

Story 946 (1977 Tape 27)

Narrator: Behçet Mahir

Location: Erzurum, capital city
of Erzurum Province

Date: March 22, 1977

Ally Hızır¹ on Wisdom

This world is not entirely empty. It is a mortal world, but it is not without spiritual knowledge. There are many kinds of wisdom to be found in this world. To illustrate that, I should like to tell you a story about wisdom.

The Prophet Hızır² and a young man became acquainted. One day Hızır said to this friend, "Oh, young man, we shall not see each other for the next forty days. When we meet again on the forty-first day, we shall tell each other what experiences we have had, what we have seen, and what we have heard." After that, the two parted, and each began to wander aimlessly in a different direction.

¹ For most Turks Hızır is a saint and an immortal (having drunk the Water of Life). He serves as a messenger from Allah, as a granter of wishes, and as a last-minute rescuer from disaster. May 6 is the day sacred to him, and it is believed that on and around that date he may walk the earth to test the goodness of people he encounters. To thousands of rural Turks, however, Hızır is a water deity and fertility god. The great antiquity of this role of Hızır has sources which precede Turkish, Roman, and Greek civilizations.

² Hızır is not usually considered a prophet.

Story

One day Hızır came to a mosque. The mosque was packed with people who had come to hear a sermon delivered by a very wise man named Abdürrezzak. Everyone was listening to him with fluttering heart. Being the very wise man that he was, Hızır did not need any of the wisdom of Abdürrezzak, and so he retreated from the mosque with his shoes in his hand.³

he got outside, he saw a young man sitting on a bench in the courtyard of the mosque. This young man seemed to be thinking deeply as he sat there holding his face in his hands. Hızır said to him, "Oh, young man, look at that crowd in the mosque! Why aren't you there? Why aren't you listening to the words of that wise man? What are you thinking about?"

The young man did not answer Hızır. In fact, he had not even heard what Hızır had said to him.

Hızır spoke to the young man again: "Oh, young man, didn't you hear what I asked you?"

This time the young man raised his head and asked, "What is it that you are talking about?"

Hızır explained to him what he had said. "There is a very wise man preaching in this mosque. Almost everyone is

³ Upon entering a mosque, one must remove his shoes

Story

there. Go and listen to that man. You may hear something of value, and you may learn something from it. He seems to be very intelligent. His name is Abdürrezzak.

The young man answered Hızır bitterly, "I was sitting here listening to Haliki Rezzak,⁴ and now you are telling me to listen to Abdürrezzak!"

Hızır then asked the young man, "Do you know who I am?"

"Yes, you are Hızır."

Somewhat confused, Hızır nevertheless realized that this was no ordinary man but someone very special. Hızır knew that he was a very wise person.

At last the forty days had elapsed, and on the forty-first day Hızır and his young friend met again. Hızır asked his companion, "Well, what did you see or hear that was interesting?"

"I am sorry, Hızır," said the young man. "Either I saw nothing of real interest or perhaps I just cannot remember it now. What did you see?"

Hızır said, "I saw some of our Creator's wise men. There are many kinds of wisdom on this earth, but we do not

⁴ There is a play on words here which is complicated by a blur in the tape recording. Halik is the Creator. The Rezzak following Haliki may be inserted in annoyance by the young man to mock the -rezzak that ends Abdürrezzak's name.

Story 946

know all of them. And the men who possess these different kinds of wisdom often do not tell us about them. They simply do not reveal themselves to us."