

Story 1161 (1977 Tape 32)

Narrator: Hasan Azerioğlu

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Province

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The Ordeal of Haydarabat and His Family

I shall tell you a very strange story but one that is liked a great deal by the people of this area. In the past we used to call such a story a nağıl.¹ This is a short nağıl.

At one time there was a padişah named Haydarabat.² He was a very good ruler and a kind man, but after he had been padişah for some time, his people went out of control. *Heft* Robbery and other kinds of evil deeds began to occur everywhere in his land. He prayed, "My Allah, do something to teach a lesson to such evil-doers

Flood
One night shortly after that an earthquake occurred. Some one shouted, "Haydarabat, get up and get out of the palace!" He awakened his wife and two sons, and together they ran from the palace. Later that same night a tidal wave moved across the country flooding the whole land. Water covered most of the palace. As a result, Haydarabat and his family were left with nothing in this world but the nightgowns they were wearing.

¹The word nağıl does not appear in dictionaries of standard Turkish or in Turkish dialect dictionaries at the Archive of Turkish Oral Narrative.

²Inasmuch as Haydarabat is not a common name, one almost inevitably wonders if the reference here is to some historical

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Holding the hands of their children, Haydarabat and his wife walked to a neighboring country, where Haydarabat became a shepherd in the service of the padişah and his wife became a washerwoman in the palace. In this way they managed to survive.

One day there arrived at the padişah's palace a wealthy merchant with a whole caravan of goods carried upon camels, mules, and donkeys. This merchant had long been a friend of the padişah, and he was now stopping to visit him. The ruler welcomed his old friend, and then, noticing that his clothes were soiled from traveling, he gave him another set of garments and sent the dirty ones to his washerwoman.

Several hours later the merchant's clothes were returned to him, all of them washed carefully and packed neatly and attractively in a basket. Noticing this, the merchant said to the padişah, "How unusual that a washerwoman should have such good taste! Who is she? May I see her?"

"She is the wife of one of my shepherds," said the ruler and they went to the place where she was working and observed

figure of that name, such as Haydarabad Nizamliğı, a Timurid ruler in Pakistan and India during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The name of the protagonist (like that of the state of Hyderabad in India and the city of Hyderabad in southern Pakistan) may well have derived from Haydarabad Nizamliğı. The plot, however, has nothing whatsoever to do with the life of that ruler. The plot follows a standard pattern for this type of folktale wherever the type is found. See ATON Notes, Volume VI.

her. She was a very beautiful woman, and when the gaze of that scoundrel, the merchant, fell upon her, he desired

The merchant said to the padişah, "We shall not leave until tomorrow morning. In the meantime, is there someone who can take our animals out into the countryside for the night where they can graze and rest?"

Knowing that the merchant wanted to take this woman, and wishing to oblige this old friend of his, the padişah suggested that they have her husband take the animals away for the night. They sent him into the countryside a distance about as far as from here to Kars. One hour before dawn these two friends went to the shepherd's hut and easily forced the door open. Grabbing the woman, they wrapped her tightly in several blankets. With two servants carrying this bundle, they then started off in the direction where the beasts of burden had been tethered for the night. When they saw from a distance the shepherd returning homewards after his night's work, they took a different path in order to avoid him. In this way the woman was stolen and carried to another country in the caravan.

When the shepherd returned to his hut, he saw that his two sons were inside and still sleeping, but his wife was nowhere to be found. "Oh, that unfaithful woman!" he said. "She has deserted me because I am now a poor man!" After thinking about his situation for a while, Haydarabat said to himself, "This country

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has now become haram³ to me. I can no longer stay here!"

Awakening his sons, he held each boy by the hand, and they walked away from that place.

When they came to a seaport, Haydarabat decided to take ship and go to some other country in that way. He was separated from his sons, however, in the throng of people struggling to get aboard. He began searching frantically for his sons, but he could not find them. As the ship was leaving the dock, he decided that the boys must have been swept aboard by the crowd. He leaped aboard at the very last moment, and the ship then began to move out to sea. But the children were not there. Then, too late, he saw them standing on the dock crying and waving at It was in this way that Haydarabat was separated from his sons, for while he sailed away to another country, they were left hind.

When Haydarabat arrived at the main city in that other country, he saw a great crowd of people gathered in a public square. When he asked what they were doing, someone told him, "Our padişah died recently, and this is the day that was set to

³Helâl/ Haram--Moslem religious concepts. That which is helâl is that which is permissible according to canonical law. That which is haram is forbidden. There is no obligation or restriction or penalty for doing or taking whatever is helâl, but there will be a penalty on Judgment Day for doing or taking what is forbidden. To accept something from a donor is helâl; to take it or steal it is haram. To do anything morally or religiously improper is haram. Dying or endangered people often declare helâl anything they have given to or done for another

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choose a new padişah." In those days they often chose a new padişah by means of a bird. A bird was set loose where the people were all gathered, and the person upon whose head the bird landed was declared the new padişah.⁴

When the bird was released, it flew over the crowd and then landed on the head of Haydarabat. People asked, "Who is this man? He is a stranger here. He cannot be our new padişah!" When they released the bird a second time, the same thing happened, but the people did not accept Haydarabat. But when the bird landed on his head a third time, everyone agreed that he was the person who was meant to be their padişah, and in this way he became the ruler of that land. Because he had been a padişah before, he knew how to do that job, and he did it very well.

person, so that No. 2 will not go to Judgment indebted to another (which is haram unless declared helâl by the benefactor).

⁴The landing of birds upon the heads of people involves two main traditions in Turkey. If one had good luck, it was often thought that it was because the talih kuşu (bird of fortune), an imaginary bird, had landed on his/her head. It was apparently from this tradition that a second tradition was evolved. The devlet kuşu (government bird) was a small, real bird set loose in a crowd. Supposedly it would land on somebody's head, and then supposedly that person was declared the new ruler. This is a very common motif in Turkish folktales. Although apparently believed by many narrators and listeners, this second tradition was probably as imaginary and fantastic as the first.

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Haydarabat ruled that country for ten or thirteen years. After that length of time, his children had grown up to be young men. They had become the slaves of a wealthy merchant. By chance, that merchant one day arrived at the court of the padişah, bringing with him the two boys. Haydarabat, who had taken a different name in this land, did not recognize his sons, but he felt attracted to them.⁵ He asked the merchant, "Who are these young men with you?"

"They are two of my slaves."

"Sell them to me," said the padişah. Although the merchant did not wish to sell the boys, Haydarabat offered so much money for them that he could not refuse the padişah's request. In this way the padişah's own sons became his slaves.

About two years later there arrived there the wealthy merchant who had stolen Haydarabat's wife, and he brought that woman with him. This woman said to her abductor, "Even though already have two other wives, you have stolen me from my good-natured husband. Now you want to marry me. Well, I shall marry you only if the wedding ceremony is held in a land whose ruler is known to be a just man." After talking with various people who had joined the merchant's caravan, she discovered that there was a land whose padişah was a just man. She did not

⁵The narrator says, literally, "His blood boiled toward them."

Blood
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know, of course, that that just padişah was her own former husband. After a while, she said to the merchant, "Let us go to such and such a country to be married."

The merchant was very wealthy, and he could easily travel wherever he wished. He loaded his mules and, taking the woman with him, went to the land where Haydarabat ruled as padişah. Going directly to the padişah, he received permission to have the wedding ceremony there. Tents were set up for him and servants, and a special tent was set aside for the woman he was to marry. "Can you assign some reliable person to stand outside the bride's tent to guard her at night?" the merchant asked the padişah.

"Yes, I have two completely trustworthy slaves who can serve as her guards," answered Haydarabat. He then gave swords to these two young men and ordered them to stand watch all night near the woman's tent. One of these young men was named Yakub and the other İlyas.

To pass the time, the two brothers talked to each other as they stood on guard duty during the night. One said, "If our father, Haydarabat, had not left his homeland, he might still be padişah there."

The other answered, "Yes, and if he had not lost us, we might now be important men in our own country. As it is now, we only slaves guarding someone else's bride."

Recognition
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Inside the tent their mother was listening to their conversation. Coming to the door of the tent, she asked, "What are your names? What was your father's name?" After receiving their answers, she said, "I am your mother and you are my sons." They hugged each other and cried for some time, and then after a while, all three fell asleep inside the tent.

The woman's owner woke up early in the morning. Going outside, he saw that there was no one now guarding the woman's tent. When he went closer to the tent, he saw that the woman lay asleep inside with one of the young men asleep on each side of her. He then went immediately to the palace and reported this situation to the padişah.

The padişah ordered his servants, "Bring all three of them here at once!"

When the three of them appeared in the presence of the padişah, the woman said, "I shall give my testimony first. At one time I was the wife of a padişah named Haydarabat. Such bad fortune befell us that we were reduced to being servants in another country to which we fled. Misfortune struck us there too, and I was carried away from my family by force. I refused to be married willingly to the merchant who had stolen me unless the wedding ceremony was held in a land whose padişah was a just man. That is the reason we came here. These two boys are my sons. They lost their father long ago, and we do not know where he is now."

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When Haydarabat heard this, he realized that he was father of the two young men. He said, "These two boys are my sons, and this woman is my wife."

Exeuted He had the merchant exeuted. After searching for a short while, he located the merchant who had sold him his sons, and he had that merchant punished but in a less severe way.

You can see from this story what unfortunate things Haydarabat and his family had to endure. In the end, however, were reunited and their lives were happy again.⁶

⁶In stories of this kind the sufferers usually know ahead of time that they face a fated ordeal. Often they are given a choice as to (1) whether they want to undergo their ordeal in youth or old age, or (2) whether they want to undergo their ordeal in this world or the next.