

Story #505 (Tape #16, 1974)

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Location: Belekçe Han Kavağı  
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Behlül Dane and the Miracle of Time Within Time

On another day, he [Behlül] and his brother were taking ablutions. He was taking ablutions and saying, "God, who makes one hour one thousand hours and one thousand hours one hour."

Harun Reshid laughed at him.

He asked, "Why are you laughing?"

Harun said, "Oh, well, can one thousand hours possibly be one hour, and one hour possibly one thousand hours?"

He said, "Isn't it all in God's hands? Can't he do it? Get on my foot." He made Harun sit on his foot. When he threw him, he fell into an unknown country.

That was a country of djinns where no sin was committed. They married him. There, whoever said, "There is no god but God" five times had his chest<sup>1</sup> burned [with divine love]. They saw that his chest was not burned even though he said it a hundred times.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The narrator actually says lungs rather than chest.

<sup>2</sup>Much Middle Eastern love poetry has, like Dante's love poetry, a strong spiritual and religious implication. Those who are so much consumed in love that it becomes a spiritual matter are described as being burned, caught up in flames of divine love. The story of Leyla and Mejnun provides the best example of the use of this metaphor. The love for the divine may come via physical and then intellectual love, or it may, as here, begin on the spiritual level.

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They married him and he had two children.

That day [when Harun had this experience] it was Friday, just like today. When he was leaving home, his wife, who was cooking meat,<sup>3</sup> said to Harun Reshid, "Come back soon, before the meat gets cold." Then he was thrown by Behlül into another country. There he was married, had two children, and lived there for many years.

Then, one day, again on a Friday, he asked the people of that country, "From where does your hodja come?"

They said, "He comes on a gray horse<sup>4</sup> from this direction."

Right then, he saw his brother on a gray horse, coming swift as the wind. He came there and got off his horse. He led the Friday prayer service. After that, Harun did not let him go. He said, "Please don't retaliate so for what I did. Please drop me back again to my place."

Behlül said, "Close your eyes."

He closed his eyes, and when he was thrown again, he found himself once more in front of their mosque [at Baghdad]. People were just leaving the mosque. He went home. When he arrived there, his wife said, "The meat isn't cooked yet. How quickly you returned today from the Friday service."

<sup>3</sup> Although it is difficult for us to imagine Zübeyde, wife of the great caliph, in the kitchen cooking meat, this presents no anomaly to a peasant narrator or to a peasant audience.

<sup>4</sup> The gray horse is ridden both by saints and by heroes in Turkish folklore. Mohammed had a gray horse; Bamsi Beyrek, one of the most prominent Oghuz beys in The Book of Dede Korkut, rode a gray horse; so too did Koroghlu, greatest of all Turkish outlaws; Hızır, the last-minute rescuer of those in trouble, often appears on a gray horse. It is not a bit surprising, then, that Behlül should here arrive upon a gray horse.

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In reality, he had had two children, and had stayed there for so many years while several things had happened. But when he returned home after all that, this is what his wife said.

Then he again took ablutions on the following Friday. Behlül was again saying, "God, who makes one hour one thousand hours and one thousand hours one hour."

Harun Reshid said, "Thus it is."

Upon this, Behlül said, "You didn't recognize God before having two children."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup>This tale ends with a "punch line" like that often found in the fikra.

*Time -  
 heavily on  
 mental side  
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