

Story 1843 (1984 Tape 6)

Narrator: Ali Çiftçi, farmer; by this time in late 60s or early 70s

Location: Çıkırıkçı village, Sarıkaya kaza, Yozgat Province

Date: March 1984

### The Saint and the Snake

A saint was once walking along a road when he met a snake. The snake said to the saint, "Help me! I am being pursued by my enemy. He has been following my trail for some distance, and he will surely soon overtake me."

The saint said, "Come and hide yourself in my bosom."

The snake answered, "He would easily find me in your bosom."

"Then crawl into my pocket," said the saint.

"He would also find me very easily if I were in your pocket."

"Where then can I hide you?" asked the saint.

"Open your mouth and let me crawl into your stomach. My enemy surely could not find me there."

The saint opened his mouth, and the snake quickly crawled into his stomach. Just a few minutes later the man pursuing the snake appeared, carrying a stick in his hand. He asked, "Have you seen a snake pass this way?"

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The saint answered, "I have seen no snake pass me here." Of course the snake had not passed him, for it was in his stomach.

As soon as the man had left, the snake stuck just its head out of the saint's mouth and asked, "Has my persecutor gone?"

"Yes, he left," answered the saint.

"Then I shall now eat either your liver or your heart. Which would you prefer that I consume?"

"But I saved your life and protected you from the man who was pursuing you! Since I have just now provided you with an important service, how can you plan to treat me so unkindly?"

"Haven't the snake and the human being always been enemies? How could you be so foolish as to open your mouth and let a snake crawl inside of you? Tell me now which you would prefer to have me eat—your liver or your heart?"

By that time the saint was praying urgently for help from Allah. When Allah received the message, He said to Gabriel, "Send down an angel at once to help that man. Send Davugh."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>We have found no other reference to date (1995) on an angel so named.

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The angel took a green leaf from the Tûbâ<sup>2</sup> tree and flew swiftly to the saint. She said to the saint, "Chew this leaf and then swallow it!"

The saint chewed the leaf and then swallowed it. He began to feel very nauseated. Then he vomited, and when he did so, the body of the snake, now in many pieces, poured forth from his mouth. "For the sake of Allah, tell me who you are. You have saved my life," said the saint.

"I am an angel named Davugh. When you prayed very urgently for help, Allah called Gabriel to His side in heaven. Then Gabriel sent me here to help you. I brought you a leaf from a special tree that grows in heaven, the Tûbâ tree."

This was the way in which she saved the life of that good man.

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<sup>2</sup>A special tree that grows in heaven. It is mentioned in the Koran. It was planted by Allah Himself, who blew His breath upon it. Its branches spread throughout heaven and its roots go to the garden of Mohammed in heaven. It is said to be such a large tree that it can be seen even from outside heaven. See Türk Ansiklopedisi, Vol. XXXI, p. 441.