

Story 1211 (Dictated)

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Location: Of, a kaza town of
Trabzon Province

Date: April 29,

H 31^v

Hidrellez¹

"Hidrellez"² is neither an official nor a religious festival in Turkey. But it is a special day which is celebrated every year. "Hızır" or "Hıdır" is believed to be a saint who is immortal. It is believed that Hıdır is the living messenger of God on earth and that he helps needy people. The night which connects May fifth to May sixth is believed to be his coming time to help the needy people.

There are many places in Turkey which are associated with Hızır (Hıdır) and Hidrellez. There are many theories about the meaning of "Hidrellez Day" and the reasons for celebrating it as a special day in Turkish culture. I am not going through these theories; instead, I want to talk about how Hidrellez is being celebrated today.

Just before Hidrellez Day, everything is cleaned and put in order, including houses, backyards and closets, because of

¹The narrator gives no indication of the ancient and larger significance of Hızır as a god, nor does she mention more commonly used ways of observing Hidrellez Day. She does not seem to be aware of the Elijah (-ellez) connection with Hidrellez.

²The usual Turkish spelling is Hidrellez, not Hidirellez.

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the belief that Hıdır comes to clean and organized places. In some areas the houses are painted just before Hıdırellez Day and everybody wears new and clean clothes. On this day, some people fast or give charity because they believe this kind of act helps their wishes to be accepted. All these preparations are made in order to meet Hıdır and seek some help from him.

During Hıdırellez Day, in some areas of Turkey, there is a kind of fortune-telling custom also. Even if there are some small differences in the implementation of this custom, the general procedure is as follows: On the afternoon of May fifth, a big earthen pot is brought to a certain house by a group of young girls. The girls and women who want to resolve their future put their earrings or rings into this earthen pot. After that, this earthen pot is filled with clean water and the opening of the pot is covered with a white cloth. In some areas flowers also are added into the earthen pot. Finally, the earthen is placed under a rosewood tree, and they hope Hıdır will come there and everybody's wishes will be accepted. In the morning of Hıdırellez Day, which is May sixth, the earthen pot is taken from its place and the girls and women are gathered in one place. One of the women sings a folk song, and after that one of the rings or earrings is taken out from the pot without anyone's looking into it. It is believed that this song represents the future of the person to whom this ring or earring belongs

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This process continues until all the earrings and rings are finished.

By the end of Hidirellez Day, it is believed that all the problems and bad days are passed and that the future will be happy, healthy, and successful.