Once upon a time there was a padishah. In the domain of this padishah, there lived a poor laborer. The laborer could earn hardly enough money to support himself. One day the padishah wanted to hire the laborer.

"Would you work for me for an hour?" asked the padishah.

"What kind of work do you want me to do?" the laborer inquired.

Then the padishah took the laborer to his treasury and told him to separate the gold from the pearls. The laborer was pleased to find out that the work was not demanding at all. After having worked for a couple of hours, he finally separated all the gold from the pearls with a shovel.

He said, "Sir (Beğim), I am through. Give me my earnings so that I can go."

"Dip the shovel into the gold, and the amount of gold you can scoop the first time will be yours," the padishah said.

The laborer was able to dip out only four gold coins. He was disappointed

"I deserve more than this," he said. "Please give me a little more."

"All right," the padishah agreed. "Try again. I shall let you have the scoopful of gold you can get this time.

When the laborer dipped his shovel into the heap of gold the second time, he again could scoop only four gold coins.

Thereupon, the padishah said, "No matter how many times you try,
all you can scoop with this shovel will be four coins."

As the laborer took his money and got ready to go, the padishah said, "I shall give you a piece of advice, if you give me one of your gold coins."

"If I give you one of my coins, I shall have only three left. However, I accept the offer," the laborer answered.

After he took the gold, the padishah said, "My advice is do not plunge into the water the bottom of which you cannot see; you will get into trouble if you do so."

"Is this all the advice you are going to give me?" the laborer asked impatiently.

"I shall give you another piece of advice if you give me one of your gold coins," the padishah answered. After having received the second gold coin from the laborer, the padishah advised him, "Never be a guest to a household that does not have a male member."

The laborer asked again, "Is this all the advice?"

"I shall give you more advice for another gold coin," the padishah replied. The advice he gave in return for the third gold coin was, "When somebody waits on you or tries to accommodate you, let him give you as many services as he likes. Never interrupt him by saying, 'That's enough, thank you.'"

The padishah then offered to give another piece of advice for the laborer's last coin. He said, "When somebody asks you, 'What do you need?' do not specify what you really need. Merely say, 'I need everything.'"1

1 At this point in the narration, Zehra Bakir makes an error and repeats the second advice given by the padishah, "Never be a guest to a household that doesn't have a male member." It is unlikely that the padishah repeated himself. It is later in the tale that the narrator inserts this last advice, "when somebody asks you, 'What do you need?'..." We took the liberty of making this correction at the expense of the original narration.
Thus the laborer bought with his four gold coins four pieces of advice. He left the palace with his purse empty and started walking toward a village nearby. On his way, he came across a torrent. He remembered the padishah's first piece of advice and decided not to cross the stream because he could not see its bottom. Right then, a man on horseback happened to be passing by. He asked the laborer, "Why do you not cross the stream? What are you afraid of?"

"I cannot," the laborer answered. "I am looking for the bridge. I shall cross this torrent only by the bridge."

"Oh, come on," teased the traveler. "Get on the back of my horse. It will carry us across the stream."

"I will not do it," the laborer answered. "Let us try to find the bridge." However, the traveler plunged into the torrent on his horse. He had not gone far when the currents hit him and pulled him down from his horse. The laborer waited in vain to see his fellow traveler reach the other side of the stream. He disappeared in the waters of the torrent and got drowned. The horse, however, swam back to the shore. The laborer discovered that the horse was carrying a sackful of gold on its back. He got on the horse and headed toward the village.

When he reached the village he saw a guard [bekçi] waiting at the gateway.

"Do you want to spend the night at our village?" the guard asked.

"I do."

"I know a certain woman who would be glad to give you food and shelter for the night," the guard suggested.

However, the laborer, remembering the padishah's second piece of advice,
refused: "I can't be a guest to a household which does not have a male
member."

He spent the night at a shepherd's cottage, instead. In the middle
of the night, he was awakened by the noise of people fighting. He found
out that another man who had spent the night at the house of the woman
who was eager to shelter travelers had been robbed by the woman and thrown
out in the street. The laborer was thankful that he was not the one who
had spent the night at the woman's house. He thought to himself, "I paid
dearly, but I have gotten my money's worth of advice."

The next day he left this village, and traveled for some time until
he reached another village. In this village, he stopped at a house which
belonged to a bey. The servants of the bey announced the arrival of a stranger, and the
bey ordered them to show him in. To make his guest com-
fortable the bey asked the servants to bring cushions. Then the host
ordered more cushions, and some more cushions, and even more cushions,
until the laborer was almost lost in a mountain of cushions. Later
the host ordered food for his guest. Every time the laborer finished
the food on his plate, his host asked the servants to serve him some more.
The laborer, however, remembering the padishah's advice, never said, "That's
enough, thank you." He ate and drank till the walls of his stomach almost
burst.

His visitor's willingness to comply surprised the bey. He thought,
"what kind of a man is this? He never says 'enough.' I cannot add his
head to my collection of heads."

When the laborer took his leave, the host said, "Please come with
I want to show you something."
Then he took the laborer through thirty-nine rooms. When they reached the fortieth room, the laborer exclaimed, "what are all of these heads doing here?"

"I was going to add you to the rest if you had declined any of my hospitality," his host answered. "However, I want to reward you. You may have as much money as you want out of my treasury."

"My load is already heavy," answered the laborer. "Therefore, I cannot take much money. Give me as much as you please."

The bey gave him a sackful of gold, and the laborer left the house. Beside the bey's house there was another one in a beautiful garden. In the garden were a pool and roses. In the house next to the garden lived a woman of ill fame who was notorious for robbing her visitors. As the laborer was passing by the house, one of the servants came out and said to him, "My mistress wants to entertain you, sir."

"Is there no master in the house?" asked the laborer.

"No, there is not."

The laborer once more followed the padishah's advice and replied, "In that case, I cannot be a guest at your house."

Next he entered the garden with the pool and knocked on the door of the house. He thought, "Little harm should come to me from the inhabitants of such a magnificent house." He asked the servant who answered the door, "Is there a master in this house?"

"Yes, there is. This is the house of the Padishah of India." 2

2 Once inside the world of the masal, the folk narrator often abandons all effort to be realistic. It seems no more unlikely to shift scenes quickly to India than it is to accept the results of magic or to accept the account of a room full of human heads. This is not always the case, of course, for some narrators are meticulous in rendering the details and patterns of cause and effect.
The Padishah of India was very hospitable to the laborer. He said, "Son, I shall grant you whatever you wish. I am honored by your visit because, though I have lived in this Indian city for years, nobody has bothered to pay me a visit. Who sent you to my house?"

"Nobody," the laborer replied. "I came of my own accord."

The Padishah of India asked, "What do you need? I shall give you anything you may need."

This question reminded the laborer of the advice he had bought from the padishah of his own land, and so he answered, "I need everything. Give me what you wish."

Upon this answer the Padishah of India took the laborer to a room where he showed forty maidens who excelled one another in beauty. Then he said, "Choose one of these beauties as your wife."

The laborer picked the girl whom he found the most beautiful. Afterwards their wedding was held, which lasted for forty nights and forty days. The young man could not help thinking, "I may have paid dearly for the padishah's advice, but I owe my happiness and wealth to it."

So, I left them there and returned here.3

[Ahmet Uysal: "Well, welcome back!"]

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3 This is a formulaic ending, a kind of terminal tekerleme. There are many such concluding statements in Turkish folktales, this one probably the simplest of all.