

Story # 169 (Tape #2, Summer 1970)

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Location: In Forestry Compound, Gereede,
Bolu Province

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"I Love You As Much As Salt"*

Once on a time, when the sieve was in the straw, there was a padişah with three sons. One day the padişah called them to his side and asked them, "How much do you love me?"

The eldest came forward and said, "I love you as much as gold."

The padişah gave him a bag of gold as a reward.

Then the middle son stood up and said, "I love you as much as sugar."

The padişah gave him a bag of gold, too. Then he asked his youngest son, "How much do you love me?"

The son said, "I love you as much as salt."

The padişah was very angry with him and delivered him to the executioners, saying, "Take him away and cut off his head."

The executioner took him to the forest, but as he was very sorry for him, he said, "I shall kill a crow, dip your shirt in its blood, and take it to your father as a sign I killed you." He did as he said, and took the boy's blood-smearred shirt to his father and said, "Here is your son's bloody shirt."

The king [sic] was very pleased.

The young man went far, and finally stopped at the home of an old woman and was adopted by her. It happened that the padişah of that land one day died. They had to elect a new padişah. He on whose head the

*"Talîh Kuşu" was the title the narrator gave this tale. The "Talîh Kuşu" motif is here, of course, but the avowals of love in terms of gold, sugar, salt, etc., are central elements of the tale.

bird of good luck alighted would be elected padişah. On the day of the election, the young man insisted that he and his "mother" go to the election.

His mother said, "No. You cannot possibly be elected." But he begged hard. Finally she agreed to go, and the talih kuşu alighted on his head. The people were very disturbed when they saw he would be king, and they wanted to tear him to pieces. They agreed that the election should be repeated. He won in the second election, too. Thus he became the padişah of that land.

His father, all this time, thought that he was dead. One day after he became padişah, he invited his father to his palace. His father did not know he had become the padişah. He had many dishes of food cooked, all without salt in them. When his father was eating, he realized all the food was cooked without salt. "These dishes do not taste good," he said. "There is no salt in them."

On this, he said, "Father, do you remember? I am your son, and I told you I loved you as much as salt."

Upon this, the father and the son embraced and wept.