

Story #211 (Tape #6, Summer 1970)

Narrator: Hacı Gönen, 66, gentleman  
farmer

Location: Yukarı Kise Köy  
Güvem nahiye  
Kızılcahamam kaza  
Ankara vilayet

Date: July 1970

Abdülkadir Geylâni Saves a Ship

When a freighter was carrying goods from a foreign land, it was damaged on the voyage back. It developed a leak in the bottom. Probably the ship had hit something below. The captain of the ship tried to do what he could, but his efforts were not successful. He said, "O merchants and friends! Our position is a bad one. It may be our last day today. We are sinking."

They said, "You have been a captain so long. Tell us what to do to save ourselves, and we shall do it."

"There is just one hope I have. I shall make a request to His Reverence Abdülkadir Geylâni. But in the event of our survival, we shall have to show him our appreciation in some way

Upon this, the merchants declared, "We shall give him one-half of our goods on this ship. When we land at Istanbul safely, we shall put the money in an envelope and give it to him."

Upon this, the captain said, "O Abdülkadir Geylâni, you see our plight."

Let us leave them with the ship and go to Istanbul a while. His Reverence Abdülkadir Geylâni was walking along the street. He saw a woman walking with a huge ball of yarn in her hand.\* He stopped the woman, saying, "Just a minute.

\*Ball of yarn = yumak [ball, literally] bir yumak iplik [a ball of sewing cotton, e.g.]. Here the narrator uses tokmak, meaning wooden mallet. When questioned, the narrator said tokmak was once the word for yumak. It seems likely that there is a better explanation, namely, that the tale once involved sending to the stricken ship both a ball of yarn for caulking and the hammer with which to drive it into the leaky planks. So, both yumak and tokmak may have been in the tale once and either this narrator or his source remembered only tokmak--though this alone, without the yarn, would make no sense. Thus, he assumed that tokmak was once the word for yumak.

Story #211

What is this? What do you do with it?"

"This is a ball of yarn," she said. "I use this in making hunting socks and other things. I have five fatherless children and I support them by selling what I make from this yarn. With the money I make I also go and buy more yarn."

"Will you sell it to me?"

"Of course I would."

He took the ball from the woman's hands and just threw it up into the air. A bird came and picked up the ball of yarn from the air. It flew directly to the ship. The captain looked and saw the bird coming to the ship. "Friends, good news!" he said. "We shall be saved." He took the ball of yarn [still designated by tokmak] and they repaired the leak with it. The ship reached Istanbul.

Of course, the ship took some time to get to Istanbul. The woman, of course, who earned her living with the yarn could not make any money for several days. During that time, the woman who had given the ball of yarn was kept without income and could not feed her children. She one day went to the tekke of His Reverence Abdülkadir Geylâni but was not admitted. His followers said to her, "What is your business here?"

"I sold a ball of yarn to the saint, but he has not yet paid for it

The followers of the saint tried to persuade her that the saint would find her when the time came and pay her her money.

Finally the ship arrived safely in Istanbul, and the captain said to the merchants, "All right, then, let us keep our promise." Everyone gave what he had promised--one-half of everyone's value--and the money was put in an envelope and taken to the office of His Reverence Abdülkadir Geylâni.

Story #211

When he was sitting in his office, someone knocked on his door.

"Come in, please

"Here you are, sir."

"Just leave it over there," he said.

All the envelope contained was left there. He then said to one of his followers, "Go and call that woman." She was called. "Here is the money for that ball of yarn," he said, and he gave her the envelope left on the table.

Ever since then, that woman has been expressing gratitude to that saint.

(If you render this poor man [narrator pointed to himself] similar help, it would be greatly appreciated. My son failed to get his driving license; after he had passed the written examination, he failed in the driving examination. We shall be grateful to you forever for such help in his case.)