

Story #210 (Tape #6, Summer 1970)

Narrator: Hacı Gonen, gentleman farmer

Location: Yukarı Kise Köy, Güven nahiye,
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Hızır Teaches That Everyone Reveals His Origins

The padişah of the time one day asked his viziers about His Reverence Hızır. "Friends," he said to them, "you have been our viziers for some time, but, you know, you have yet to be somewhat knowledgeable. I want you to find me His Reverence Hızır."

"Your majesty, how can we ever find Hızır?"

"If you cannot find him, how do you then deserve being my viziers? If you find him, well; if not, consider what your plight will be."

The viziers had a meeting of their own to see what they would do. They decided finally to make a public announcement to the effect that a great amount of money from the treasury would be paid to His Reverence Hızır. "Let us cheat them with such promises, or, if necessary, really pay them that money." They went and explained to the padişah their plan, and he said, "It is all quite acceptable just so long as you find Hızır." They sent a town crier, announcing to the people that whoever could find His Reverence Hızır would be paid a salary from the treasury until the end of his life.

No one responded to the announcement until one day a poor man (just like me) said to himself, "Let me go and make the claim that I can find Hızır and perhaps I can, in this way, put an end to my poverty."

His wife expressed concern in case he failed to discover Hızır, but he said, "Never mind. It is better to die with a full belly than to die hungry."

He went to the viziers and said, "I can find Hızır, but you must give me forty days for it."

They paid him abundantly from the treasury--so much that this would itself be enough to last him for the rest of his life. Finally, counting 1, 2, 3, and so on, he found that 39 days had passed. The next day would be the 40th day.

His wife reminded him, "You have done this, but, you know, tomorrow is the 40th day. I have been counting the days. What will you tell them?"

"Never mind."

The next morning there was a knock on the door. He was told that he was supposed to go and report to the viziers whether he had found Hızır. As he had failed to do this, they had sent the policemen to his door. "Come along. You are wanted," the policemen said

The man dressed and bade his wife farewell, saying, "I shall either return or not return. If I do not, well, that will be just too bad." He went found that the viziers were having a meeting. They were waiting for him. As he was walking through the door, a child walked through, too, about seven years old, a boy. He thought it was probably the padişah's son, and the padişah thought it was the son of the defendant. He thought, "Probably he has brought this child to elicit pity from them and reduce his punishment."

They went and stood in front of the council. The padişah demanded an explanation: "What happened?"

The man was silent.

"Could you not find him?"

The poor man remained quiet to this and all questions.

The padişah turned to the first vizier. "What punishment should we give him?"

He said, "We ought to forgive him. If you ask the reason, I can give it. This poor man made the claim he could find Hızır because he was poor. He was led to this act under the pressure of poverty. But it did not work out."

The boy said, from where he was sitting, "Kale resulullah." The padişah noticed this remark of the boy, but at the moment gave it little attention.

The padişah turned to the second vizier. "What is your opinion?"

"He should be executed."

The boy again said, "Kale resulullah."

He then asked the third vizier, "What should we do with him?"

He said, "His body should be cut into pieces and his flesh hung from hooks."

The boy again said, "Kale resulullah."

When it was the fourth vizier's turn, he said, "His head should be put in a mortar and beaten with a hammer."

The boy said, "Kulli seyin yercuhu ila aslihi [Arabic]."

Briefly, each of the twelve viziers gave his verdict as to what form of punishment should be given. I cannot remember the rest

When the padişah heard the boy's remark, he asked him, "What do you think should be done to the defendant? What do you mean by 'Kulli seyin yercuhu ila aslihi?'"

The boy said, "That expression means, 'Everyone reveals his origin.' Your first vizier said he should be forgiven. He, by this statement, explained his real (true) nature. The second vizier said he should be executed. By this he too revealed his true nature, for he was originally a (gypsy).* (As you know, gypsies execute people for money). Your third vizier, who recommended that the defendant's flesh be hung from hooks, must have once had ancestors who were butchers. Your fourth vizier, judging from what he said, must have come from

*Although Moslems may kill each other in war, they believe that in normal circumstances one of the faithful should not kill another of the faithful. For several centuries hangmen and public executioners have been non-Moslem gypsies

a family of keşkek beaters.**"

The boy then said, "If you are looking for a good vizier, he is the first vizier. If you are looking for Hızır [vizier and Hızır make near-rhyme], it is I." Then he walked out of the room and disappeared. The meeting was then adjourned, for there was no need to continue it.

**Keşkek is a dehusked wheat and meat dish, all stewed; the wheat is boiled and dehusked with hammers in mortars.