

Story #600 (1968, Tape #2)

Narrator: Hasan Güzeloğlu

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kaza of Andırın,
Province of Maraş

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#600
Hızır Shows That Everyone Reflects His Origin

Once there was a sultan. This sultan one day gathered about him all of the hocas and made this announcement to them: "I shall reward with anything you wish the first among you who can find for me Hızır Aleyküselâm."¹

No one of all the hocas who were there said anything at first. Finally a very poor hoca in the group said, "Your Majesty, I shall show you where Hızır is, but I shall do so only upon one condition."

"Very well," said the sultan. "What is your condition?"

The hoca said, "You will feed me and take care of me in the same way you do yourself for forty days. Then I shall show you Hızır."

"I agree to that condition," said the sultan.

The hoca came to live in the sultan's palace. He ate and drank from all the things served to the sultan. This went on for forty days and then on the forty-first day, the sultan called the hoca to him saying, "Now show me Hızır."

"I cannot do that because there really is not any Hızır."

¹Hızır, last-minute rescuer of the desperate and a fertility-vegetation god, is sometimes called Hızır Aleyküselâm. (Aleyküselâm is the Moslem response given to one who greets you Selâmüneleyküm--peace be unto you.) The narrator uses a dialectal pronunciation and says Aleyusselâm.

Jas K-- to find Hı

The sultan became angry when he heard this. He at once called his viziers to him and, after they had arrived, he asked them, one by one, "What should we do to punish this hoca?" As the sultan was talking with his viziers, a dark-skinned boy entered the room and seated himself by the door.² Nobody observed his entrance.

The *vizier - grand* Grand Vizier offered the first suggestion for punishment: "Your Majesty, we should cut this hoca into thin slices, run skewers through these slices, and place a few of these skewers on every street corner of the city."

The little boy sitting near the door was listening to this conversation. When he heard the Grand Vizier make this suggestion, he said, "Aslı hu, nesli hu"³ [as the source is, so is the offspring]

The middle vizier next said, "We should thrust this hoca between moving millstones and grind him up alive."

Again the little boy said, "Aslı hu, nesli hu!"

When it came the turn of the youngest vizier to speak, he said, "Your Majesty, what a pity this is. That poor man was probably starving. What else could he do under such circumstances? His appetite must have been aroused by the good things you always eat. My suggestion is to let this man go."

²The lowliest seat is that by the door, farthest from the seat of greatest importance. In taking that seat, the boy has shown appropriate humility.

³Literally, this means, "As the source [or origin], so the family [or offspring]." The narrator, perhaps trying too hard to make the rhyme perfect, mispronounces nesli hu and says naslı hu.

The sultan was watching the little boy, who again started saying, "Aslı hu, nesli hu!" The sultan was curious about this and said to the boy, "Come here, son. Why do you say 'Aslı hu, nesli hu!' every time that one of my viziers makes a suggestion? You have said the same thing after each of them has spoken."

Kebab -- kebab ⁴ *metter* "Sir, every man in the family of the Grand Vizier has been a kebabçı.⁴ His parents and all the rest of his family were raised as butchers. He grew up among butchers and kebab makers. This is why he wants to have the hoca sliced up, the slices put on skewers, and the skewers placed on every street corner. In a butcher's fashion he wants to provide a lesson against lying and cheating. The middle vizier's family were all millers. That is why he wishes to have the hoca ground up. Your youngest vizier is the one most deserving of being Grand Vizier. And if you want to know who Hızır is, I am he." Saying this, the little boy suddenly disappeared.

[Ahmet Uysal: "Does Hızır appear as a little Arab boy?"

Narrator: "Yes, he appears as an Arab boy."

Ahmet Uysal: "Do you mean a dark-skinned Arab?"

Narrator: "Yes, a little dark-skinned boy."

Ahmet Uysal: "Thank you."⁵]

⁴ Kebabçı is a maker and/or seller of kebab. There are several different types of kebab, the best known abroad probably being şiş [skewer] kebab.

⁵ Professor Uysal is here confirming a convention of Turkish folklore: Arabs are black. This convention is baseless, for Arabs are not, for the most part, black. The convention goes even farther than this in identifying Arabs with Negroes, for they are often described as having unusually large lips. When a genie (jinn) assistant appears, he is usually described as an Arab having one lip touching the sky and the other dragging on the ground.