

Story 1426 (1976 Tape 32)

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Broken Agreement Between Yunus Emre¹ and Snakes

While he was both a student and servant of Taptuk Emre, Yunus Emre performed many different kinds of services for the saint. One day he went to the forest to cut firewood for Taptuk Emre's house. After he had cut as much wood as he could carry back, he suddenly realized that he had forgotten to bring with him a rope to tie the sticks of firewood into a bundle that he could put on his back

Seeing his difficulty, several snakes went to Yunus Emre and said, "We shall wrap ourselves around your bundle of wood and hold it together until you reach home with it. But there is one condition, and that is that you do not permit anyone else to see us performing this task for you. If you break that condition, we shall at once cease helping you."

¹Medieval Turkish folk poet who lived from approximately 1230? to 1307?. He is now considered one of the most important of all Turkish poets. There is a Yunus Emre Society in Turkey which holds annual Yunus Emre symposia. There are often Yunus Emre sections in literary and folklore conferences.

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"Very well!" said Yunus. When he got back to Taptuk Emre's house and knocked on the door, however, the saint's wife, who opened the door, saw the snakes wrapped around the wood. The snakes immediately vanished, and the bundle of wood fell in a disorderly pile upon the threshold.²

²Since the time of Biblical Solomon, religious people have often been credited with knowing the languages of animals and birds and with winning the help of wild creatures. Siegfried, Hiawatha, and numerous secular heroes have also been reported as having this friendly relationship with wild creatures.