Story 933 (1977 Tape 24)  
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Tale collected by Ahmet Ali Arslan  
The Auspicious Dream  

Once there was and once there was not, back in the old times, a very poor man who had a son. In order to give this son a chance in life, his father enrolled the boy in a religious school.

There the days passed along quite rapidly. One day the boy's teacher said to his class, "If you should have a dream, do not tell it to anyone unless that person first says, it be auspicious!"

One night not long after that, this boy had a dream. When he arose in the morning, he said to his mother, "Mother, I had a dream last night."

"Oh, my boy, tell it to me. What did you see in your dream?"

The boy answered, "No, I cannot tell it to you." After that, the boy went to his father and said to him, "Father, I had a dream last night."

The father said, "Oh, my dear son, tell me about it. What did you see in your dream?"
The boy said, "No, Father, I cannot tell you my dream." He thus refused to tell his parents his dream because neither of them had said, "May it be auspicious!"

A little later that morning the boy said, "Mother, miss lavas. Bake me some lavas today." His mother baked him some lavas, but when he came home from school, he said, "Mother, I do not want to eat this lavas now but later. Leave the bread in the pan, and I shall eat it after a while.

The hours passed, and after a while everyone went to bed. But in the middle of the night the boy arose and dressed. Saying to himself, "I saw that dream, and I intend to pursue it," the boy took the lavas and left home.

He walked and walked. He went and went, passing through the mountains until he reached a city like, say, Ankara. While he was walking through the city marketplace, he heard a towncrier announcing that the padişah wished to hire a servant. The boy thought to himself, "I am here without food or water, and I have no job. Furthermore, I shall probably not find any other job very soon. I had better go to the padişah's palace, therefore, and become the padişah's servant. In that way I shall at least have food to eat."

Lavas is a thin type of bread resembling the well-known pide.
He went to the palace and asked for that job. After examining him carefully, they accepted him as servant to the padişah, for he was intelligent, strong, and healthy. Taking him into the presence of the ruler, they said, "Our great Padişah, we recommend this boy as a servant to you. What is your pleasure in this matter?"

The padişah saw at once that the boy was alert and strong. He said, "My boy, you will be my servant. Your only responsibility will be cleaning my room and keeping it in good order. You will work only for me."

Very pleased, the boy said, "Yes, my Padişah."

A few days passed uneventfully. Then one morning the boy noticed that the padişah seemed quite disturbed. He was reading a letter over and over again, and as he did so, he was shaking his head sadly. The boy asked, "My great Padişah, why are you so sad? What is in the letter you are reading that affects you so?"

But the padişah did not answer his questions. Instead, he said, "It is no concern of yours and so it should not bother you. Attend to your own work and do not interfere with this"

"Yes, my Padişah"

But after some time had passed, the boy observed that there was no change whatsoever in the mood of the ruler. It
still appeared that anything that fell from his nose might break into a thousand and one pieces. He was still examining the letter and still shaking his head in sorrow. The boy asked again, "My great Padişah, won't you tell me what is troubling you so much?"

This time the padişah answered him, saying, "Oh, my boy, I have a very great problem. There is a padişah more powerful than I who is trying to find a reason for declaring war on me and my land. He has sent me a smoothly chiseled stick and demanded me to tell him which end of the stick was closer to the root of the tree from which the wood was chiseled. If I can tell him that, all will be well. If I cannot do that, he will declare war upon me. How can I tell which end was closer to the tree root after the stick has already been chiseled and smoothly polished?"

The boy said, "Please do not worry, my Padişah. The solution of that problem is very easy. Just give me the stick, and tomorrow I shall tell you which end was closer to the root of the tree from which it came."

The padişah felt greatly relieved by what the boy had said. He decided not to give the matter any further thought until the following day.

2 This is a proverbial expression in Turkish: Burnundan düşen binbirparça oluyor, or sometimes Burnundan yere düşen binbirparça oluyor.
The boy took the stick to a stream and placed it in the water. He left it there for several minutes, drinking some water as he stood waiting. After removing the stick from the stream, he observed it closely as it began to dry. He knew that the end closest to the root would dry faster than the other end. When the one end became dry while the other remained quite wet, he marked the dry end.  

After that, he took the stick to the padişah and showed him the end which had been closer to the root of the tree. Very pleased, the padişah asked him how he had arrived at his answer to the problem. "My Padişah, I soaked the stick in a stream. Then I watched it closely to see which end of the stick dried sooner. I knew that that would be the end closer to the root."

"Bravo, my boy! By solving this problem you have saved me from great trouble. I shall give you my daughter as your wife."

"Thank you, my Padişah."

As the days passed, the padişah came to like the boy more and more. He was no longer the ruler's room attendant

3 In most Turkish versions of this tale, the unpromising hero is not the first aide of the padişah to attempt a solution of the puzzle. Usually "wise" men assemble, ponder the problem at great length, and then fail to solve it. Only at the eleventh hour does the hero have an opportunity to demonstrate his ability.
but now served as his adviser. One day the padişah received a second ultimatum from the same foreign ruler, and this time he was even more deeply disturbed by the demand made upon him. Noticing his concern, the boy asked, "Your Majesty, what is the problem this time?"

"Oh, my boy," said the padişah, "this time the problem is very difficult. That heartless man now wishes me to send him a man who is very large, who is white-bearded, and who is clever"

"Don't worry, my Padişah," said the boy. "You just give me a large camel, a white goat, and a donkey. Then I shall go and answer that other padişah's questions."

"My dear boy, if you can do this, I shall be most grateful to you!

The boy then took a large camel, a white goat, and a donkey, and with them he set out for the palace of the foreign ruler. After traveling a very great distance, he reached that palace and said to the doorman, "I am the one who has come to answer your padişah's questions."

The doorman went to the padişah's court and announced the arrival of the boy. The padişah had the boy sent in, and when he entered the throne room, the padişah showed him a place to sit. "My boy, are you the one who will answer my questions?"
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"Yes, Your Majesty."

"But the one who came was supposed to be a very large man," said the foreign padişah

"Well, if it is largeness you want, my Padişah, then order your men to bring in my camel. He is very large."

But the camel would neither climb the stairs nor step on the carpet. When this was reported to the padişah, he became angry and said, "My boy, I wanted your padişah to send me a large man, not an animal.

"Your Majesty, that camel is the only really large living creature in my country."

The padişah accepted this answer but made another objection: "But the person who was to answer my questions was supposed to be white-bearded!"

The boy said, "I know, I know!" and ordered the doorman to bring in his goat. When it arrived, the boy said to the padişah, "If it is a white beard you want, Your Majesty, here is one on my goat so long that it almost sweeps the floor!"

Having to accept that fact, the padişah now asked the boy this question: "How many stars are there in the sky?"

After having his donkey brought into the room, the boy answered, "My Padişah, I shall answer your question if you will tell me first how many hairs there are on this donkey."
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"Oh, my boy, how could I know that? There is no way for me to count them."

"Neither is there any way, my Padişah, for me to count the stars in the sky."

padişah admired the clever and quick-witted way in which the boy had behaved, and he said, "My boy, I like you very much! You have given logical answers to my questions, and now I shall give you my daughter as your wife."

The boy thanked the padişah. A wedding was quickly arranged, and after the marriage, the boy lived in that land for a month. Then one day he asked his father-in-law, "O my great Padişah, may I have your permission to go with my second wife to the land of my first wife? Please let me go.

The confused padişah said, "But, my boy, you have the daughters of two padişahs for wives. All my country, all my wealth, all my palaces are yours. Why do you still wish to return to your country? I don't understand."

the boy remained firm in his wish to return to his own country, and so the padişah very reluctantly gave him permission to go. Loading ten camels with jewels for the young man and his wife, the padişah wished them a safe journey.

Shortly after he had returned to his own country, the boy, accompanied by his two wives, went to his native village
in search of his parents. But he was unable to find either his father or his mother. The people said to him, "Your father sold his land to the muhtar\(^4\) and left this village."

Going to see the muhtar, the young man asked that man to sell his family land back to him. "Will you sell that land to me? I shall give you twice as much money as you paid for it."

After the muhtar had agreed, the young man bought back his father's land. He then hired a crew of workmen and had a large and beautiful house built on that land. When the building was completed, he and his two wives began to live there.

Time passed, and the young man spent all his days searching for his parents. At last he located them, though they were living in two different villages. His mother worked as a bread baker in one village, and his father had a job as a water salesman in another village. The young man ordered his men to bring his mother and father to his home to work there as bread maker and water seller. When the two parents were brought, the young man said to his two wives,

\(^4\) The muhtar is the head-man of a village or city ward. The village muhtar may be the only elected official that his constituents ever see. Most other officials in rural areas are appointees of one or another federal ministry.
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"Take this woman and this man to the public bath and have them cleaned thoroughly. Then give them beautiful clothes to wear, for they are my father and mother."

The two wives did exactly as their husband had directed them to do. They took them to the public bath to be washed, and then later they gave them sets of fine clothes to wear.

Naturally, the mother and the father were confused by all this. Looking at each other, they said, "There are some very strange things going on here. But we must remain patient and wait, for we shall learn, sooner or later, what it is all about."

After a short while, the young man entered the room where they were and asked, "Oh, grandfather and grandmother, don't you have any child to help you and take care of you?"

They answered, "Oh, yes, we had a son, our dear boy. But one morning he woke up and said that he had had a dream. Each of us asked him about his dream, but he refused to describe it to either of us. And then that night he left home secretly without saying a word to us about why he was going.

"Look at me! Did your son resemble me in any way?"

"Yes, but, oh, our real son! Where are you? You are such a kind and caring boy!"
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look at me more carefully! I am your son, and you are my father and mother! Yes, I had a dream one night, and I wanted very much to tell it to you, but neither of you said, 'May it be auspicious!' and so I could not tell you about it.

Both mother and father said together, "May it be auspicious! Now tell us your dream, Son!"

The young man said, "In my dream I saw the moon and the sun in the sky at the same time. Then both the moon and the sun came to my bed. After I awakened, I felt that the dream somehow foretold some special fortune for me, and so I decided to leave home to seek that fortune. After some time I found my fortune. I married the daughters of two padișahs, and these two girls were my sun and my moon. I also became very wealthy. Now we can all live very happily together, for you are my mother and you are my father. I shall take care of you!"

And that was exactly what happened. They all lived together happily until death overtook them.