

Story #479 (Tape #11, 1970)

Narrator: Halil Şengül

Location: Pazar köy, kaza of Mengen,  
Province of Bolu

Date: July 1970

How They Knew That the Poet (Dertli) Was a Saint

*Aladdin mevalat fa DERTLI  
#479 is on Dertli + wo has  
another tab about poems of  
his grand*

One day as the mufti<sup>1</sup> and the kadı<sup>2</sup> were sitting in their house, they saw the poet Dertli playing on the saz<sup>3</sup> in his home across the street. "Look at that fellow!" one of them said. "He pretends to be very virtuous, but it does not seem to bother him that he plays upon an instrument which is the handiwork of the devil."<sup>4</sup> When they spoke about Dertli in this way, he became aware of what they were saying and what they were thinking.

On Friday, Dertli, like everyone else, went to the prayer service. After the service was over, he went straight to the mufti and the kadı. He started playing upon his saz and singing.

Its wire [strings] comes from Istanbul;  
The neck is from the mulberry tree.  
You, Allah's foolish creatures,  
Where is the devil in it?

<sup>1</sup> Mufti refers to a senior Moslem priest or a Moslem jurist. The reference here is probably to the latter since he is associated with a kadı (judge).

<sup>2</sup> A kadı was a judge in pre-Republican Turkey.

<sup>3</sup> The saz is the Turkish stringed instrument used most often to accompany folk singers.

<sup>4</sup> Among the pious in Turkey, as in many other places, musical instruments to accompany song and dance are thought to be the tools of evil.

When I take ablutions,  
 One of you says that I have not.  
 When I pray and worship,  
 The other says that I have not.

It does not lie like the kadı;  
 Nor, like the mufti, eat things haram.  
 Where then is the devil in it?  
 Where is the devil in it?<sup>5</sup>

From this the mufti and the kadı realized that when they had spoken a few days before, in their home, against Dertli, he had known what they were thinking about him. Then they knew also that he had reached the level of a saint.

*mind reading*

[Ahmet Uysal: "Where did Dertli come from?"]

Narrator: He came from Şahnalar village of Gerede [kaza]. He was buried in Ankara. His tomb was demolished during the construction of some new buildings. It was discovered at that time that his body was in a perfect state of preservation.<sup>6</sup> His flesh was all still on his body, and his will was written on his chest. In that will he requested that his body be buried in his village. The place where the present monument stands, along the Istanbul-Ankara road, was not the place he wished to be buried. When the authorities were examining the body of the poet, one of them stuck a pin into Dertli's body, and blood flowed from this pin prick.

<sup>5</sup>This is a fairly literal translation which loses the poetic effect of the original.

<sup>6</sup>This is a claim made for many saints, Moslem and otherwise.

In his dreams that night, the man who had thus pricked Dertli saw the poet, who said to him, "You destroyed my 200-year-old ablutions."<sup>7</sup> It was strange that when the monument was built there, along Istanbul-Ankara road, many accidents took place, and no one could explain about 90% of them. Peasants in that area say that this was because his will had not been fulfilled and so he was not satisfied.]

<sup>7</sup>Any bodily emission (bleeding, burping, urinating, etc.) makes one religiously unclean and therefore unfit for any religious experience, including praying. Such an emission makes the surrounding area unclean. Thus if it occurs in the mosque at prayer service, all the worshippers are obliged to repeat their ritual ablutions and then start the prayer service all over again.