Narrator: Kara Ahmet Durmaz, 65
Location: Tercan, kaza town of Erzincan Province
Date: August 12, 1974

**Hızır**

According to our religious beliefs, Hızır comes to the assistance of those in desperate need of help. Once one of our sultans was thinking about Hızır, and he wondered to himself, "How can I have the opportunity of seeing Hızır?"

After considering this for some time, the sultan unable to think of any way in which he himself could make contact with the saint. He therefore sent messengers throughout the land to make the following announcement: "I, sultan, will give a rich reward to anyone who can show me

1. **Hızır** is a very ancient fertility and water deity in the Middle East, a role which he still plays in the mythology of rural Turkey. For all Turks, both rural and urban, he had two other roles: (1) that of a last-minute rescuer from disaster and (2) that of a granter of wishes. He has also, in recent years, been thought of as an agent of Allah, carrying out the Deity's will in human life.

2. Although Hızır is an object of religious belief, most of this belief has nothing whatsoever to do with Islam. He is not named in the Koran, though many view the unnamed Koranic figure called by Allah "Our Servant" as being Hızır. The very extensive cult of Hızır as fertility god in rural Turkey is strongly opposed by the Moslem establishment--so much so that much of its worship has gone underground. Very visible, though, remain the many shrines and temples of Hızır, especially along the Mediterranean coast of Turkey.
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St. Hızır."

Among those who heard this announcement was a poor hoca in a small village. Going to the palace and gaining permission to speak to the sultan, this poor man said, "My Padişah, I can show you St. Hızır, but you must give me forty days in which to do it."

Unfortunately the tape on which this tale was recorded was damaged in transit. The collectors remember Kara Ahmet's rendition well enough, however, to be certain that it is a variant of a very commonly told tale in Turkey. Other variants in ATON, q.v., are 210, 301, 523, 699.  

3 A hoca is a Moslem priest.