

Abdulrahman Gumuş was a folk healer. This gift been passed to him by his father who had received it from his father and so on back through generations. He could heal snake or scorpion bites with a touch of his hands and a prayer.

Abdulrahman took his gift very seriously. He believed implicitly in his gift's power. He saw it his duty to alleviate suffering at all times. His services were given freely. He would accept no gifts being satisfied with the words of thanks, "God bless you, Abdulrahman amca."

Because of his high standards he had a grand design in his mind for a successor; someone who would make a worthy recipient for the gift when the time came for him to pass it on.

Folk healing runs in certain families. Usually fathers pass the gift to sons; mothers to daughters. But it is possible to confer the gift to someone outside the family if the one with the gift believes the outsider to deserve it.

Abdulrahman was a perfectionist and expected others to match up to his high standards. He was a bit of a nit-picker. He could always see faults in others; and let them know for their own good; but was blind to his own defects.

He had two sons. Mehmet, the oldest, had studied medicine and become an eye-specialist. "He is a man of science," his father thought. "He has to understand the whys and wherefores of things. He has not got the faith needed to accept the gift as it is." Mehmet would not be suitable.

Soner his youngest son was good-natured but lazy.

The community believed Soner's laziness jinxed any work if he walked in while it was in progress. Women would unpick their crotchet and start again after he had gone because they were convinced he put the evil eye on the work's advancement. Tradesmen stopped what they were doing when Soner arrived for similar reasons. "Let's take a break now he's here. We want the job to get finished," they would mutter to each other.

When his father remonstrated with him about his lazy attitude Soner would say, "You worry too much, Father! Take it easy! It'll be right in the end!"

He was a disappointment to Abdulrahman who could not accept his son's lazy, laid-back attitude. Soner was out of the question as recipient of the gift. He was unreliable and his father believed he would be tempted to use the gift to make money and charge people in some way.

His mind turned to men outside the family but no one stood out as deserving the honour. All had qualities he deemed undesirable. Ali was too eager to please. Adem procrastinated. Murat always wanted praise for his work. Mustafa became very defensive when he was criticised. Really there was no one who fitted his grand design for the next owner of the gift.

Abdulrahman would never have concurred with Edwin Bliss\* that; 'The pursuit of excellence is gratifying and healthy. The pursuit of perfection is frustrating, neurotic and a terrible waste of time.'

The years passed and Abdulrahman continued to use the gift diligently but was convinced no one around him was worthy to be given it. So when the time came for him to breathe his last he and the gift of generations passed away together.

\*Edward Lydston Bliss, Jr. (July 30, 1912 – November 25, 2002) an American broadcast journalist, news editor and educator.