

Story #420 (Tape #5, 1972)

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Behlül Dane, the Imam's Donkey, and the Mosque Full of Non-Worshippers

One day Behlül Dane went to the mosque for the Friday noon service. When he looked through the door of the mosque he could see what each member of the congregation was doing. None of them was worshipping. They were all doing different things, even though they were all in line<sup>1</sup> and to outward appearances were praying.

As Behlül saw, the imam [priest] conducting the service was not really worshipping, either. He had planned to go to the vineyard afterwards, and he was wondering where he could tie his donkey. "If I tie it to the vineyard, it will nibble the grapes. If I tie it to a cherry tree, it will eat the fruit."

Behlül Dane shouted to him, "You cuckold! Lie on your back and tie your donkey to your penis!"

When the imam heard this, he went to Harun Reshid and made a complaint. Calling Behlül to his presence, Harun Reshid asked him why he had behaved in such a way in the mosque.

Behlül said, "The hoca was not conducting the service. He had gone

<sup>1</sup>In the farz, the part of the service required by Allah, worshippers form neatly dressed lines, in almost military fashion, and follow the directions of a leader, called an imam or hoca.

out for a walk and was trying to find a place to tie his donkey. I told him what he could do."

"How could a man take a walk outside when he was in the mosque?" asked Harun Reshid.

"Well, if you do not believe it, go to the mosque next Friday and see for yourself."

On that day they went to the mosque together. Behlül Dane made a circle of his arms and said to Harun Reshid, "You look through here." *Looking beneath arm*

When Harun Reshid looked through Behlül's arms, he saw that some of the men were plowing, some were grubbing in their gardens, some were going to their vineyards, and some were going to the forest. Each was doing something [other than worshiping].

Oh, that Behlül was such a saintly man.