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OUTBREAK & OTHER SIDE OF THE MEDALLION / SALGIN & MADALYONUN TERS TARAFI (2005) RESAT NURI GUNTEKIN (1889 – 1956)

Apropos

“This story by Resat Nuri was published in Persembe journal in 1935 and in 2005 it was published as a book by Inkilap Publishing House under the title of *Complete Works 25* together with the story *Other Side of the Medallion. Outbreak*, one of these works, both of which are long stories, is about a teacher who sends a letter to the district governor’s office asking for help after the death of children due to a disease in the village where he works, with the concern that the disease may be epidemic, the attitudes of the district governor and other authorities towards the teacher and the situation, and the results of the sensitivity shown by the teacher. While the plot unfolds in this way, the author approaches the story based on his impressions of the Anatolian cities where he has lived for many years thanks to his father and his own profession, and draws a portrait of Anatolia, sometimes by entrusting the word to the heroes of the work, and sometimes by allowing the narrator to directly intervene in the flow of events. In doing so, he assigns the narrative to the omniscient narrator and enables the descriptions of the heroes to meet with the reader based on the narrator’s point of view. (Ulutürk Sakarya 2020).

Extended Storyline

General situation between Qaimaqam and Chief Clerk Qaimaqam of Gokpinar, who has the habit of putting every personal and official mail that comes to him in his drawer without looking at it, spends most of his time reading poetry, writing down the sentences, expressions and phrases he likes, and writing down the pleasant events he listens to on paper. He likes to wander by the streamside or in the cemetery, dive into deep thoughts and to write down the thoughts he finds important. Chief Clerk is generally in charge of the work he has to do at the district governorship. Even though Qaimaqam is the most authorized person, everyone who has a problem knows that they cannot meet with Qaimaqam, so they make it a custom to first meet with Chief Clerk.

Teacher in Karlibel requests intervention for the outbreak in the village Qaimaqam, who had forgotten to reply to some official mails that he had left in his drawer, decides to solve the problem of a female friend with one of his officers and to respond to the request for a report from the inspector in Van as soon as possible. Among the letters, he finds an envelope that he realizes has been opened but not read. Qaimaqam begins to read the petition and sees that Mr. Jawdat, the primary school teacher in Karlibel village, reports that everyone in the village has started to fall ill for some unknown reason and that they are showing symptoms such as fever, pain and vomiting. Mr. Jawdat added that he had reported the situation to Alderman but had not received any feedback. He reported that Karlibel, a village with fifty households, might be facing an outbreak and that a doctor should be sent for the necessary examinations as soon as possible. Thinking about what to do in the face of Mr. Jawdat’s request, Qaimaqam is in doubt about what decision to take. Although he is afraid of being investigated for not doing his duty, he prefers to leave Mr. Jawdat’s request unanswered.

Qaimaqam’s fear of being blamed for his current situation Chief Clerk asks Qaimaqam, whose stye on his right eyelid swells when he is angry or agitated, what the problem is. Chief Clerk, who grew up in Beylerbeyi and started working as a civil servant in Anatolia after his involvement in the Ali Suavi Affair, is financially well-off. Chief Clerk states that he knows Mr. Jawdat, who graduated from Istanbul Teacher Training School, and says that he has made some complaints on various issues before and that he is an annoyingly idealistic person. According to Chief Clerk, Mr. Jawdat opposes the state, accuses civil servants of irresponsibility and defends populist ideas. Thinking that he might lose his seat if the allegations are true, Qaimaqam decides to send someone to Alderman and have a doctor

examine the town. It is understood that there is rivalry between Qaimaqam and Chief Clerk as the two have different views on the situation.

Trying to send a doctor to the village Alderman, who is in charge of the town of Ihlamur, complains to Qaimaqam about the teacher Mr. Jawdat in a letter. He states that he canceled classes just because children's ears and faces were swollen due to the cold, accused the council of elders of ignorance and incompetence, made a complaint even though no significant problem was detected in the previous investigations, and criticized the policies of the state. Qaimaqam says that a better decision can be made with a doctor sent to the town and orders a doctor to be sent. Qaimaqam immediately summons Chief Clerk, who is said to have gone to the bazaar. Chief Clerk, smoking a hookah with a friend, comes to the district governorship as soon as he learns that he has been summoned. Qaimaqam appreciates Alderman who uses very smooth and complex expressions in his letter. Then he asks Chief Clerk whether the doctor has been sent to the town. Upon learning that the doctor has not been sent to the town yet, Qaimaqam feels that his authority has been undermined and his orders are not taken seriously, so he gets angry and starts to scold Chief Clerk.

Qaimaqam's distress when the doctor failed to go to Karlibel Twelve days passed and the outbreak in Karlibel was forgotten again. Upon a letter from mutasarrifate to district governorate, it is reported that no action has been taken regarding the epidemic alleged to have started in Karlibel and a report on the issue is requested. Upon receiving the telegram, Qaimaqam asks Chief Clerk whether the doctor was sent to the village. Dr. Ramzi set off for Karlibel about nine days ago. However, after a fight broke out between two families in the town of Yigitler over a pasture issue, the doctor had to treat the wounded and report the dead to prosecution office. Panicked by the letter from mutasarrifate, Qaimaqam sent a telegram and asked that the doctor in Yigitler town be notified to leave for Karlibel as soon as possible. Qaimaqam thinks that the doctor postpones going to the mountain village and enjoys himself where he stays, using his illness and the outbreak as an excuse. Chief Clerk defends Dr. Ramzi, who takes care of his family whenever he is needed, treats his children's illnesses regardless of the time and allocates a small acre of his own field for him every semester. He says that he is old and despite his illness, he goes wherever he is needed. Qaimaqam agrees with Chief Clerk and decides to send another doctor to deal with the affair in Yigitler and orders Dr. Ramzi to go to Karlibel.

What happened to Dr. Ramzi while trying to reach Karlibel Dr. Ramzi, who had to rest with Alderman for a while due to the rheumatism in his legs, prepares to hit the road again. Together with a gendarme, he moves towards the mountain village of Karlibel despite the snow and blizzard. Due to adverse weather conditions, they decide to rest in Erenler village on the way. On the occasion of the doctor's arrival, a child receives medicine and an elderly man has one of his aching teeth pulled in the coffeehouse. Dr. Ramzi feeds himself with the food offered by the locals and rests in one of the houses there. Later, they try to set off again but realize that they will not be able to make any progress, so they turn back. Dr. Ramzi, a guest at the mukhtar's house, is informed that several more people from Karlibel have lost their lives. Doctor also takes care of other sick villagers in need. A turbaned teacher of Erenler village denigrates the teacher of Karlibel. He says that he is an enemy of the state and a bad example for everyone. His main purpose in saying this is to keep his job and to flatter his superiors. Dr. Ramzi tries to set off for the last time but falls ill and cannot continue. Dr. Ramzi returns to Alderman and tells those around him what needs to be done so that he can be cured.

When the incident hits the news, an inspector is sent to the district Qaimaqam heard a rumor that the provincial health director had come to the district. He tries to find out from the Chief Clerk whether the rumor is true or not. Chief Clerk tells Qaimaqam that the rumor is true and that he saw Provincial Health Director in the bazaar. Thanks to Mr. Jawdat's vigorous efforts, Tanin newspaper publishes a news article about the deaths in Karlibel. Thereupon, the Provincial Health Director was assigned to investigate the incident. Upon receiving the news, Qaimaqam anxiously waits for the arrival of Provincial Health Director. On the night of the day he receives the news, he cannot sleep because he is extremely nervous.

Inspector flatters Qaimaqam Due to his anxiety, Qaimaqam, who hasn't been able to sleep, begins to wait in his office in a worried state. The Inspector, who arrives at the office during the daytime, has a short, skinny and grumpy character, contrary to Qaimaqam's expectations. Inspector, who is closely interested in Sufism and classical arts, states that he has read Qaimaqam's published writings and admires his works on music. Qaimaqam tries to learn from Inspector the purpose of his

visit and his views on the epidemic, but he hears negative statements about Mr. Jawdat. Provincial Health Director claims that Mr. Jawdat is a dissident and even a heretic. After telling Qaimaqam that there is nothing to worry about and that he will deal with the problem himself, he invites Qaimaqam to dinner. Seeing that a party is being held at the Provincial Health Director's house where alcohol is being served, Qaimaqam, upon realizing that he is staying in the same room as Provincial Health Director's father, becomes suspicious that something might happen to him and looks for an opportunity to leave.

Problems encountered in arrival of Inspector and preparation of the report Qaimaqam sits round a table in the corner and observes the visiting officials who attended the party and is disgusted by their drunkenness, dancing, crude joking with each other, their lack of seriousness, in other words, their fondness for fun. One of the clerks working in the district governorship comes to the Qaimaqam and kisses his hand and asks for forgiveness. Qaimaqam, who watches the sycophancy and helplessness of the clerk in shame, says that he forgives him in order to get rid of the clerk and not to be disgraced any further. Observing the intimacy between Chief Clerk and Provincial Health Director, Qaimaqam feels that his seat is in danger. Because he knows that Chief Clerk wants to be new Qaimaqam. A week after the organized entertainment, Inspector arrives at the office and begins to ask some questions about the incident. Qaimaqam concludes from the questions asked by Inspector that he intends to hold Dr. Ramzi responsible for the failure to reach Karlibel. But in the meantime, Dr. Ramzi enters the Qaimaqam's room. Finding Dr. Ramzi in front of him, Inspector compliments and praises him as he did Qaimaqam. Since no definitive decision could be made on what to do, Inspector says that his main job is as a doctor, that he is interested in scientific matters and that he is quite unfamiliar with administrative issues. Therefore, Inspector suggests to the officials in the room to write an estimated report on the incident based on the available data and send it to the mutasarrifate. Qaimaqam, who does not want to accept such an offer in front of his officials, is overwhelmed by the intervention and coordination of the process by Chief Clerk and remains silent.

A forged report is prepared after not being able to go to Karlibel Chief Clerk, Dr. Ramzi and Qaimaqam come together at the house of Cocoon Dealer Shakir, the Provincial Health Director, to discuss and try to make a decision on how the report should be written. Since the exact name of the disease must be stated in the report, there is no other option but to go to region personally. Arriving in the town of Ihlamur, the group meets with two locals from the town and Gecit village who had recently been to Karlibel. When asked about the disease in the region, the villagers do not give any right answers and state that all diseases are caused by fate. Thereupon, they set off for Karlibel with a police soldier. Although they try to go to the village, the police soldier tells them that it will not be possible due to the adverse weather conditions. Even though they insist on going to the region, in the end the police soldier prove to be right and they return to the town. Inspector, who is overwhelmed by being stuck in Ihlamur town, says that he and Dr. Ramzi will write the scientific part of the report and that the administrative part should be written by the provincial authorities. It is decided that the final version of the prepared report will also be reviewed by Qaimaqam.

Qaimaqam signs the report At night, Qaimaqam thinks about what he should do about the forged report and cannot sleep because of guilty conscience. Thinking that he has never done anything against the law throughout his professional career and therefore deciding not to sign the report, Qaimaqam goes to his office the next morning with these thoughts in mind. Qaimaqam, manipulated by the statements of Chief Clerk and other officials and praised in the report, signs it in shame. Inspector then leaves the town and the report is sent to mutasarrifate.

Mr. Jawdat fails The day before Inspector leaves the region, Civil Inspector Mr. Saifoullah arrives in the region. Although it is thought that Civil Inspector Mr. Saifoullah has come to the region to investigate the rumors of the epidemic, he is actually unaware of the incident. However, Cocoon Dealer Shakir, who meets Mr. Saifoullah and chats with him, blabs and tells the incident in parts. Mr. Saifoullah, who was initially not very interested in the incident in Karlibel, listens to the incident in detail when he realizes that the officials have deceived the state by preparing a false report. Seeing that there is a serious lawlessness and injustice, Mr. Saifoullah decides to take an interest in the issue and write a report. However, the next morning, Mr. Saifoullah, who developed an abscess in his tooth, had to urgently leave the region before completing the report. Mr. Saifoullah regrets not being able to help Mr. Jawdat and the Karlibel people. Days later, the decree is sent to Karlibel. According to the report, the relevant authority sentenced Mr. Jawdat, who had kept the state busy for no reason, to a fifteen-

day salary deduction in addition to a demand letter. But the mail informing about the penalty is returned. Because Mr. Jawdat had died of an unknown disease.

People

<i>Mr. Jawdat</i>	Studied in Istanbul and became a teacher in the mountain village of Karlibel.
<i>Mr. Ramzi</i>	An old doctor working in the region.
<i>Qaimaqam</i>	District governor of Gokpinar.
<i>Chief Clerk</i>	Most important assistant and rival of Qaimaqam.
<i>Alderman</i>	Most authorized civil servant in the town of Ihlamur.
<i>Cocoon Dealer Shakir</i>	Provincial health director.
<i>Inspector</i>	Mutasarrif officer who comes to investigate the outbreak in Karlibel.
<i>Mr. Saifoullah</i>	Civil service inspector.

The names of other narrative characters in the narrative are as follows: Woodcutter, Gendarmerie soldier, villagers, etc.

Character Analysis

Mr. Jawdat (Open/Social/Conscientious)

Although he is the protagonist of the narrative, the character who is not dominant and whose actions are given briefly is actually almost a background character. Even though he occupies a relatively small part of the narrative, he is the protagonist due to his actions and the significance of those actions. Mr. Jawdat, who started teaching in a mountain village called Karlibel after completing his education in Istanbul, is disliked especially by the notables and civil servants of the region because of his criticism of the state and his populist discourses. But Mr. Jawdat never stops saying the truth he knows. He does his best for the state to intervene in the epidemic that emerges in Karlibel. Considering the hierarchical structure in administrative institutions, he notifies the situation to the relevant authorities in turn. Finally, he writes a letter to Tanin newspaper and makes sure that the incident is reported. He is a very sensitive, conscious, stubborn, determined and responsible narrative person. According to him, careless and irresponsible civil servants and the notables are the main responsible for the misery of the people.

Sensitive When an epidemic breaks out in the village of Karlibel, he does everything he can to bring a doctor to save the people: "There is no time to wait, mister... The death toll in the village of fifty households has reached six,' I said with a frown: 'All right, all right... You go; get busy with your work. We will take care of it,' he said. Two days later the gendarmerie and the village sulfate medicine arrived. After waiting for the doctor for a few days, I couldn't stand it; I went down to the town center again in the rainy weather" (Guntekin 2005, 12).

Active Because of his actions for the benefit of the people, he is disliked by comfortable and self-interested civil servants: "One of the people that the Istanbul Teacher's Training School has brought upon us... I mean, if there were ten teachers like him in the district, there would be left not a stick standing..." (Guntekin 2005, 16).

Conscient He defends the social class to which he belongs and tries to protect the interests of the working class: "What sin do these strange, poor peasants on this mountain top, cut off from the whole world, have other than their ignorance? And they are not responsible for that crime. Would you pay attention to the last sentence, sir?" (Guntekin 2005, 16-17).

Decisive Despite all efforts to prevent it, he continues to fight for intervention against the epidemic: "Sir, I think a few lines of an article appeared in Tanin newspaper in Istanbul, saying that more than fifteen citizens perished, and although the incident was reported to all authorities in turn, no one paid any attention... No doubt it was the work of that pock-marked Jawdat traitor..." (Guntekin 2005, 42).

Responsible He acts with a sense of responsibility in the face of the epidemic that has begun to destroy the people of Karlibel: "We are facing a disaster, a disgrace, he said, a school teacher reports that the people in his village are destroyed by an infectious disease. At first no one pays attention.

Then, when the fire spreads, they take action; they try to send a doctor to the village, but it is not possible because it is winter and the roads are blocked” (Guntekin 2005, 74).

Victim He is victimized by officials who misrepresent the truth when he is in the right: “Karlibel’s teacher Mr. Jawdat was given a strict warning and a fifteen-day salary deduction” (Guntekin 2005, 76).

Defeated Mr. Jawdat dies due to the outbreak: “It was understood that Mr. Jawdat passed away one and a half months ago due to an unknown illness and it was returned” (Guntekin 2005, 77).

Dangerous Because he is an idealist teacher, he is seen as a threat by self-interested officials: “He was afraid that the graduate of the Teacher Training School in Karlibel was coveting his place, and he was constantly badmouthing him: - Disease and epidemic are all made up, sir... I know what he intends... He will gain favor by stirring up rumors like this, he’ll get rid of a teacher from one of the lower villages and replace him” Guntekin 2005, 38-39).

Qaimaqam (Closed/Asocial/Unconscientious/Emotional)

The narrative person, who is the district governor of Gokpinar, is full of contradictions in terms of personality traits. Although he is actually a very sensitive and conscious character, he is weak-willed and cowardly. Qaimaqam, who almost never likes to deal with administrative matters, likes to read books, write, and write down pleasant events or interesting sentences he heard. He writes poetry and is interested in music. Although he initially does not care much about the outbreak in Karlibel, he takes action out of concern that the incident will be heard by higher authorities. In a secret rivalry with Chief Clerk, Qaimaqam is afraid of losing his title to him. At the same time, he is afraid of being penalized if it is determined that he has not fulfilled his duty. Although he makes efforts to have a doctor sent to Karlibel and to have the necessary examinations carried out, these efforts are insufficient. As a result, despite his reluctance, he signs the false report presented to him because it praises him. Even though he is a conservative, he loves arts.

Intellectual He is interested in literature, music and art: “Qaimaqam was fond of poetry and calligraphy. When one of his guests recited a few beautiful couplets or told a nice joke, he would say: “Excuse me for a minute. Let me take down this” and wrote it down on a piece of paper (...)” (Guntekin 2005, 7-8).

Sensitive Although he has a very sensitive character, he makes unethical decisions due to his cowardice: “His favorite trees were cypress and willow. He could not distinguish between these two loves, such as the love his children, he would say, “These show sorrow and joy in my eyes, one makes me taste the pleasure of the world, the other the sadness and spirituality of death” (Guntekin 2005, 8).

Sluggish He looks at life with a mystical pessimism: “As for the Creekside inspirations, these were some poems in Khayyam’s style. Since in almost all of them he talks about the mortality of the world and that happiness is as unstable and intangible as the shadow of willow leaves, one would have to conclude that what the Qaimaqam calls worldly pleasure is not much different from the sadness of death” (Guntekin 2005, 8).

Careless He is self-indulgent and does not want to take responsibility: “If he tore it up and threw it in the wastepaper basket, no one would ask him anything, and it would be the best thing to do” (Guntekin 2005, 14).

Uneasy He is afraid of being held responsible for any incident or issue and losing his position: “– I don’t know, no sir, I don’t know. What I do know is that none of my orders are being carried out; I’m being played like a child. It can’t go on like this, sir. I’m a man who took the responsibility of a entire district, sir. If there’s a problem tomorrow, sir, I’m the one who will solve it. You’ll all turn tail and run away, sir” (Guntekin 2005, 25).

Confused He cannot hide his surprise at the situations and events he encounters: “Qaimaqam still could not find the opportunity to open his mouth and say a word. He was compelled to express his gratitude and appreciation for the Provincial Health Director’s compliments with gestures of the

eyebrows, eyes and mouth. Together with Chief Clerk, they took him by the arm and sat him on the armchair next to the stove” (Guntekin 2005, 46).

Twofaced Although he seems to be a sensitive and empathetic character, he prefers the easy way out when he needs to take responsibility: “If Provincial Health Director had spoken to him alone, perhaps Qaimaqam would have agreed to this charade. But it did not fit into his conservative officer head to prepare a false investigation report as if he was preparing a theater play, even though two of his assistants were with him” (Guntekin 2005, 57).

Weak-willed He has no will to fight against difficulties: “The old man became numb under these influences and accepted whatever the Provincial Health Director asked with a heavy nod” (Guntekin 2005, 72).

Themes

Crime Mr. Jawdat, a primary school teacher in the village of Karlibel, informs the relevant authorities about the epidemic in the region by paying regard to the hierarchical order. Alderman, who did not like Mr. Jawdat’s views and actions, ignored his mail and did not take any action regarding the complaint. Thereupon, Qaimaqam of Gokpinar is informed about the situation. Qaimaqam, fearing that there was indeed an epidemic in the region and that he would be held responsible for the deaths that had occurred or might occur, asked for the doctor to be sent to the region immediately. However, the doctor is unable to get there due to adverse weather conditions and his illness. Inspector and Provincial Health Director assigned to investigate the incident also fail to reach the region. Inspector then proposes to prepare a forged report stating that the current situation is a complete misunderstanding and blaming the primary school teacher. Qaimaqam, afraid of losing his seat, approves the forged report. Thus, many people die, all the blame is placed on the teacher and the epidemic is covered up.

Duty After completing his education in Istanbul, Mr. Jawdat, who was assigned as a teacher in Karlibel, repeatedly sends petitions to Alderman to investigate the epidemic and the deaths caused by the epidemic in the region. He also tells the mukhtars and notables in the region to take responsibility. He holds state officials responsible for the misery. After receiving no response from Alderman, he complains to Qaimaqam. When he does not receive the expected response from him, he applies to the mutasarrifate and even makes sure that the epidemic is reported in Tanin newspaper. As a primary school teacher, Mr. Jawdat does anything he can to raise public awareness and tries to find solutions to their problems. As an enlightened representative of the state, Mr. Jawdat tries to solve the problems of the local people. He acts with a sense of duty.

Punishment At the end of the narrative, the authorities, who fail either to send a doctor to the region or to go there in person, prepare a false report and say that the epidemic is a simple disease that is constantly seen in the region and that Mr. Jawdat is keeping the state institutions busy for nothing. Due to careless, irresponsible and conformist state officials who fail to fulfill their responsibilities, most of the people in the village of fifty households, including Mr. Jawdat, lose their lives. Mr. Jawdat, who becomes a criminal due to the false report, not only dies, but also receives a demand letter and a fifteen-day salary deduction. While the characters who are actually responsible for the disaster manage to save themselves by cooperating in the crime, Mr. Jawdat and the Karlibel people, who are the real victims, are punished.

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