

Story 1341 (1988 Tape 15)

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Allah Helps Those Who Help Themselves

There was once a ^{All} beggar who went from village to village seeking enough food to keep him alive. He would go to a village, knock on one door after another, and take whatever people would give him. Then he would travel on to the next village and do the same thing.

One day after leaving the village of Kasaba,¹ he headed down the road toward another village some distance away. Before he got there, darkness overtook this beggar as he was passing through a forest. Forced to spend the night there, he found a suitable place to sleep beneath a tree. After a short while, he heard the roaring of an approaching lion. The beggar moved to a place behind the tree where he would be able to observe the lion without being seen himself. The lion arrived with the carcass of some prey--perhaps a deer--which it had caught while hunting. The lion ate as much as it could of this prey and then it went away.

Not long after the lion had left, the beggar heard a

¹A village attached to the ilce (administrative district) of Turgutlu in Manisa Province.

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rustling sound on the path. He then saw in the moonlight a miserable fox dragging its body along. This animal had somehow been badly wounded and it could not walk normally but instead dragged its body along slowly toward the carcass left there by the lion. The fox ate what the lion had left of its prey, and then the fox also moved away

The beggar then began to think about what he had just witnessed. The fox had been unable to hunt for food, for it could barely hobble along. Nevertheless, Allah had given it good fortune by bringing food almost to its feet. The lion had brought the carcass of a deer there, and then had left the rest for the fox. But the lion did not plan this good fortune for the fox; it must have been Allah who arranged it all. The beggar said to himself, "Allah does not neglect any of His disabled creatures, and if He brings good fortune to a fox, then surely He will also bring good fortune to a human being, the pearl of all creatures. Will not Allah who protected the fox from starvation also protect me?"

That night the beggar slept only fitfully, for he was anxiously waiting for Allah to provide him with good fortune. He was very hungry. He waited there day after day until he became so weak from hunger that he had no choice but to continue waiting. Then he heard a tingir mingir sound² approach-

²Tingir mingir is onomatopoeia for any shuffling sound such as the rocking of a cradle or movement of feet on a soft surface.

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ing, and as it grew louder and louder, he realized that it was being made by a passing caravan. The beggar began to crawl and drag his body toward the caravan, and as he did so he kept groaning, "Uh! Uh! Uh!"

This sound frightened the horses and mules in the caravan and they shied away from the path. When the caravan crew noticed this, they dismounted and went ahead to see what it was that was frightening their animals. Walking over to the beggar, they asked him, "What is the matter? What has happened to you?" But by that time the beggar had lost consciousness and was thus unable to answer their questions. When he began to stir again, they gave him some food to eat and some water to drink. Then they repeated their questions: "What is the matter? What happened to you? Were you robbed by bandits?"

He answered, "No, I am a beggar, and I recently left Kasaba to find other villages where people might give me enough food to survive." He then told them about having witnessed the way in which Allah had brought good fortune to the fox. He concluded his remarks by saying, "I decided to wait for Allah to bring good fortune to me, and He has done so by bringing you here to give me some food."

A wise old man among the caravan drivers then spoke up and said, "Allah gives nothing to any of His creatures who

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do nothing. If you had not moaned, 'Uh! Uh! Uh!' we should never have known that you were here, but because you did something, we found you."

That caravan driver was right. Don't forget what he said. If we do not do something for ourselves, Allah will give us nothing.