

Story 892 (1964 Tape 2)

Narrator: Sürgit ----- /last
name not recorded/,
retired taxi driver

Location: Vezirköprü, a kaza town
of Samsun Province; taped
at Ünye, kaza of Ordu
Province

Date: August 1964

The Lecherous Hoca¹ + Hoca, numerical
as False Hızır²

There was a Laz hoca from Of who had been preaching to women in mosque services for several days.³ His attention was drawn to a very attractive woman who was attending these services. One night as he was thinking about this woman, he made a plan to win her affections

The next day he started his sermon in the following manner:

"O ladies, tonight is the time when Hızır travels about among

¹ A hoca is a Moslem priest. The one in this tale comes from Of, a Black Sea coast town (Trabzon Province) noted for the strict and pietistic hocas it produces.

² Hızır is a very ancient water and fertility god who survives in the twentieth century throughout the Middle East. He is the object of a rural cult. Besides his fertility role, Hızır serves two other functions: (1) he is a last-minute rescuer from disaster, and (2) he is a granter of wishes. Today he is called saint rather than god.

³ Women are not permitted to participate in the regular prayer services at the mosque. If they appear in the mosque at the same time that there are men there, they are kept behind a curtain so as not to be visible to the male worshipers. The services spoken of in this tale are specially arranged.

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human beings.⁴ Let each of you keep your door open tonight, and let me know tomorrow through whose door he has walked.

"That is all very well, hoca," said the women, "but can we tell Hızır from Hinzır⁵?"

"That is a very good question," said the hoca. "I am glad that you asked it. Let me describe the appearance of Hızır so that you do not make any mistakes. He is of medium height-like me. Like me, he has a white beard. His turban is wound in the same way mine is. As for lovemaking, he is also as good as I am. In fact, Hızır and I are quite similar.

That night the hoca visited the home of the woman he had found so attractive and made love to her. On the following morning at the mosque he asked this question: "O ladies, which of you was visited by Hızır last night?"

That woman whom he had visited lifted her hand. The hoca then said to the other ladies, "Don't look at her; don't at her! Let me be the one to look at her, for she has been selected for heaven."

⁴ May 6 is Hidrellez Day. The word Hidrellez is a combination of Hızır Elias (Elijah), the Hebrew counterpart of Hızır. On that day both saints walk the earth as impoverished old men, richly rewarding those who give them food and hospitality when they come knocking on doors asking for alms.

⁵ Hinzır is an Arabic word for pig.