

Story #17 (Tape
1961-1962

Narrator: Mustafa Çolak
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Note: This tale was collected during the rainy season in Hatay Province. The group of men telling, and listening to, tales was gathered in a stone hut alongside a small grocery store. The collectors, having walked for 2 hours over rough country to get to the village, were anxious about the weather as the evening approached, and they asked several times when the rain would stop.

17 # 17
The Widow and the Learned Man

You keep asking when this rain will stop. There are many questions which only Allah can answer, because it is only Allah who can know the unknowable, and this reminds me^{of} a story about such questions. Once upon a time there was a very learned man called Honorable Hasan Basri. One day he went walking with two of his friends, and after a while they came to a house where a widow lived, a woman who had recently lost her husband. They expressed their sorrow for this woman, but they all desired her, for she was a very beautiful woman. Hasan Basri had no wife, and he wanted her most, and he asked her to marry him. She did not wish to marry again, but she did not wish to be rude to this very learned man.

"I shall ask you a number of questions, and if you can answer these correctly, I may then agree to be your wife."

Hasan Basri agreed to this and so she asked the first question.

"When I die, shall I die as a believer or as an infidel?"

"That," said Hasan Basri, "is in the category of questions unknowable to man and knowable only to Allah."

"Very well. On the judgment day, when some people are being sent to heaven and some to hell, to which place will I be sent?"

"That is the same kind of question, knowable only to Allah,"

Hasan Basri.

"Which is superior, the intellect or passion?" asked the woman for her third question.

"The intellect is superior to passion, because when Allah asked the intellect to tell what it was, it said to Allah, 'You are my God and I am only a humble creature of yours.'" But when Allah asked this same question to passion, the answer was, 'You are what you are, and I am what I am.'"

The widow then asked, "How many different kinds of intellect are there?"

intellect -- ten types of

"There are ten distinctly different kinds of intellect," said Hasan Basri.

"Of these ten," said the widow, "how many are possessed by men and how many are possessed by women?"

"We men possess nine of these types of intellect, and women possess just one type," said Hasan Basri.

"How many different types of passion are there?" asked the woman.

"Ten again," said the learned man. *Passion -- ten types of*

"And how many types do each of the sexes have?"

"Here it is the other way around. Women have nine types of passion, but men only one," said Hasan Basri

"If these answers are correct," said the woman, "then tell me this: How can I be content without a husband, having nine parts passion to one part intellect, while you, with nine parts intellect and only one part passion, say that you cannot be happy without a wife?"

The learned man saw the wisdom behind this woman's questions, and he was ashamed of himself. He excused himself from the presence of the woman and took his friends and departed.