#438 (Tape #2, 1972)

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The Three Pieces of Advice

Once upon a time a man from Konya went to a distant land called Bodrum, where he started working. He worked for three years, and after paying for his food and drink, he managed during that time to save three golden coins. He put these coins in his pocket\(^1\) and said, "I can no longer stay away from my own country. It is time to see my wife and children again." Having decided to go home, he set out in that direc-

After going for some time, he met a man who was shouting, "I am selling advice! I am selling advice!"

This attracted the attention of the traveler, and so he approached the man and asked, "Friend, what are you doing?"

"By God,\(^2\) I am selling advice, answered the man.

"How much do you charge for your advice?"

"If you wish some advice, I shall sell it to you, but the price is a golden coin," the man answered.

The good fellow thought about how he had worked for three years for the three golden coins that were now in his belt. Finally, however, he took one of these coins from his belt and said, "Since that is the

\(^1\)Turkish peasants once wore shelvar, low-crotched, baggy trousers that usually had no pockets. They carried small items inside their shirts or in purses or pouches tucked beneath their broad belts.

\(^2\)Vallah is a common Turkish oath. It is usually not at all blasphemous, as "By God" may seem to be. It can mean, "I swear," or "In the name of Allah."
it is, take this golden coin and give me a piece of advice.'"

After taking the golden coin, the man selling advice said, "Do not plunge into water if you cannot see the bottom."

"Is that all?"

"Yes, of course that is all, but if you will give me another golden coin, I shall give you another piece of advice."

The good fellow pondered this. He wondered if he should do such a thing as to give a golden coin for a piece of advice. He thought and thought about it, and then at last he said, "All right, here is one more gold coin. Give me another piece of advice."

Taking the coin, the advice seller said, "Take care always to mind your own business."

Surprised, the good fellow asked, "Is that all?"

"Yes, of course that is all," answered the advice seller, "but I shall give you still one more piece of advice if you will pay me another gold coin."

Again the good fellow had a difficult time trying to decide whether to give a third coin for another piece of advice. He thought and thought and finally said, "Very well. Here is a third coin. Now give me another piece of advice."³

"When you have to go away from home to live abroad, never leave your wife living near her mother."

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³ Some of the repetitive material here is omitted by the narrator.

Annet Uysal: "Does he take the third gold coin?"

Mustafa Çakmak: "Yes, he took the third gold coin too."
"Is this

"Yes, that is all, but if you want more, I can sell

but there were no more gold coins left, and so, after a while, the two separated. The good fellow again set out on his way home. After going for a great distance, he came upon a large meadow through which there flowed a great river. What could he do? He had been advised not to plunge into water if he could not see the bottom, and so the good fellow walked along the bank looking for a safe place to cross. He went for some distance along the bank, but he was unable to find a place where there was a bridge or where he could ford the river. He still did not plunge into the water or even enter it.

Suddenly he saw a horseman riding rapidly in his direction from the opposite side of the river. He said to himself, "Let me wait now. There must be some place to ford this river at which this horseman will cross. I shall use that same place to cross to the opposite bank."

When the horseman came to the bank of the river, he did not even slow down but rode right into the water. The furious waters swept the man away, and he was lost from sight.

"Oh, God! Oh, God! Look how he is lost! It is well that I did not plunge in." He looked and looked but did not see anyone come out from the river. "What a pity that he has been lost!"

Fortunately for him, however, the horse managed to struggle out of the water. "That is it now!" he said to himself, but the owner not with the horse. The good fellow mounted the horse. Feeling to the saddle bag, he discovered, to his surprise, that it was old. "My God, what kind of thin is his?"
he said to himself, "That must be it! It must have been I!

Once again he set forth on his journey, and he went and went and went. One day toward evening he saw, at a lonely place, a house that looked like an inn. He approached and saw, at a window, the owner of the house—or, let us say, the inn. But, strangely, there was nothing else in the area of that house.

The innkeeper spoke to him: "Friend, what are you doing? From where do you come, and to what place do you go?"

"By God, friend, I am coming from such-and-such a place and I am going to such-and-such a place."

"But I cannot allow you to go further today," said the innkeeper. "Look, the sun has almost set, and at such-and-such a place along your way there is that very dangerous area filled with bandits. They would not permit you to pass. They will take your goods and possessions, and they may even attempt to take your life. Tonight you must be my guest here."

The good fellow, quite naturally, was very pleased to hear this. "All right," he said to the innkeeper.

The innkeeper came downstairs and helped the traveler to dismount. "Please go right ahead inside," he said, "and look after your own comfort. He himself took the horse to the stable.

When the good fellow entered the inn, he was amazed to see there a completely naked woman hung from the ceiling by her hair. Her feet not quite reaching the floor. He noticed that she was alive, but he turned his head and passed by her.
The innkeeper returned after putting the horse to stab after holding a friendly talk with the traveler for some time, and proceeded to prepare a meal for them. Then they ate together, and soon afterwards, they retired for the night.

Then morning came, they awakened and again the innkeeper prepared a meal for them. The good fellow said at last, "It is necessary for us to part company. I should appreciate it if you would now prepare my horse now for my departure.

"Certainly," said the innkeeper, and he went down to get the man’s horse from the stable. When he brought it to the inn door, he said, "Here it is, if you please."

The good fellow came down, mounted his horse, and was ready to leave, but the innkeeper stopped. "Wait, friend" he said, "We ate together, slept, arose this morning, and had friendly conversations together, but you never told me what you had seen in this house."

"O friend, what did I see? As I entered your house, saw a woman, still alive, hung from the ceiling by her hair."

"Well, why did you not ask me about her difficulty," inquired the innkeeper, "and about why she was hung there by her hair?"

"I was not obligated to ask such a question, and therefore I did not," said the traveler.

The innkeeper explained later why he had given such a woman, but now he said, "I did not before this met a person as you. If I had asked me, she was hanging there, would dead. All these graves you see—the house was completely surrounded by them."

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by graves—belong to those who stayed as guest in this house and asked why the woman was hanging there and what she was being punished for. Then they asked that question, I always became irritated by it and went mad. cut their heads off, killing them, and all of the graves that you see everywhere around this house are theirs. I have never before seen a man as patient as you. Bravo! Dismount again, and I shall reward you with a saddle bag full of gold. Take this as a gift that involves no obligations." Saying this, he placed another saddle bag full of gold on the horse.

Then the innkeeper said to him, "Let me now explain all of this to you. Once at an earlier time, when I was going away to do my military service, I left my wife near her mother. While I was doing my military service, she became a prostitute. A friend of mine informed me of this. When I was discharged from the army and returned home, I decided not to kill her but to punish her in this way for ten years. If she survives her punishment, I shall forgive her. She deserves what she has suffered.

"And now, you are deserving of the gold I have given you (as much without obligation as one hopes his mother's milk to be). Goodbye, good

4 Again, as in so many other tales, we are here involved in the distinction between what is haram (forbidden) and what is halal (approved, and thus blessed). Unless one clears with a benefactor and ascertains that a gift was freely given, without obligation, one may be held to account for that amount on the day of judgment. Thus one who embarks on a dangerous trip, becomes seriously ill, or approaches death from old age is concerned to ask all his friends and family members if they have made halal the various things they have given him or done for him. Of all these benefactions, one of the most important obligations from which to be released is that which one owes to his mother for all she has been and has done for a person. "Mother, do you make your milk halal to me?" is the metaphor in which the entire obligation to the mother is expressed. --This concept recurs, more overtly, in the last paragraph of this tale.
luck, and Godspeed! Thus the innkeeper parted with him, wishing him good journey.

The expression used here is Allah selâmetlik versin.