

Story 1205 (1990 Tape 12)

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54

Location: Çeşme, kaza town of
İzmir Province

Date: December 20, 1990

Mohammed on Uninterrupted Devotion

One day during the early years of Islam, our beloved Prophet was talking with his daughter. He was explaining to her the correct and honest behavior of a Moslem. He pointed out that an ideal Moslem should show respect and tolerance for others, and he illustrated this with a parable. "Listen closely to this, Fatma."¹

Exemplum 111-112

"Once there were two houses that faced each other across the street. [Let us say that this was in a city in Arabia, for that is where the Prophet lived.] One of these houses had a rather bad reputation, for the woman who lived there was a prostitute. The woman who lived in the opposite house considered herself a much more virtuous person than her neighbor, for she had no such relations with men, and every day she worshiped during the five required periods of prayer. However, all day long--even during the prayer periods--her attention was fixed upon what was happening across the street. Every time that a man came along and knocked at the prostitute's door,

¹The daughter of Mohammed was named Fatima, but Fatma is a common shortening of the name among Turks.

Story 1205

neighbor made note of this. She had two piles of small stones before her, and every time another man entered her neighbor's house, she moved a stone from the left-hand pile to the right-hand pile. This is how she kept a record of her neighbor's sins, by moving stones from left to right--even while she was supposedly worshiping.

Think about this example, Fatma. The woman who was supposedly worshiping thought that she was showing great reverence

Allah, but her thoughts were actually fixed upon the woman across the street instead of upon Allah. A good Moslem should be concerned about whether she is doing right or wrong herself, and she should not attempt to judge the virtues or vices of other people. This is especially important when one is engaged in the devotion of Allah. No other subject should be allowed to come between the worshiper and Allah."