

Narrator: Ömer UysalLocation: AdanaDate: February 1962Allah Gives a Thousand for One Through a Bektashi

Once there was a man who had a gold coin in his pocket. This was all of the money that he had. As he was walking along the street he heard a town crier saying, "Allah gives one thousand to the man who gives only one." When this crier came near him, the man said to him, "All right, here you are Take this money." The man then waited for Allah to give him one thousand gold liras<sup>1</sup> for the one which he had given. After waiting for a considerable length of time, the man became impatient and so he decided to go and look for God so that he could collect his money from him.

After a long walk the man reached a forest, and he had to spend the night there. He climbed a tall tree in order to be out of the reach of animals, but before he went to sleep he looked down and saw that another man was coming toward the tree. This second man came to the foot of tree, put his saddle bag there, and sat down. This second man was a bektashi. The man in the tree watched the bektashi

The bektashi took from his saddle bag a piece of dough, and began to squeeze it and shape it. Finally he placed it on the ground, saying, "This is Allah." Then he took another piece of dough and pressed it hard and finally shaped it into a figure, and he put this on the ground also, and said, "This is Mohammed." Taking a third piece of dough from his saddle bag

<sup>1</sup>The lira is worth approximately eleven U. S. cents at this writing (1963). It is not now a gold coin, but there were once coins of gold which either at the time or later, were referred to as liras.

he shaped it too, and after placing it upon the ground he said, "This is the Prophet Ali."<sup>2</sup> Caliph Ali

Addressing the piece of dough representing the Prophet Ali, the bektashi said, "All of my life I've begged you to help me but you didn't give me anything in return. I think that I shall eat you now.

Now it was the turn of Mohammed. The bektashi said, "Ah, Mohammed! I asked a lot from you too during my life, but you gave me nothing. I think that I shall eat you." Thereupon he ate the piece of dough representing the Prophet Ali and the Prophet Mohammed.

Then he took up the third piece of dough which represented Allah. He said, "O, Allah, why do you give others things in great abundance and your humble servant nothing whatsoever? I am going to eat you too."

The man in the tree looking down at the dervish shouted out at this, "Wait! wait!--don't eat him! He owes me one thousand gold liras." Thereupon he jumped down out of the tree and landed right beside the dervish, who died instantly of fright. Afterwards the man examined the dervish's clothes and he found there a purse with one thousand gold coins in it.

<sup>2</sup>Ali was the fourth caliph after Mohammed. He was the object of the largest schism in Islam, his followers (Shiites) feeling that he should have been the first caliph. He was the cousin and son-in-law of Mohammed, married to Fatima. As opposed to the Sunnites (largest division of Moslems), the Shiites have many more festivals and a greater cult of saints. Most Turks are Sunnites; the Shiites are strongest in Persia and Afghanistan. By the Shiites (known in Turkey as "Alevi"), Ali is considered to have been half divine. Hence it is appropriate that he appears here alongside Allah and Mohammed.