

Story 781 (1970 Tape 15)

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Dervish Ahmet Saved from Death by His Master, Üftade

Once one of the dervishes of Üftade,<sup>1</sup> a man known as Dervish Ahmet, was involved in a battle against some Serbs and Russians. When Dervish Ahmet was taken prisoner, he was taken, along with the other prisoners, to the presence of the Russian commander. This Russian officer was surprised at the height of this Turkish dervish, who was one meter and seventy centimeters tall.<sup>2</sup> When he looked at Dervish Ahmet, he had the feeling that he was looking at a man five or six meters tall. He seemed to be of gigantic stature. The Russian commanding officer asked him, "Who are you? Where are you from?"

"I am from Bursa, and I am a dervish student of Üftade."

When the interpreter had translated this statement, the Russian commander asked, "What does a dervish do?"

Dervish Ahmet answered, "You can put me in a cauldron and boil me as long as you wish, and nothing will happen

<sup>1</sup>Üftade was the dervish and saint who founded the Celveti Order at Bursa.

<sup>2</sup>This would be a height of approximately 6' 7" or 6' 8".

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to me."

When the commander heard this remark, he consulted with the Christian Patriarch<sup>3</sup> there, asking, "Don't we have any men who, like this man, cannot be harmed by fire?"

"We should have some. Let us make an announcement call such men together."

When they had done this, thirty-nine priests replied, saying, "We cannot be cooked, either."

A contest of enduring heat was to be held to see which of the forty people (thirty-nine priests and Dervish Ahmet) could endure the most heat. This was announced far and wide. On the public square were placed forty great cauldrons, each large enough to hold a man. These were filled with water, and fires were lighted under each cauldron. They put the thirty-nine priests in the cauldrons and then Dervish Ahmet last, when the water would be hotter. Lids were placed on the cauldrons, and they were then boiled for an hour or more. Then, while everyone looked on in great interest, the lids were removed. The Russian priest in the first cauldron was unfortunately cooked to death. The second was all shriveled up. The third was reduced to jelly. The fourth was turned into a mass of something as

<sup>3</sup>A leader of the Greek Orthodox or Eastern Church

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soft as helva. This was the way it went all the way down to the fortieth pot. But when the lid of that fortieth cauldron holding Dervish Ahmet was removed, he jumped out, all alive, and well, and fresh, with unshaken faith. The Russian Czar and his party, who had witnessed the trial, were very much impressed. They showed great respect for Dervish Ahmet and felt that there was nothing they could do but order his release. When he left, they showered him with many precious gifts, so that when he returned to Bursa, he was a wealthy man.

At the time of the trial of Dervish Ahmet, when the cauldrons were being heated, it was reported that His Reverence Üftade experienced great heat. While he was repeating the names of God with his dervish students, he said, "Oh, it is so hot today!" He then had the students carry buckets of water from the fountain and pour it over the marble floor of the mosque. This showed how Üftade had the ability to exchange the cold water of Bursa with the hot water in the cauldron in Russia.

<sup>4</sup>Helva is a confection made with sesame oil, wheat flour, and honey. One variety of helva is very soft and creamy in texture.

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symphonette