

Story #539 (1974 Tape #6)

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Location: Pazar Köy, kaza of
Kızılcahamam, Province
of Ankara

Date: June 11, 1974

Behlül Dane Nullifies a Divorce

Behlül Dane was Harun Reşid's brother.

One day Harun Reşid was sitting with his wife on the balcony of their home. While they were talking together, the moon rose and stood above them--the fifteenth of the moon.¹ Harun Reşid looked at the moon and observed how brilliant it was. He then said to his wife, Zübeyde, "Zübeyde Hanım, by Allah, you are even more beautiful than that moon." *female beauty forever*

"How can that be?" she asked. "Can anything be more beautiful the moon?"

"By Allah, if you are not more beautiful than the moon, then may we be divorced."

"We are divorced then," said his wife, and she left him.

On the next day, Harun Reşid gathered all of his learned men in order to find a way out of this situation. He explained to the wise men that his wife considered them divorced because of such-and-such an incident that had occurred. He wanted to know if there was a solution for this problem.

¹ On the Moslem lunar calendar, the fourteenth and the fifteenth days of the moon cycle show the moon at its fullest. It is then considered to be at its most beautiful. To describe a woman as being as beautiful as the fourteenth or the fifteenth of the moon is the highest praise in Turkey. (Plump women are often considered more attractive than slender ones in some Middle Eastern societies.) Here Harun Reşid has gone beyond the conventional compliment, calling Zübeyde more beautiful than the fifteenth of the moon. This could be considered a blasphemous statement, and so Zübeyde apparently interprets it.

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learned men investigated this question, but they could offer no solution to it.

Behlül Dane used to walk around like a madman. When he just happened to walk past the gathering of wise men, he observed and overheard what was going on. When they delivered their decision, Behlül shouted, "No--you failed to resolve the problem. Go away!" Then Behlül said to his brother, "You are not divorced because there is the following verse in the Koran: "Man is the most beautiful creature made by Allah."²

the others heard this, they said, "That is right. Thus it is known for certain that they are not divorced."

²The Arabic verse (whether correct or incorrect) used by the narrator here was, "Lâ kadi halâknel insane fi ahsene takvim."