

Story 783 (1970 Tape 15)

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Location: Native of Erzurum, but tale taped in Bursa

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A Moral Fable on Politics

When Deli¹ Peter (Peter the Great) was feeding Turkish prisoners captured by the Russian army, his son spoke to him in this way. "These handfuls of Turks have for centuries been sticking like fishbones in the throat of the Russian nation. Give me permission and I shall wipe out these Turks from the face of the earth so that the Russian nation can breathe more easily.

Although the father was "mad," he was nevertheless wiser than the son. He said, "All right, Son, but first do what I am going to ask you to do."

"What is that?"

"Have the Turkish prisoners all assembled in one place

¹Deli in Turkish can mean mad, crazy. But it may also be used to indicate the reckless abandon of especially brave soldiers and fighters. Peter the Great is here being called Deli Peter (Mad Peter) in that sense.

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Then tell them that those of them who will accept our laws and government will be given unlimited amounts of land, the most beautiful girls in Russia as their wives, and all of the money they want. Tell them also, 'You will lead very comfortable lives.' Then pick out those who will accept these terms and separate them from those who will not. Tell the latter that they will be hung by the feet and that every day they will have another organ or part of their bodies cut off."

When this proposal was made to the prisoners, the genuinely Turkish and Moslem young men among them refused to accept it, and they were separated from the rest. They formed a unit, and the commanding officer of that platoon said, "My platoon, fourteen steps forward! We are Moslem children living for nothing in life but honor. We shall not sell our honor for the sake of worldly property or women. We are ready to give up our heads, if need be!"

After separating the prisoners in this way, the Czar's son went to his father again. His father said to him, "Now take those who accepted our laws to some comfortable place, give them their food, and let them live there."

"What shall we do with the others?" the son asked.

"Give each of the others a fine Russian horse and all of the provisions that horse can carry. Give them their

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weapons, too, and let them return to their own country."

The son did this, but then he gave orders to several officers: "Gather together all of the palace guards and all of those troops on guard duty in the city, and with them we shall go and recapture those ignorant Turks who would not accept our laws and religion."

After these troops had been assembled, the infidels drank vodka and then started chasing the 300 to 500 Turks. The Russians rushed across the field in complete disorder, like a herd of wild boars. When the Turkish youth looked around and saw the pig herd following them still, they opened fire on them repeatedly. By the time the son of the Czar had sobered up, he realized that half of his troops had been killed.

Returning to the Czar, he said, "Oh, Father, we have been trapped. Give me another regiment and we shall capture all those Turks before they can cross their borders.

"Son, sit down. Those Turks who did not accept our laws and our faith believe strongly in their Allah. As long as they have that faith, the entire world cannot defeat them. But those who accepted our laws and became Russians for money are a bastard group who are not real Turks. If they stay in Russia they will someday sell out Russia, too. You son of a donkey, go and destroy them!"

buying - show

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Even the Russians appreciated the honor of the Turks, and what a great pity it is that today many young Turks who sold themselves for money are engaged in hostility toward America or hostility toward private property. We can say that a generation removed from its mother and father. Or, to put it in better Turkish, a generation far removed from Fatih² is trying to reduce us to what the Russians would like to have us reduced to. That is, our own youth today are doing what the Russians couldn't do!³

²Fatih is a noun which means conqueror. It was given as a title to Mehmet II, the conqueror of Constantinople (now Istanbul) in 1453. When Fatih appears capitalized and alone, it now inevitably refers to Mehmet the Conqueror, Mehmet II.

³It should be noted that this satirical tale was told by Topal Ahmet at the beginning of the six years of anarchy and terrorism within Turkey, an effort (now well documented) of the Soviet Union to destabilize Turkey. When the Turkish Army took over the reins of government in a bloodless coup in 1980, it uncovered fifty-two tons of small arms and great quantities of dynamite and other explosives provided by the Soviet Union to Marxist, Leninist, Maoist, and other revolutionary groups within Turkey. Thus Topal Ahmet's asperity is not a mere matter of spleen!