

Story #426 (Tape #1, 1968)

Narrator: Ramazan Demircan

Location: Cingirli village, settled
by Tatars migrated from
Crimea, Haymana kaza, Ankara
Province

Date: 1968

The Koranic Hızır

Ahmet Uysal: Have you heard any tales about Hızır?

A friend of mine traveled through many lands in an effort to see Hızır. One day he came to a beach. Wandering about there, he saw many fishermen fishing, but he saw nothing of Hızır. He was wearing a fur coat. He took this off, laid it on the beach, and walked farther on, hoping to find him. But Hızır was nowhere to be seen there, and so he eventually walked back to where he had left his coat. He saw that an old man was lying on his coat, asleep.

He said, "Get up, you old man! Why are you lying on my fur coat?"

The old man arose, and they started walking along together. After they had walked for a while, the old man said, "Shall we be friends?"

but you probably will not be able to tolerate me, for your religion is open while mine is hidden."

I shall put up with you all right, but we must agree upon one condition, and that is that you must not interfere with anything I do for three episodes in a row."

They agreed to this and started traveling together. The old man said, "While you were preaching in the mosque, a man stood up and asked,

The two of them soon boarded a ship. Along the way, Hızır damaged the ship. His companion said, "What are you doing? Why do you damage new ship? You will sink us."

"Did I not tell you not to interfere with what I did? Now one of the three parts of my condition has been broken. If you break all three parts, I shall disappear, and then you will get no good from me. If you are quiet and patient, what a lot of other things you will see!"

"Very well, I shall not interfere again."

to you in the end, and later you will understand what they mean."

"All right, I promise not to interfere again with what is your business."

They went on, and some time later as they came to a village, they stopped, knocked on a door, and asked for some bread. They were refused.

When they went to the next house, they were refused there too. They went to a third and to a fourth house, but at both they were refused. At the house they also asked to be accepted as guests for the night, but that too was refused them. Continuing on a little, they came to a cemetery surrounded by a wall. The wall leaned a little to one side. His Grace Hızır said a prayer and straightened out the wall with one hand.

His companion asked, "Why did you straighten out that wall? The people of that place refused to have us as their guests, refused even to give us bread, but now you have straightened out their wall which would soon have fallen."

"Did I not tell you not to interfere with my business? We had three parts to my bargain, and already you have broken two of them. There is only one left."

His companion said, "Oh, I am sorry. I shall not interfere again in affairs."

They went along until they reached another town. Many children who were playing outside in that town started throwing stones at the two travelers. His Grace Hızır caught one of these boys, laid him on the ground, and cut his throat.

His companion said, "Now you have become a murderer!"

"Beware!" said Hızır. "Our bargain has ended. The three parts of the condition of our traveling together have been completed. Sit down, and I shall explain these things to you. When we were approaching the ship, a bird came down from above and lighted on the sea, picked up a drop of sea water in its beak, drank the water, and wiped its mouth [sic]."

He then added, "Your learning is just about as much as that drop of water which the bird took from the sea, while knowledge is as wide as the ocean--endless. Never boast from now on about your knowledge. Learning is so vast, but your knowledge is like a drop of water in the sea." ²

His companion said, "Oh-h-h, I was very sorry for having spoken so."

"Along the way at a village where we stopped, the people refused to give us anything to eat and drink. Then we came to a cemetery with a leaning wall. Under that wall there was a pot of gold. Now it so happened that a child had just been born in Yemen. I had heard of this from Jebraïl.³ The gold belonged to that child. It was destined to be his--his kismet. If the wall had collapsed, the pot of gold would have been exposed, and someone else might have gotten it before the child had grown to manhood. Fifteen or twenty years from now he will have grown to be a man, and he will come and possess this gold. --Why did you interfere in this?"

"I don't know, but please forgive me."

"We went on a little further and came to another village where we were stoned by the children. I cut the throat of one of the boys. He was a bastard whose father was unknown. His mother did not know where she had gotten him. I thought it proper to kill such a boy."

² While what Hızır says here may be very true, it does not explain the reason for his damaging the bottom of the ship, an explanation which has been promised but is not given until the narrator is asked for it.

³ Cebrail, Jebraïl, or Gabriel--the archangel (of whom there are four) in Islamic faith who is the agent of revelation and the messenger.

Right then Hızır disappeared.

Ahmet Uysal: What was his reason for damaging the bottom of the ship?

Narrator: I am sorry I forgot that. When he asked Hızır, "Why did you damage the bottom of the ship?" Hızır answered, "Don't inter-

This ship is to provide income for two recently born children. If I had not damaged the ship, the government would confiscated it for carrying ammunition. When I caused it to sink, that would not happen, and the children would still be able to use it when they grew up."⁴

⁴Private conveyances (ships, automobiles, wagons) were often confiscated, during times of national emergency, for public use. Owners of automobiles in Turkey understand that this may still happen to their vehicles if the national need requires. Peasants still damage deliberately their carts in order that they be not subject to confiscation. Much of this is a vestige of an earlier time, the military forces now being quite adequately supplied with equipment.