

Story 1520 (1981 Tape 9)

Narrator: Ali Çiftçi, farmer;
in mid-60s by this
time

Location: Çıkırıkçı village,
Sarıkaya kaza,
Yozgat Province

Date: 1981

The Story of Job

Job was a man who suffered sickness and great adversity for seven years. Because this man was wealthy and had several children, Satan was jealous of his good fortune. Satan to Allah and said, "You have given Job many children and great wealth. That is the reason he loves you so much. Take away his possessions, and then you will be able to see whether or not he really loves you."

"Then blow into his nose while he is praying," Allah said to Satan.

Satan blew into Job's nose while he was praying, and very soon Job's body began to swell. Allah took away his sons and his possessions, and Job soon had nothing left. He was a poor man. His body began to decay, and it became so rotten worms began to feed upon him. Job prayed, "My Allah, do not let them eat my tongue, for if they did that, I should not be able to utter Your name. And don't let the worms eat my heart, or I should not be able to remember You. Save those two parts of me, and I shall not care about the rest."

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The worm that did not eat his tongue became a leech,
the one that did not eat his heart became a bee.

/Narrator: "I remember a poem that sounds somewhat similar
to this."¹

First came spring and then the summer months.

The nightingale was upon the rose, the rose upon the
thorn.

Two worms from somewhere fell upon the skin of
One of which made silk and the other honey.

Ali unfurled a flag for the sake of religion,
Setting religion apart from infidelity

Seventy thousand prophets entered and left this world.

From all their numbers one may still be on the road."⁷

For several years Job's wife brought food to him that she
had begged. Satan went to the people who had been giving her
food and said, "Do not give them any food. They have a bad
disease, and it will spread to you. If you give that woman
anything, charge her a lock of her hair for it

When the woman went to those people for food, they said
to her, "We shall give you only bread, and we shall give you

¹The narrator did not in fact remember the poem at this
point in the tale. He remembered just parts of three lines.
He remembered the whole poem after the tale was finished, but
we have moved the lines forward to the place where he initially
intended them to be.

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that only if you give us a lock of your hair for it." The poor woman had no choice but to cut her hair in order to get bread to take for her husband to eat.

In the meantime Satan had gone to Job and said, "Your wife is doing evil things. She is giving pieces of her hair to strangers."

The next time that his wife brought him bread, Job said to her, "Take off your head covering." When she removed her head scarf and revealed that her hair had been indeed cut, Job asked her, "What have you done? Why is some of your missing?"

She answered, "Job, they would not give us any bread unless I cut off a lock of my hair and gave it to them. There was nothing else I could do but cut my hair if I was going to be able to bring you any food."

Job answered, "If I ever recover, I shall beat you with forty sticks."²

On another day when the woman returned with more bread, she found a handsome man sitting where Job had been lying for so long. She said to him, "There was a sick man here until now. Where has he gone?"

²A figurative way of saying "I shall strike you with a stick forty times."

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"Come here," he said. I am the one who was that sick man.
I am Job

Allah then spoke to Job: "Collect and tie together forty
rye straws, and strike her just once with that bundle in order
to fulfill the vow you made." Job did as Allah had directed.