

Story #2 (Tape 23)
1961-1962

10

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Süleyman's Servant

Süleyman (Solomon) -- [Biblical]

One day one of Süleyman's servants stopped at a farm and was offered hospitality there by the farmer. While they were sitting talking by the stable, the donkey and an ox started talking to each other in the stable.

The ox complained to the donkey, "I am made to work hard every day pulling the plow and I can never get any rest."

The donkey asked, "Would you take my advice if I gave it to you? Here it is: Don't eat the hay that they put before you today. They will think you are ill, and then they will leave you alone."

That day the ox managed to go without his food. When the farmer's hired man came to put the ox out of the stable the next day, he noticed that the ox had not touched any of the hay he had placed before it the night before. He went back to the farmer and told him what he had seen.

"All right," said the farmer, "let the ox rest today, but take the donkey today and yoke him instead with another ox to the plow."

The hired man did this, and the donkey was made to work hard all day. At night the ox and the donkey were tied near each other in the stable again. The ox asked the donkey, "What kind of a day did you have?"

"A terrible day," said the donkey. "I never ate a mouthful of grass all day long. But you had better eat your hay now, for I overheard our master say today that if you don't start eating again soon he is going to have you slaughtered."

Süleyman's servant was listening to these animals talking, and he understood what they said to each other, for he had eaten the wax-like white stuff which was in Süleyman's treasury, and he had gained the power of speech with

animals -- language of

all creatures. When he heard the donkey speaking to the ox in this fashion, he smiled broadly, which was noticed by the farmer's wife. She went to her husband and reported to him that Süleyman's servant had smiled when there was nothing to smile at.

When the farmer asked Süleyman's servant why he had smiled, the stranger said he had smiled at what he had overheard the farmer's donkey saying to one of his oxen. "I could write this down for you, if you will ask your wife to bring pen and paper," he said. While the wife was away looking for the pen and paper, the stranger said to the farmer, "What is the business of women where men are laughing? You should reprimand your wife for this when she returns."

The farmer took his advice and gave his wife a good beating when she came back. "Don't you dare to interfere in men's business any more."