

Story #318 Tape #5, 1971

Narrator: Professor Süheyl Ünver
of Istanbul University

Location: Malazgirt was site of
taping

Date: Summer 1971

Behlül Dane Visits Hell

Behlül was a madman who lived in Baghdad where he was a very popular figure. He had no regard for money and other material possessions, and he was totally indifferent to fame and personal welfare. He lived during the time of Harun Reşid and addressed the caliph as "brother." The caliph also called him "brother." Behlül was free to enter the caliph's palace whenever he pleased. Behlül was famous for telling the truth at any cost. He often warned the caliph and he advised him never to deviate from the truth.

Behlül was a beloved of the people. Everybody considered seeing him on a particular day a sign of good luck. One day he disappeared mysteriously and was not seen for several days. His disappearance worried the people and they asked each other, "Have you seen Behlül recently? I wonder what has happened to him?" Behlül, however, returned to the city after this absence. Upon his return, he was faced with numerous curious questions: "Where have you been all this time, Behlül? We missed you, for we're used to seeing you in town every day. Tell us where you've been."

"Well," Behlül answered, "I had nothing that I really had

Story #318

to do in town, and so I decided to visit Hell."

"Tell us what you saw in Hell."

"I will take an oath that I didn't see fire, wood, or coal in Hell. Everyone carries within himself the fuel necessary to consume him."