

Story #444 (Tape #2, 1972)

Narrator: Mustafa Ölmez

Location: Üçhisar village, Ürgüp kaza,
Province of Nevşehir

Date: Winter 1972

Miracle after Miracle

There were once a husband and wife who had not had any children. One day the woman said to her husband, "There is a tekke¹ with forty sheiks at such-and-such a place. Let us go and get an amulet from that place. Everyone who goes there for an amulet to have a child soon afterwards has born to them a child. Take me with you, and let us go there to be prayed over so that we may have a child."

"Lady, remember that you are not a man. Women cannot just go ^{to} a tekke without encountering difficulty. Let me go first and look inside the place to see what it is like. Let me go and see what the situation is there, and then I shall return to take you there with me."

To reach the tekke the man had to climb a mountain. As he approached the foot of the mountain, it began to rain, and the water fell as if it were flowing out of a fountain. He quickly took off his clothes--whatever there was, whatever there was not--until he was stark naked. He placed his clothing beneath him, sitting upon it, and thus he kept it dry. When the storm was over, he put his clothes on again and proceeded on his way. Climbing the mountain, he soon reached the place of the forty sheiks or forty dervishes.²

¹A tekke is a dervish convent. Once common in Turkey, they were closed as part of the Atatürk Reforms.

²The narrator uses the words dervish and sheik as if they were interchangeable. The head of a convent was called a sheik; there might be more than one at a tekke, but it would be most unlikely that forty would be there. There would more likely be a sheik and forty dervishes.

"Selâmunaleykûm," he greeted them.

"Aleykûmselâm," they responded, amazed to see him as he was. Five minutes before, it had rained hard enough to wash away the world, but now they beheld approach a man who did not have a single drop of water on him. They showed him great respect, for they thought they beheld a miracle.

The ruling sheik efendi said to him, "Tell us about the miracle you have experienced, for we are filled with admiration."

"May God forgive me, but let me ask you something first. It is said that here you pray over and exorcise women who are unable to conceive children. After they leave here, they have, with God's favor, children. Tell me how your miracle is performed, and then I shall explain mine."

"Oh, ours does not amount to anything at all. When a woman comes here for help, we all, all forty of us, take turns sleeping with her, and if one of us does not get her with child, then another will. We have neither a miracle nor any special power." This was the way the ruling sheik spoke.

The man then told them of his experience. "Mine, brother, happened this way. When it started to rain, I simply took off my clothes and placed them beneath me to keep them dry. That is how my miracle happened!"