

Story 1835 (1970 Tape 16)

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Location: Karaağaç village,  
Karacabey kaza,  
Bursa Province

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İncili Çavuş<sup>1</sup> and the Clever Yürük<sup>2</sup>

There was once a padishah<sup>3</sup> who had a favorite sergeant in his army. That sergeant was known as İncili Çavuş. The padishah was fond of this soldier because of his wit, his sense of humor, and his ability to tell interesting stories. One day the ruler said, “İncili Çavuş, can you bring me someone who is as talented as you are?”

İncili Çavuş mounted his horse and set out to seek some person as talented as he himself was. He rode this way, he rode that way, in search of such a person. One day he was told about a very clever

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<sup>1</sup>Çavuş means sergeant, and incili means pearly or with a pearl, so this supposedly historical character was known as the Pearl Sergeant. He was a member of a noted and notorious elite body of troops known as the Janissary Corps, dating from Renaissance times.

<sup>2</sup>Yürük (yörük) refers to a large body of pastoral nomads living in Anatolia. Living usually in tents, they move with their flocks back and forth with the seasons between the warm Mediterranean plains and the Taurus Mountains, where they summer. Occasionally Yürüks will become sedentary, as the Yürük of this tale has obviously done.

<sup>3</sup>The sultan (padishah) who patronized İncili Çavuş is sometimes thought to have been Murat IV, who ruled from 1623 to 1640.

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Yürük. He went at once to the home of that Yürük and became a guest there. He then took his horse to the Yürük's stable and tied it there. While he was there, he took out his knife and cut off the lips of the Yürük's horse. Shortly after that the Yürük went to the stable and discovered what the guest had done to his horse. To retaliate, the Yürük cut off the tail of İncili Çavuş' horse and shoved it into the horse's anus. In the evening the host and his guest went down to the stable together to feed their horses. When they arrived there, İncili Çavuş asked, "Why is it, my friend, that your horse is grinning all the time?"

"He cannot help being amused at seeing a horse whose tail has grown out of his anus.

İncili Çavuş thought, "By Allah, this Yürük may be even more talented than I am!" But he remembered that the padishah had ordered him to find someone equally talented, and İncili Çavuş feared that he might lose his head if he did not carry out that order. He said to the Yürük, "I want you to go to Istanbul with me to meet the padishah. In all dealings with the padishah, we shall be partners, and you are to share equally with me any gifts that the padishah may give you." The Yürük remained silent.

They decided to take a ship to Istanbul rather than to ride overland. After they had wound their way among many islands,

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Istanbul finally came into view. The Yürük had never seen such a sight before. When he saw the tall minarets of the many mosques, he asked, “What are all those high, pointed things?”

“Oh, they are the penises of Istanbul,” answered İncili Çavuş.

“Are there prostitutes in this city who can tolerate such great penises?” asked the Yürük.

Discussing what they saw along the way, they finally entered Istanbul and went to the palace of the padishah. There the ruler said to the Yürük, “Ask for whatever you wish, and I shall grant it to you.”

İncili Çavuş was, of course, listening to this discussion, for the arrangement was that he would share whatever the padishah gave the Yürük. He was amazed to hear the Yürük respond to the padishah, “All I want is 100 blows with a cane.”

The padishah asked, “Are you sure that that is what you want?”

“Yes.” (You know that he was a Yürük and that Yürüks are able to survive all kinds of rough treatment.)

At first the padishah refused to grant the Yürük’s wish, but when the Yürük refused to name any other wish, the padishah finally honored his request. “Bring the cane!” the padishah ordered his attendants.

They brought the cane. After laying the Yürük down on the ground, they began to strike him with that cane. After he had been

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struck fifty blows, the Yürük said, "Stop! I have a partner who is, according to an agreement we have, to receive half of everything get. want you to give him the second half of my 100 cane strokes."

"Who is your partner?" they asked.

"He is İncili Çavuş," said the Yürük.

They grabbed İncili Çavuş and gave him the remaining fifty blows. Then the padishah, having given the gift requested, dismissed the two men from his presence.