

Story 794 (1970 Tape 21

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56, a farrier

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His Reverence ¹ Ibrahim Hak1 and His Student [?] Kâmi

The tale I am going to tell you about His Reverence Ibrahim Hak1 is based on facts. During the time of His Reverence Ibrahim Hak1, a man by the name of Kâmi was taken prisoner by the Russians and sent to a labor camp in Siberia. The commanding officer of that work camp came one morning to divide the prisoners into work groups. As this was going on, a Christian monk went to this officer and said, "Give me a man for labor."

"Monk ^{2-85, 87} Efendi, you may take any man you wish from among those gathered here," said the officer.

The man called Kâmi was an old man. When the monk glanced over the prisoners, he saw Kâmi and felt sorry for him. He said to the officer, "Give me this man."

The officer protested, "But Monk Efendi, he is an old

¹ Ibrahim Hak1 is the best-known saint of the Erzurum region. He was not, however, buried at Erzurum. He is buried in the tomb of Seyfi Fadirullah at Külü in Siirt Province. His dates were 1703-1780.

² Efendi is equivalent to Sir now. In the past when it was attached to a name, as in Ahmet Efendi, it was an honorific of prestige, but today it is used in that way only when addressing servants or children.

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man. Choose a younger man who would be more useful to you in your work."

he is good enough for me."

officer then gave Kâmi to the monk. Taking Kâmi by the hand, the monk led him to his house. He then sent Kâmi to the ^{bath, jalli} bath, had him change his clothes, and provided for all his needs. He then fed him. As he was eating, Kâmi was asked by the monk, "Kâmi, my son, can you read the Koran?"

"Yes, I can."

"Very well, then. Now you and I shall go to the cellar, and I shall explain it to you."

The monk lifted a trapdoor and led the way into the cellar where, to Kâmi's surprise, there was a small but complete mosque. There were also there a turban, a gown, and copies of the Koran. Everything was ready for a service. The monk said, "You take your ablutions and ^{prayer service} pray here five times a day,³ whether or not I am here. This is all that I expect from you."

Kâmi lived in the home of the monk for three years. as you know, there are six religious Bayram⁴ periods in three

³There are five prayer periods spaced between dawn and just after darkness falls.

⁴Bayram means holiday, a religious holiday.

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years: three Ramazan Bayrams⁵ and three Kurban Bayrams.⁶

Five of the six religious holidays had passed, and just before the sixth, a Kurban Bayram, Kâmi, after performing his afternoon prayers, opened the Koran and started reading. As he was doing this, he thought of his wife and children. He said, "Oh, (Allah), I wish I were at home. Tomorrow is the Kurban Bayram, and how happy I should be if I could see my children on that occasion. How much longer will this separation continue?" While Kâmi was saying this, he was also weeping.

At that point the Monk Efendi entered and saw tears in Kâmi's eyes. "My son," he asked, "why are you crying? Have my wife and sons insulted you? Why are you crying?"

Monk Efendi, no one has insulted me. But as you know, tomorrow is our Kurban Bayram, and thinking of that I remembered my wife and children. That is why I have been crying."

⁵Ramazan Bayram, usually called Şeker [Sweetmeat] Bayram in Turkey, falls on the three days after the end of the holy month of fasting, Ramazan. It is a highly social occasion after the fasting and restrictions of Ramazan. People call upon friends, relatives, and neighbors, and at each stop they are treated to some confection.

⁶Kurban means sacrifice. At the beginning of Kurban Bayram, every family that can afford it sacrifices a sheep, in emulation of Abraham's sacrificing a ram rather than Isaac. Part of the meat must be given to the poor. This four-day holiday that comes 45-50 days after the end of Ramazan is the religious high point of the Moslem year.

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"Well, Kâmi, would you like to go home for that event, if I sent you to your home at Hasankale?"⁷

When Kâmi heard this, he thought that the monk had gone mad. He thought that the monk must have forgotten that they were in Siberia. He said to himself, "It is now just five or six hours before dawn. How could I possibly reach Hasankale before the bayram?"

The monk left, took a walk, and returned at evening. He said, "Kâmi, I am going to send you home."

When Kâmi heard this, he was certain now that the monk had gone out of his mind. He said to himself, "Oh, our monk has gone completely mad!"

About the time of the yatsı service,⁸ the Monk Efendi came and said, "Kâmi, my son, come here."

When Kâmi went up to him, he saw that the monk had a white ram with a lead chain around its neck. He also had a carpet saddlebag filled on both sides and locked. He said, "Kâmi, take this bag on one shoulder, and hold this lead chain with your other hand." The two men and the ram then walked together beyond the edge of that town in Siberia. The monk then said, "Kâmi."

"Yes,

⁷A town about thirty kilometers east of Erzurum

⁸Yatsı is the last of the five daily prayer services at the mosque, coming around 9:00 P.M., just after dark.

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"Take this letter, and when you get home, give it to His Reverence Ibrahim Hak1," the monk said.

Kâmi took the letter as he had been ordered, but he did not understand what all this was about. After he had put the letter in his sash, he was again addressed by the monk: "Kâmi, close your eyes, step forward upon my feet, and then open your eyes again

When Kâmi opened his eyes, he found himself at Kokmıřlar,⁹

Kasankale on the Kars road. (Coming from the direction of Kars toward Hasankale, there is on the left-hand side beautiful place called Kokmıřlar.) He found himself there

wondered whether he had gone mad or was dreaming. He said to himself, "This is Kokmıřlar, all right, but what am I doing here? What brought me here?" He said his salavat,¹⁰ repeating, "There is only one God and Mohammed is His Proph-

When he walked a little farther, he saw the domes of the mosque and the baths at Hasankale. When Kâmi saw them, he beat his knees¹¹ and said, "Oh my God, I thought that the

⁹Not shown on standard maps, this is apparently no more than a village.

¹⁰This prayer is sometimes used as a protective formula. If someone is amazed or frightened by what he thinks is, say, a ghost or a fairy, he is supposed to say the salavat to make the evil presence go away.

¹¹People in grief often strike their knees while seated. People who are greatly surprised sometimes do the same, whether seated or standing.

monk was mad, and even mad enough to be chained up, but in truth it was I who was mad!"

It was not yet quite dawn when he reached the town, where the ezan¹² was just being chanted. He went to the front door of his own home and put his ear to the door. Inside he could hear his children crying. The eldest son said, "Mother, the father of so-and-so has bought him a fez,¹³ but I am bare-headed."

The middle son said, "Mother, they bought shoes for the son of such-and-such a neighbor, but I am barefooted."

He also had a daughter who said, "Mother, I have no head square to wear," and she was crying, too.

The mother said, "Children, what can we do? Your father was taken prisoner while he was doing his patriotic duty. he had been here, he would, of course, have bought you the things to make you happy."¹⁴

When Kâmi heard this, he knocked on the door. "Who is it?" his wife asked.

"Open the door, wife. It is I."

¹²The ezan is the call to prayer made from the minaret of a mosque shortly before each of the five daily prayer services.

¹³Now outlawed in the Turkish Republic, the fez was the headwear of most men during the later part of the Ottoman period.

¹⁴Her remark relates particularly to the season, for whenever possible new clothes were given to family members to wear during the Kurban Bayram.

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Very much surprised to hear his voice, she opened the door. The father and mother and children all embraced each other in their joy. Thus God Almighty had brought about the reunion of these long-separated people. After tying up the ram, Kâmi opened up the saddlebag. On one side were many clothes for his wife and children, and they all fitted so well that it seemed almost as if the monk had known their exact sizes. When he opened the other side of the saddlebag, he found there a large sum of gold. The man said to his wife, "Allah has given us much, but I have lost an eye, for I left the Monk Efendi in Siberia."

He then took his ablutions in preparation for going to the early morning prayer service at the mosque.

of that holy man.

In the excitement of the reunion with his family, Kâmi had forgotten all about the letter which had been given to him to deliver to Ibrahim Hakı. His Reverence Ibrahim Hakı now said, "I believe you have something to deliver to me, Son. It was natural for you to forget it, having just seen your wife and children after such a long absence, but now please give it to me.

"Your Reverence Efendi, I beg your pardon for forgetting to deliver it

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"Never mind, Son; never mind." Kâmi took the letter from his packet and handed it to him. On the way to the mosque Ibrahim Hakı said, "Kâmi, Son, after prayer service go home and make your sacrifice [for Kurban Bayram] and then come to my home without having eaten any breakfast. We shall eat together."

When they left the mosque after the prayer service, Kâmi went home and slaughtered the ram given to him by the Monk Efendi and skinned it. He then went immediately to the house of Ibrahim Hakı without eating any breakfast.

When he arrived there, he found forty or fifty men seated at the breakfast table of Ibrahim Hakı Efendi, who said, "Come, my son Kâmi," and had him seated. After breakfast was finished his host said, "Kâmi, my son, you go to Erzurum and I shall follow you."

Kâmi started for Erzurum. By now, of course it was after morning prayer service and after breakfast, and so it was about bird time¹⁵ as Kâmi walked along. He remembered Ibrahim Hakı's directions: "You go and sit before the shop of Ahmet the Tespi Maker¹⁶ near the cattle gate (where the present Cumhuriyet Street begins) in Erzurum, and I shall meet you there

Kâmi reached Erzurum before noon, but he could not under-

¹⁵Mid-morning is sometimes called bird time.

¹⁶A tespi is a set of Moslem prayer beads.

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stand how he had done this, for he had not started until mid-morning, and the distance was thirty kilometers, a walk of six hours. He saw that His Reverence Ibrahim Haki, wearing his gown,¹⁷ was already there and coming down the street toward him. "Selâmünaleyküm,¹⁸ Kâmi, my son. Have you come?"

"Yes, I have."

"Then follow me." Saying this, he took the ^{93-94/19}coffin and desk from a mosque and borrowed a cauldron and water jug from someone he knew. "Take these to the cemetery of the Twin Brothers' Grave, fill the cauldron with water, and build a fire to heat it. I shall be there soon." (There are two different reports about this incident. One version says that he had these things taken to the Twin Brothers' grave in a cemetery in Erzurum. The other version says that they were taken to the cemetery in the Valley of Abdurrahman Gazi.²⁰ When Kâmi looked again, he was alone, and the old man had disappeared.

¹⁷ Religious men traditionally wore gowns.

¹⁸ Traditional Moslem greeting: Peace be unto you.

¹⁹ Most Moslems are not buried in coffins. The body is buried only in its grave clothes. During the funeral procession to the cemetery, however, the body is carried in a coffin. Wealthy families might have their own coffins, but in the yard of most mosques is a community coffin (known as the four-armed-one for its four carrying handles) which the family of the deceased borrows for a funeral procession.

²⁰ Both of these locations have long been shrines visited by the local people.

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He had porters carry the coffin and other things to the Twin Brothers' Grave. There he filled the cauldron with water and built a fire under it. A short time later His Reverence Ibrahim Hakı arrived. Ibrahim Hakı said, "Kâmi, my son, now take the pick and shovel and dig a grave."

After the grave had been dug, His Reverence Ibrahim Hakı faced Mecca and stretched out his two arms. Descending from above, a coffin settled gently into his arms. Placing the coffin on the ground, he opened the lid and then called, "Kâmi, my son, come and look at this. Do you know this person?"

When Kâmi looked, he saw that the person in the coffin was the very monk he had known in Siberia. "Your Reverence Efendi," he said, "this is my monk from Siberia."

"He was not really a monk but the Pole²¹ of the time. Your eyes were closed in Siberia, and you could not see anything.

His Reverence Ibrahim Hakı Efendi lifted the body from the coffin with his own hands, placed it on the washing table,

²¹Sufi mysticism envisions a universe guided by spirits and by special human beings holy enough to mingle with these spirits. Some of these special human beings work in groups: The Forty, The Twelve, The Seven, The Three, with the smaller groups made up of more powerful and responsible persons. One human being of this holy type is the most powerful figure. He is known as the Pole--like the pole of a tent, which supports the whole stucture.

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ablution
and washed it thoroughly in the manner used for the Moslem dead.²² The corpse was then shrouded. After proper funeral ceremonies, it was lowered into the grave. In this way His Reverence Ibrahim Hak1 Efendi buried the holy man there, and received his share of spiritual wisdom from that event. left that place then, and so this tale ends here.

²²This washing of the corpse is not only for sanitary and cosmetic effect but also for spiritual cleansing. The washing is a ritualized ablution, and it is for this reason that not everyon is qualified to perform it.