

Story #419 (Tape #5, 1972)

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Location: Isçehisar (nahiye), kaza of
Afyonkarahisar, Province of
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The Hot Feet of Harun Reshid

One day when Harun Reshid realized that Behlül had really become a mature man,¹ he asked his brother, "I wonder if you would allow me to go to ^{heaven}paradise with you?"

"I can take you there if you can give an account, while standing on a hot griddle,² of your worldly possessions."

"Well, why don't you give your account first?"

"Very well," said Behlül; "mine is easy."

They heated a griddle, and Behlül stood on it and said, "Bir anam, bir danam [one mother, one calf or offspring]."³

Those were his worldly possessions.

Intrusion by member of coffeehouse audience: "But the other one had a great amount of property."

¹The suggestion here is that Behlül has become spiritually aware

²The word used here is sac, a large, slightly convex sheet-metal griddle used to bake yufka. The narrator seems to be pronouncing the word sac, which means hair, but it is clearly sac to which he refers.

³This can be translated "I have only my mother and myself in this world." Like many anecdotes, this one ends on a turn of language, a play on words. It can, therefore be called a nükte.

Another remark from audience: "He will have a hard time [trying to remain on the hot griddle so long], and so will not be able to go to paradise."⁴

⁴The fact that two different members of the audience offered interpretations of the meaning of the anecdote indicates how well known it must be. They were part of an "in group" which recognized the implications of Behlül's comment.