

Story 1652 (1971 Tape 1

Narrator: Behçet Mahir,  
mid-60s

Location: Erzurum, capital  
city of Erzurum  
Province

Date: 1971

The Precociousness of Young Namık Kemal<sup>1</sup>

When Namık Kemal<sup>2</sup> was very little, when he was a little boy, his grandfather, holding him by the hand, was taking him somewhere. When he hit a stone and fell down, he spoke as follows: "There is no mistake about the sample given I fell down and you, pavement, hurt the calf of my leg."<sup>3</sup> People who heard these two lines of poetry understood that although he was a little boy, he had ability as a poet. When they heard "I fell down and you hurt my leg," they understood that when this boy grew up he would be a great poet. He would be a man with a very special way of thinking. In truth, today Namık Kemal is one of the great men of Turkey. So, friends, let us be that way. Let us work

<sup>1</sup>This was an exemplum interpolated into ATON Tale No. 330. Because it is really a brief tale complete unto itself, we have here given it individual status. This will prevent its being "lost" in the very long Tale 330.

<sup>2</sup>A great Turkish patriot and poet of the late 19th century.

<sup>3</sup>In Turkish, these two lines do rhyme.

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hard and develop our government, our population, and ourselves. To fight among ourselves, to struggle with each other, striking each other--such behavior does not bring benefit to human beings. To speak pleasantly, and to treat each other decently, to address and guide each other with good manners, suits us well. Otherwise, hurting others, a person can injure within a day the feelings of forty men

thus offend them. It may take forty years of working hard to make a heart. Is it possible? For this reason we should always proceed with good morals, with beauty in

movement. Whether one is great or not depends on how hard he works. But, human beings, the greatest grace and

greatest stature comes from moral goodness. The real beauty is moral beauty, good character. It is the most important beauty that exists.