drew out that money?" the padişah asked.

*He or
B. Mahir*

"You did, your majesty."

"No, I did not. It looks as if someone has forged notes and drawn this money out on my name."

The culprit was searched for and finally found. When he was brought before the padişah's council, the members began asking each other, "What shall we do to the kind of man who commits this sort of theft from the padişah's treasury?"

One said, "Let us hang him."

"Let us cut him into pieces," another suggested

A third spoke up and said, "If you hang him, he will die but once, and the same will be true if you behead him. What will that achieve but to

make orphans of his children and ruin his family? Do you not have any charity or compassion, O Padişah? Why not release this man as a charitable act?"

"Very well," said the padişah. "Take this man to the treasury and give him as much gold as he can carry away. Then let him loose to go wherever he wishes." This they did, loading sacks of gold on his back.

After that [Hâtemi Teyh] went here and there introducing himself as padişah and boasting of his generosity. "Do not praise yourself so much," someone said to him. "In Adana there is a padişah who gives 1,000 liras to anyone who says, 'Thanks be to Allah!'"¹

"How could this be?" he asked.

"If you do not believe it, go and see for yourself," the people said.

The padişah ^{in squint} changed his clothes for those of a dervish. He proceeded to find that other padişah with the aid of his address.² When he [Hâtemi Teyh] said in his presence, "Thanks to Allah!" a çıkın³ of gold was dropped in front of him containing exactly 1,000 liras. At noon he went again and shouted, "Thanks to Allah!" and another bag dropped. He counted its contents and found that it contained another 1,000 liras. "I wonder where he is getting all this money?" he [Hâtemi Teyh] asked himself. He went for a third time in the afternoon, and again he shouted, "Thanks to Allah!"

This time the padişah [of Adana] said, "Bring that man to me. He must

The actual expression used here was rıza lillah.

² This is an obvious anachronism. Urban addresses are often puzzles and wonders to rural peasants, something which fascinates them. Obviously, however, a padişah would not need an address to be located.

³ A çıkın is cloth parcel made by folding in its four corners to the center. It is carried in the hand, as opposed to the bohçe (smaller but similarly made), which is carried under the arm. A bohçe is used to carry one's bathing paraphernalia to a public bath.

Story #527

be testing me." When he [Hâtemi Teyh] was brought to his presence, the padişah said to him, "Friend, you are not a poor man. Tell me the truth about this. A poor man comes but once to my door. You are testing me."

"Yes, sir, that is correct. I am a padişah myself, like you."

"Then why do you come here?"

"Well," said Hâtemi Teyh, "the situation is this. I had a man whom some said I should hang and some said I should behead. I had him loaded with gold from my treasury instead and then turned loose. But this happened just once, whereas you repeatedly pay 1,000 liras to anyone who says, 'Thanks to Allah!' How can you manage to do this? Will you give me an explanation of this?"

The padişah answered him in this way. "There is a man in Konya who calls a town crier to him every morning and hands him a jewel as large as a lentil, saying, 'Son, take this jewel to the marketplace, and when the bidding for it reaches 1,000 liras, bring it back to me.' The town crier takes it to the marketplace, and when he is offered 300, 400, 500, and finally 1,000 gold pieces for it, he brings it back to that padişah and reports, 'Padişah, it has now reached the value of 1,000 gold liras.' The padişah then takes back the jewel, puts it in a mortar, and pounds it into a fine dust. Then, pouring the dust into the palm of his hand, he blows it away. If you can discover why the Padişah of Konya does that, then I shall tell you why I give 1,000 liras to the man who says, 'Thanks to Allah!'"

He [Hâtemi Teyh] mounted his horse and rode to Konya. There one of the padişah's men held his horse's head for him while he dismounted.

Story #527

padişah there asked him, "What do you wish here?"

"What should I wish? I have been told that you are offered 1,000 liras for a jewel as large as a lentil but that you refuse to it. Instead, you powder it into dust and then blow away the dust. What pleasure does that give you? Why do you not sell it for that price?"

The Padişah of Konya answered, "What does that have to do with you?"

"That is my only wish--to know this. I wish to understand the truth behind this."

"I cannot explain that to you now. But there is a man in Afyon Karahisar who goes to the coffeehouse in the morning and sits down. He talks with the people there, drinks coffee, smokes a water pipe, and, when he is about to leave, shouts, 'Isn't there a Baba Yiğit⁴ here who can slap the nape of my neck and thereby earn a few kuruş?'⁵ Well, a man will appear and deal him a blow between his ears. He pays the man a mecidiye.⁶ You go and find out why he does that, and I shall then tell you why I do this [i.e., blow away a powdered jewel worth 1,000 liras]."

⁴ A Turkish idiom for a strong, courageous fellow.

⁵ A hundredth part of a lira. Once worth an appreciable amount, it is now (1981) worth about 1/10 of an American cent. One-kuruş pieces are now collector's items, coins no longer in use as money. The expression "a few kuruş" meant "some money," whether or not that money was actually measured in kuruş or in some other coin. The kuruş is copper.

⁶ The Baba Yiğit is not actually paid in kuruş pieces. He is paid a mecidiye, a silver coin first minted by Sultan Abdul Mecid [Mejid] (1839-1861).

Story

He [Hâtemi Teyh] took the man's address and set out [for Afyon Karahisar]. When he found him, he said to him, "Fellow-citizen,⁷ are you your own enemy? Are you an enemy to your wealth? You not only have your neck slapped, but you also pay money for this. Why do you do that? The answer to that is all I wish from you."

"I cannot tell you."

"Why not?"

The man then said this. "There is a hoca in İzmir who climbs a minaret in the morning, chants the ezan,⁸ and then comes down weeping. You go and find out for me why he does that, and then I shall give you your answer."

He [Hâtemi Teyh] went a little way, he went a long way, and finally he reached İzmir. He found the hoca and said, "Selâmünaleyküm."

"Aleykümselâm."

"O hoca, my brother! You chant the ezan and intone the sala.⁹ Health to your tongue! But I am curious to know why you come down the minaret weeping. Can you explain the reason for this to me?"

I will not."

"Why not?"

⁷ The term that the narrator used here was hemşehri, which means literally resident of the same city.

⁸ The ezan is the call to prayer.

⁹ The sala is a special part of the ezan chanted on Friday, formerly the sabbath, and also chanted for funerals.

Story #527

"There is a bootmaker in Balıkesir who goes and sits in his shop in the morning. He takes two stitches and starts shouting 'Yalel.'¹⁰ After that he bursts into laughter but laughs only briefly before he starts weeping. How is it possible that a man should shout 'Yalel,' burst out laughing, and then start crying, all in five or ten minutes? You go and find out why he does that, and then I shall tell you what you wish to know of me."

He [Hâtemi Teyh] went and found this man [the bootmaker in Balıkesir]. He asked the man why he behaved in this way.

"I shall not tell you. But there is a man in İstanbul who has a herd of deer. When the deer graze, he grazes with them. How can a man eat grass? You go and find the answer to that question, and then I shall tell you why I behave as I do."

He [Hâtemi Teyh] went to İstanbul and found this man. He greeted him, "Selâmunaleyküm."

"Aleykümselâm."

"Tell me, fellow-citizen, are you a human being?"

"Yes, I am."

"Then, why do you graze and eat grass?"

"What is it to you whether or not I eat grass?"

"Well, friend, I should like to find out from you the reason for your doing this."

¹⁰ Whatever the literal meaning of this Arabic word, it is often used in refrain lines of songs as a verbal space-filler, like "Dum-diddle-dee."

H B graze
with deer
31-33

Story #527

"I cannot tell you the reason. But I have a sheik at Çanakkale. You go to him and ask that question, for only he can give you the answer."

He [Hâtemi Teyh] went and found the sheik. "Selâmunaleyküm."
"Aleyküm selâm. Allah willing, you have come here for an honorable purpose."

"Father, at such-and-such a place I saw a man with a large herd of deer. He grazes these deer, and he himself grazes with them. I want to know why he does this."

"Oh, he deserves that."

"But why? Please, for the sake of Allah, tell me the reason."

"Very well, I shall tell you. Son, this is the garden of the Padişah of Fairies. I am the gardener, and I have spent all of my life here. That child [the grass-eater] was once with me here. The daughters of the Padişah of Fairies come here once a year to bathe in the water of the pool. He fell in love with one of these daughters even though I had warned him, 'Son, do not get close to them.' But one day he hid the clothes of one of the padişah's daughters, and when I returned, I discovered that this girl was unable to fly away because her wings had been hidden. Anyway, I put a dress on her, had the couple married, and provided a house in which they could live."

"One day the young man said to the girl, 'Come now. I risked my life to get you. Let us now become one in body as we are in property.'"

"She answered, 'You are a human being and I am a fairy. Actually, it was not right that I marry you, but I was in a difficult situation here and had no choice. But I have a condition. If you can fulfill this

*f hls
do in 32 actor
just of 13 mader 70g*

*Swam
man
muf*

Story #527

condition, then we can be joined in both property and body. If you cannot fulfill it, then we cannot be joined.

*Jerh: Sute
rest*

"What is the condition?"

"We shall lie together for forty days, and if you do not touch me in that time, on the forty-first day we shall be joined as man and wife, for I shall surrender to you then."

"They went to bed and slept for three, five, ten, twenty days, but after that, the young man could wait no longer. Satan had entered under his arm and had said to the young man, 'She said forty days, but by then you may be dead and not see her again. She is your wife. Don't you have the strength to overcome your wife?'"

"The girl pleaded with him to avoid doing this, but she could not prevail against her husband. Finally, she struck him, found her *Swin made* wings, and flew away. That is the reason why, ever since that day, *fuck leather & floor* he has been eating grass."

He Hâtemi Teyh said, "Very well. I understand." He then returned to the bootmaker.

"Did you discover the reason for the man's eating grass?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, let us go to my home." They had a meal together followed by a cup of coffee and tobacco. Although the narrator does not say so, it is obvious from the context that Hâtemi Teyh then tells the bootmaker the story of the grasseater.

Story #527

"Well," said the bootmaker who then begins an explanation of his strange behavior⁷ "I once had a wife of unparalleled beauty, but I realized after a while that I had never seen this woman eating with me. One day when I touched her back, I discovered that it was as cold as ice. A while later, while talking to my friends, I asked them, 'Friends, are your wives' backs also very cold? When my wife undresses and I touch her back with my hand, it is as cold as ice.'"

"'No, friend,' they all said. 'The backs of all our wives are hot. Perhaps she goes somewhere where it is very cold. Why don't you observe where she goes and secretly follow her?'"

"By the time I had returned home, it was time to go to bed for the night. I retired and pretended to have fallen asleep. My wife lifted up the blanket and walked out of the door. I followed. The cemetery was near the village, and she started walking in the direction of the cemetery. She went there and stood at a spot where there was a bright lamp with thousands of creatures standing around it. All of the bodies buried in the cemetery had come to life. She stood on a lecture platform and addressed them: 'O my girls, families, sons, serve and respect all others well. My only warning to you is this: Do not eat with others i.e., the living human beings⁷."

"I heard this. That very day a body had been buried. She said to her audience, 'Let us go and dig her up.' They all went and dug her a corpse⁷ up, taking the body from the grave. At that moment

Story #527

Glow - eating the food

the heads of the dead grew to the size of large baskets, and their teeth to the length of pickaxes. They started eating the corpse, çatır, çatır.¹¹ The lights were then extinguished, and she said, 'Everyone to his home!' Then she returned home and got into our bed, to which I had returned just before her. When we were both in bed together, I felt her back, and it was as cold as ice. I said to myself, 'Now I know what the trouble is.'

"In the morning I said, 'Come, wife, let us eat.'

"'No,' she said, 'I am busy. I cannot eat now.'

"'Come, let us eat,' I insisted.

"She answered, 'A wife is like a cat. She tastes the food being cooked and in this way gets enough to satisfy her hunger.'¹²

"'Well, there is a corpse in the cemetery. Would you not like to eat that?'

"When she heard this, her head grew as large as a bulgur basket,¹³ her teeth grew the length of a handspan, and she attacked me. 'Shall I eat you now like that corpse?'

"My gall bladder almost burst.¹⁴ I said 'Bismillah,'¹⁵ and she just disappeared from view. And so after that I was without a wife, and I could not marry just any woman. That is why I think 'Yalel.' I sing it to disperse my sad thoughts, and when I remember their eating a corpse,

¹¹ Onomatopoeia for the smacking of lips.

¹² Cats supposedly eat their food in small amounts.

¹³ Bulgur baskets in this region are about the size of bushel baskets.

¹⁴ Turkish peasants believe that fright will damage the gall bladder, not the heart.

¹⁵ One may foil fairies and jinns by reciting a prayer from the Koran. The passage beginning with bismillah [bismillahhirrahmanirrahim] is often used.

Story #527

I start laughing so that I can hardly stop, but when I think then of their rule to serve and respect human beings, I cry."

This account was completed, and so he thanked him and left. Then he [Hâtemi Teyh] went once again to visit the hoca at İzmir. "Well," he inquired, "did you discover the reason for it [the bootmaker's laughing and crying]?"

"Yes, I did."

"Let us go to my home, then," said the hoca.

After eating and drinking, he [Hâtemi Teyh] said, "All right, hoca, now let us hear your story."

"I have been a muezzin¹⁶ here since my boyhood. When I climbed to the balcony of the minaret, a bird used to appear every day. I would try to catch it, but for a long while I failed to do so. Then one day I finally did manage to catch hold of it, but as I held on to it, it started to carry me upward. I realized that if I released my hold and fell, I should be smashed to a thousand pieces, but if I held fast, it would take me even farther upward. It flew, flew, flew, and set me down at last in a garden where there were many kinds of fruits--you know that hocas are very fond of their stomachs--and there I gathered some figs and grapes to eat. The gardener was there, however, and he shouted, 'Hey, do you think that your father planted that fruit and your mother watered it? From whom did you get permission to take those fruits?' And he started hitting me with the wooden handle of a pickaxe

¹⁶ Muezzin is the title given to the one who chants the calls to prayer from the minaret of a mosque.

Story #527

"Please don't! Please don't! I shall pay you for it!" I said, but I was unable to reach an agreement with him about it. Finally I called the bird, and when it came, I jumped on its back and was carried up in the air again. He carried me a long way and at last landed me in a country about which I had never even heard before.

"I walked around for a while, and then I went to a coffee-house and drank a cup of coffee. I felt in my pockets for money to pay for this, but there was no money there. The waiter, seeing me feeling for money, asked, 'What--have you lost something? Don't you have any money in your pockets?'

"No."

"Here, then, is a gold coin for you."

"I took the money and spent it. He had asked me to return in the afternoon. When I went there, he asked, 'What sort of purse was it that you lost?' I gave him a description. 'How much money was in it?' he asked.

"Ten gold liras were in it," I said.

"Well, then, here is your money."

"I paid him back the one lira he had given me and put the rest in my pocket. I was amazed. Where had I dropped that purse? One day when I had been walking about in the streets, I was called from the police station. I went there and said, Selâmünaleyküm.

"Aleykümselâm."

"You sent for me? What is the matter?" I asked.

"The reason we asked you to come here was to tell you that you cannot remain a bachelor in this town, for if you did, you might look

Story #527

at other men's wives, and in the end this might lead to trouble.

We want to have you married. Would you agree to this?'

Proverb "Of course I would. Why should I not? A blind man can use one eye, but Allah gives two.¹⁷

"They found me a young widow who had had a large store left to her by her late husband. They delivered the keys of this store to me, and so I started buying and selling things. Well, one day after that I received another call from the police station.

"Why did you call me here?' I asked

"We have heard that the goods you buy for one lira you sell for five.'

"No, I do nothing of the sort. What I sell for five liras I buy for five liras, and what I sell for ten I buy for ten.'

"Well, this time we shall forgive you,' they said. 'You are a stranger here. But if you sell for more than one one-hundredth of what you paid for something, we shall punish you severely the next time.'

"All right,' I said. I then went to the market where I saw everyone buying grapes. I bought grapes at one lira [a basket] and then I watched what other store owners did. They sold their grapes for the price at which they had bought them. So, I said to myself, 'That is apparently the custom here.' I bought things for five liras and sold them for five liras; I bought other things for ten liras and

¹⁷The standard text for this proverb is Körün aradığı bir göz, Allah verdi iki göz. A local play on this proverb says Körün aradığı iki göz, biri âlâ biri boz--A blind man has two eyes, one excellent and one grey [blind].

Story #527

sold them for ten. (I shall not make it too long a story and give you a headache.)¹⁸ Well, later I counted my money. After eating, drinking, paying bills for the movies [!], the rent, city taxes, lighting, and bath fees--after paying for all of these things, I counted my money again and found that it had not decreased by as much as a kuruş. I was greatly surprised at this. How could money increase in this way? I never made even one kuruş of profit and yet when we spent so much, our supply of money remained the same.

"When my wife heard me talking to myself about this, she called out, 'My man has lost his mind! He is talking to himself!'

"All of the neighbors gathered at our house, and they beat me almost to death. I shouted, 'O bird, fat bird!' The bird appeared, grabbed me up in its claws, and set me on the same minaret where I had begun. Ever since then, I ^{have} wished that I could catch that bird again, for I missed my life in that last land very much. I wish that it would come and carry me to that land again, but it does not. That is the reason I come down from the minaret weeping."

He [Hâtemi Teyh] then left and went to the jewel-seller.¹⁹ This man said, "Did you discover the cause of his behavior?"

¹⁸ It is impossible to determine from the tape recording whether this statement is that of our informant, speaking in his own voice, or whether it is that of the tale's internal narrator, the hoca.

¹⁹ The story recounted by the hoca was the one demanded not by the jewel-seller but by the man who had his neck slapped and paid the slapper a mecidiye. In this telescoped tale, our narrator proceeded through the several cases of strange behavior accurately, but in threading his way back with the explanations of these cases, he inadvertently skipped one. Because the tale is so complex and difficult to grasp from the first oral performance of it one hears, the collector failed to detect this omission and query the narrator about it.

Story #527

"Yes, I did."

"Let us go to my home, then," said the jewel-seller. And after had arrived there, the jewel-seller said, "All right, then, let us hear the account." After he had heard this, he told the story explaining his strange actions.

"Friend," he said, "we have been a wealthy family since the time of our ancestors. I was the only son of my father and mother. My name is Kerim. One day my father grew ill, and he called me to his side. 'My son, Kerim,' he said, 'you are not yet very wise. When I you will inherit everything I have, and you will ruin it all. If you ever sell this house after you have used all the money I shall leave you, I shall never permit all of this to be helâl²⁰ to you. When you encounter too many difficulties in life, there is a in the ceiling of this room from which to hang yourself.'

"I hope that I shall not have to do that, Father,' I said.

"Well, my father died soon after that, and we wept for him for a few days. After we had buried him, I came into control of everything. I used to take ten to the movies with me, twenty to the theatre, and thirty to the bath. In this way I soon spent all my money, and when I was penniless, I started selling property until I had but the one house left. My name Kerim Ağa was then changed to Gerim Ağa.²¹ I was soon without even food and water. Friends on

²⁰ One is forever indebted to another for a gift unless that giver releases one from all obligation. The father here says that Kerim will not be released if he ever sells the house. All of the inheritance will then be haram (forbidden) and not helâl (morally permissible), and thus he will suffer severely for this in the afterlife.

²¹ The word geri means going backwards; the m is retained to make a play on the name Kerim.

Story #527

whom I had spent thousands of liras now turned their asses toward me as they drank their coffee and ignored me. Finally, what my father had said came true.

"One day several ağas came to me and said, 'Gerim Ağa, we are going on an outing. Will you go with us?'

"'All right,' I said, 'I will.'

"'Very well. Be ready to go in the morning.

"In the morning five or ten of them came. They had three geese with them, along with some other food to eat. We loaded all of this upon an animal and went up to a place like Hortum yayla,²² When we got there, one of them said, 'Gerim Ağa, do you know your duties?'

"'No, I do not.'

"'Well, here is your duty. You will kill these geese, pluck their feathers, clean them, stuff them, and then have them [cooked and] ready for lunch.'

"'All right,' I said.

"The others took guns and went hunting, I killed the geese, plucked their feathers, cleaned them, stuffed them, and cooked them. Just before lunch time it seemed to me that the goose on top had not cooked well. I put it on a plate to test it, but just then a bird flew down, grabbed the goose, and flew away with it. I shouted at it, but the goose was gone. I became like the cat which had overturned the milk kettle [embarrassed at what had been done but remaining silent].²³

²² A yayla is a summer upland pasture to which flocks are taken for several months, not being brought back until cool weather comes.

²³ This is based on the proverb Süt dökmüş kediye dönmek--The milk is spilled by the cat's turning.

Story #527

I was thinking like a [unintelligible word on tape].

"The ağas returned and asked, 'Gerim Ağa, is our food ready? Bring it over here.'

"I gave them their food, dividing one of the geese into portions. Then I served the second goose.

"We are still hungry. Bring the third goose,' they said.

"Friends, I am embarrassed. That goose is not here.'

"Where did it go?'

'Well, by Allah, I had taken it from a pot and laid it over here when a bird flew down and took it.'

*How
angry*
"You son of a donkey! You are lying! Why don't you admit that you have been hungry for days and you have eaten it yourself? Why don't you say, "I have eaten it"? Go ahead and say that so that we can say Amen. Are you trying to deceive us?' Saying this, they beat me soundly, and I came home crying.

"My father's words were true after all,' I said. 'I shall myself.' I went to the room with the ring in the ceiling and put a rope around my neck and the other end through that ring. But when I let my weight go on the rope, the ceiling came down, and with it came a whole roomful of jewels which my father had stored in a space above. I was buried in jewels up to my neck.

"Thanks to Allah, I have gained wisdom now. I have experienced poverty and learned the value of wealth. I sold half a handful of jewels, and with the money I repurchased the property I had sold

Story #527

earlier. My name was restored to Kerim Ağa, but I never forgot the painful beating I had received.

"One day when there was a child near me, I said to him, 'Son, either today or tomorrow the ağas will come to invite me to go on an outing with them. I shall then ask you to get out my sword and sharpen it in case we need it in hunting. You go into the house and come back out with the sword saying, "Ağa, rats have eaten the sword." Then the ağas will say, "How could rats eat a sword--a sharp, pointed thing?" Then I shall have an occasion to go against them.'

"The ağas arrived, and I said to the child, 'Son, sharpen my sword. We shall go on an outing, and we may need it in hunting.'

"The child entered the house, opened the cupboard with the mirrors, took out the sword, pulled it from its scabbard, and said, 'Ağa, two parts of the sword have been eaten by rats.'

"'It is quite natural that they would eat it,' I said.

"The ağas said, 'How could rats eat a sword? Do rats eat swords?'

"I locked the door and got a strong stick of hard wood, grasping it in my hand. 'You ^{A huge Lay} pimps and sons of pimps!' I said. 'The bird grabbed the goose taken from the pot, but you would not believe it. Now rats have eaten a sword, and you will not believe it. Do you not have any religious beliefs at all?' I went out and started beating them, and in so doing, I cooled myself. Anyway, the ağas disappeared.

"Each time I put a jewel as large as a lentil into a mortar and pound it into a powder, one of those who used to turn his ass toward me

not printed
same way as B.M.
did it

Story #527

and drink coffee dies out of curiosity. There are only three or five of them left now. After I have gotten rid of all of them in this way, I shall again start valuing money. This is the reason why I do that [i.e., powdering 1,000-lira jewels and blowing them away]."

After I had left him, I went back again to the Padişah of Adana and greeted him, "Selâmünaleyküm."

"Aleykümselâm. Did you find out?"

"I did."

"Then let us go to my home." There the man explained [about his giving bags of 1,000 liras].

"The reason that I give 1,000 gold coins to the man who says 'Thanks to Allah!' is that all my ancestors have been padişahs. Each year my treasury used to be broken into, and though I searched and searched, I could never discover the thief. I had had a set of prayer beads made of jewels, the value of which equalled all the rest of my treasury. I forgot these beads and left them at the gate of my treasury, and when the treasury was broken into next time, both beads and money were taken. I put all the villagers and all the citizens in jail."

"At that time I had ^a sheik who, when he walked on the street, would have two men with brooms precede him to prevent him from accidentally stepping on ants. He was such a religious man.

Pety m
Ex con 44-49

of the prisoners saw my sheik coming along in this way and asked, 'Who is he?'

is the padişah's hoca.'

"The man then swore at the hoca, but others said, 'Be still! If the padişah hears you swore at the hoca, he will have you executed.

Story #527

"'Well,' the prisoner said, 'I would rather live one day as a cock than forty as a hen. Did I come down from my village and break into the padişah's treasury? I have left my sheep untended on the mountain.'

"This was finally reported to me, and I had the prisoner called to my presence. 'Son,' I said, 'you have sworn at my hoca. Why did you do that?'

"'My padişah, I have my reason, which I shall explain to you.'

"'All right. Explain.'

"'My padişah, the one who has broken into your treasury is none other than this hoca.'

"'How do you know this?'

know, and I shall find your prayer beads made of jewels, too.'

you can find my prayer beads, then for the sake of my father and for Allah's sake, I shall appoint you my vizier.'

"'All right, then. I suggest that you invite the hoca to dinner. After dinner, you will wish to drink coffee, but we shall say that there is none left in your coffee jar because we forgot to attend to it during the day. Upon this, the hoca will say, "We have coffee at my home. Let us have some sent for." Then you will send me, and I shall find the jewelled prayer beads.'

"'All right,' I said, and, as the prisoner suggested, I invited the hoca to dinner. We all sat down to dinner and ate, but after the meal no coffee was served. I shouted, 'Hey, Ahmet, Mehmet, what are you supposed to serve after dinner? Must we remind you?'

"Please excuse us, padişah. It is our fault. We forgot to

Story

examine the coffee jar, and now we find it empty. We are sorry.'

"Then the hoca said, 'Never mind. Do not chide them. We have coffee at our house, and I shall go for some.'

"'No, no, hoca,' I said. 'You may step on ants and thus commit a sin. Let the boys go to fetch it. Will the henna be shaken off their asses if they go for coffee?'²⁴ All right, son, you go and get it.'

"Upon this order of mine, the prisoner said, 'My padişah, I would go, but the hoca's servants would not recognize me, a stranger here. If the hoca would just let me take his walking stick [for identification], I would go and get the coffee.' He jumped twice and sprang once and arrived at the hoca's house with his walking stick.

"When he pounded on the door, someone said, 'Who is it?'

"'Sister,' he said, 'Open the door. The hoca sends greetings. Here is his walking stick. He wants the jewelled prayer beads that he brought home the other night.' She opened the cupboard with mirrors, took out the jewelled beads, and handed them to the young man. He returned at once to the palace and said, 'I have done my duty. Here are your prayer beads.'

"I turned to the hoca and said, 'O hoca, so you are the one who has been sitting in my lap and plucking my beard?' I then had the hoca handcuffed and later executed. I had his house searched and there found all the money stolen since the time of my father. He, in fact, had grown much richer than I. I had promised to distribute all of the recovered money to the poor as alms. That is the reason I throw [bags of] 1,000 gold coins. After that is done, I shall stop, for I am not

²⁴ Henna is a ceremonial coloring worn on the hands, especially those of brides. This is a colorful way of saying that servants are not so formally decorated that the walk will disorder their grooming or appearance.

an enemy to my own wealth. I did not promise to distribute money to people forever, but that money is haram.²⁵ I can remedy that by giving it away, but after that is gone, I shall not give money away.

"Well, to come back to the young man [the former prisoner]. I said to him, 'I have been a padişah all these years without being able to discover that this hoca was the thief. How were you, a simple peasant, able to find this out?'²⁶

"Well, sir, here is the reason that I knew the answer to this problem I had a wife who seemed an honest and pious woman. One day when I was sitting with some friends of mine, one of them said, 'My wife weaves excellent carpets.'²⁷ Another friend said, 'My wife is very good at making rugs.' Still another said, 'My wife knits sweaters.' And I said, 'My wife is very good at taking ablutions and praying.' But they said to me, 'Get out! You consider yourself a man, you cuckold! Your horns are tearing the sky!'²⁸ When I heard this, I was angry, but they said, 'Why are you angry with us? If you do not believe it, we shall show you, and then you will see it with your own eyes.'

"All right. If I have the opportunity to examine this question with my own eyes, I shall either accept your claim or become an enemy to you all.'

²⁵ Because the money is stolen property, it is tainted, and thus the padişah does not wish to keep it himself. It is a liability, dangerous to possess. This applies only to the money recovered from the home of the deposed and executed hoca.

²⁶ The interpolated story of the peasant and former prisoner which begins here lies outside the frame device which unifies this tale. The question which elicits it was asked by the padişah within this unit of the tale; it is not one of the telescoped units which take Hâtemi Teyh from point to point and then back again through the series in reverse.

²⁷ This is probably a reference to the kilim, for that thin carpet is woven.

²⁸ In Turkey, as in many other countries, horns are symbolic of cuckoldry.

Story #527

"'Very well, then,' they said. 'Go home and tell your wife, "There is a vacancy at Demir-Çelik."²⁹ Prepare food for me for a week, for I shall go there and work a week." Then take your food and come to us. Later, toward evening, go back to your home, and you will see it with your own eyes.'

"'I went home and said, "Wife, there is a vacancy at Demir-Çelik which pays 100 liras per day. Prepare food for me for a week, for I shall go there and work."'

"'But you may become ill, and so forth," she said.'

"'Well, there are thousands working over there, and they are human You consider me both human and eggplant."³⁰ Finally she agreed to prepare my food, and when it was ready, I took it and said, "Goodbye."'

"'Goodbye," she said.'

"'I had an orange tree in my garden which bore 1,000 oranges a year. I sold some of them and ate the rest. Robins alighted in that tree, and my wife used to say to me, "Husband, cut that tree down."'

"'Why?'"

"'Because when I squat to urinate at the base of that tree, robins sometimes alight on it. Among them are male robins as well as females, and those male robins can observe what I am doing. I do not want that

there!" Well, we cut down that orange tree and used it for fire wood,

²⁹ Demir-Çelik means literally Iron-Steel, but it is the figurative name given to the recently built steel mill just outside the city of Iskenderun. This is a striking anachronism--a steel mill in a tale about padişahs--but it illustrates the peasant narrator's tendency to lend credibility to his tale by citing the name of some local resident or of some nearby village or river or landmark. Şerif Ayıldız does this often.

³⁰ This involves a pun and an internal rhyme, can (human or soul) rhyming with patlıcan (eggplant).

Story #527

thus depriving ourselves of oranges. Another day she said to me, "Husband, I can no longer take this pitcher with me to the toilet."³¹

"'Why not?'"

"'Because it has a spout [like a male sex organ].'"

"'Well, I struck the pitcher against a rock and broke it to pieces. My wife was such a proper and pious woman. --Well, I ate and drank with my friends for a while. Then, at night, I loaded my pistols, went back to my home, and hid myself nearby. During the night a fellow came to the door, knocked, and asked, "Where is your husband?"'

"'He went to Demir-Çelik.'"

"'I hope that he has gone to a place of no return," this fellow said.

"'The man walked into the house, and that wife of mine, who had not allowed even her eye to be seen by a robin, took off her dress, hung it on the wall, and became completely like a European woman.³² When they started making love, I could stand it no longer. I drew my pistols and shot both of them through a hole in the door. Then I ran away and came to this region. That was how, my padişah, I discovered that those pious people commit such sins.'

Charity
not
mantained

"'Well done, my son,' I said. 'I am appointing you my vizier. I shall also have you marry the hoca's daughter, and thus you will be able to live happily.'

They ate and drank and enjoyed life, and may you do the same.

³¹ If there is not running water at a toilet, Turkish people carry some there in order to cleanse themselves.

³² The actual expression used by the narrator was a la franga. During the Crusades, many of the Christians that the Turks encountered were Franks, and from that time, Frank became a generic label for any European, and the bastardized French a la franga meant European. To Moslems of an older time, Western women always seemed shockingly deshabelle.