

Story 1199 (1990 Tape 12)

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Location: Çesme, kaza town of  
İzmir Province

Date: December 20, 1990

ALL  
Fate Restores Lost Money

This story is about something that happened a long time ago when people used caravans<sup>1</sup> for transportation. Back in that time there was a ALL caravanserai owner who provided many services for travelers. He supplied all of the necessities for 78-40 caravans that stopped at his caravanserai. He had good lodgings for the travelers. He repaired their equipment. And when they were about to continue their journey, he bade them farewell and wished them a safe trip

In those days there were no banks or similar safe places in which to place money. The caravan owner stored the money that he earned in the space beneath the false bottom of an old saddlebag which stood in one corner of his office. That was the secret hiding place for his money, and he never told anyone else where it was.

<sup>1</sup>Caravans--many of them built by the Selcuk Turks--were placed along trade routes about 18 miles apart. Each contained an inn for travelers and a large walled compound within which a caravan's beasts of burden and their freight could be safely left overnight. Bandits and marauding tribes would have made travel extremely hazardous had it not been for this system of caravanserais. The space separating caravanserais was the distance a caravan could travel during a day before darkness overtook it.

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One day when the owner had to go somewhere briefly, he left the caravanserai in the care of one of his apprentices. During the morning a caravan was preparing to depart when its leader discovered that they needed a saddlebag for the colt of a donkey that had foaled before their arrival there. The leader asked the apprentice, "Can you find a saddlebag for this donkey colt?"

The apprentice answered in embarrassment, "That old saddle in the corner is the only one we have available right now. Will that do?"

"Well, if that is all there is, what else can we do but take that one?" He paid for the saddlebag and placed it on the back of the young donkey. Then he led the caravan on its way.

When the owner returned to the caravanserai, he noticed at once that the old saddlebag containing his money was missing. He immediately asked his apprentice, "What did you do with that old saddlebag that was standing here in this corner?"

Thinking that he had done very well, the apprentice said cheerfully, "I sold it this morning to a departing caravan for a small amount of money."

Although he could not blame the apprentice for what he had done, the owner fell into a state of despair when he heard what had become of the old saddlebag. What could he do? He could not set out alone wandering far and wide in an effort to recover

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the money. He was helpless. In the days that followed, he would stare at the horizon, engrossed in his thoughts, and say to himself, "If Fate so determines, my money will be returned to me from India or Yemen or wherever it was taken. But if Fate does not so determine, what is there that one can do about it?"

Day after day he grumbled to himself in this manner. Time continued to pass as months and years disappeared. Then one day the owner looked down the road--and what did he see? He saw the same caravan approaching again, and when it drew closer, he saw his old saddlebag on the back of a donkey. He thought, "Didn't I say that if Fate determined it, my money--whether in India, Yemen, or elsewhere--would be returned to me, and if Fate did not so determine it, then there was nothing I could do about it?"

During the night that the caravan stayed at his caravan-serai, the owner went out into the compound where the saddlebags and other freight were stacked for the night. Locating his old saddlebag, he removed the gold from the false bottom but left the bag right where it lay.