

Story #457

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Behlül's Poem about Bayram and Doomsday

Behlül Dane was Harun Reshid's spiritual brother, not his blood brother. Another spiritual brother to Harun Reshid was Ahmed el-Seddi. This second person used to work only on Saturdays and then spend the rest of the week in religious duties. Harun Reshid realized that no political harm would come to him from these two spiritual brothers, and he thought that he might benefit from their prayers.

Muhiddin Arabi² in the first volume of his work called Futuhāt³ gives some information about Behlül Dane. A poem that the muezzin⁴ used to recite at the mosque at the time of Kurban Bayram⁴ was composed by Behlül. It was a poem that contained a profound thought.

"A bayram cannot be celebrated simply by putting on fine clothes and using sweet perfume;

1

² Transliterated from the Arabic, his name is usually spelled Muhyi al-Din. B. in Spain 560/1165, he became prominent mystic Sufi at Damascus; died 638/1240.

³ His Futuhāt (Al-Futuhāt al-Makkiyya--Meccan Revelation) was the best known of his 300 books and other writings.

⁴ The Moslem Festival of Sacrifices.

Only he who is fully aware of the anguish of Doomsday
can celebrate a bayram properly."⁵

⁵This literal translation loses much of the effect that the couplet
has in Turkish.