

Story #566 (1963 Tape #2)

Narrator: Guide at Hacı Bektaş Shrine

Location: Hacı Bektaş, Kırşehir kaza  
merkezi, Kırşehir Province

Date: 1963

Mehmet Ali Pasha's Creatures and God's *Allah*

Once a Bektaş arrived in Egypt after a long journey. He had no shoes on his feet, no coat on his back, and no money in his pockets. The Bektaş saw Mehmet Ali Pasha's <sup>coach</sup> carriage<sup>1</sup>, and he saw his attendants, wearing gold-embroidered robes. The Bektaş stopped an Arab and asked him, "Who is that man in the carriage?"

"He is Mehmet Ali Pasha, ruler of Egypt."

"And who are those people with him?"

"They are his slaves."

When the Bektaş heard this, he opened his hands toward heaven<sup>2</sup> and said, "O great God, look at Mehmet Ali Pasha's creatures and then look at your own slave. I have neither shoes nor clothes."

There was another Arab nearby who said, "You heretic--insulting God like that!" And this Arab gave him a slap on the back of the head.

The Bektaş looked around and saw that he was a black Arab<sup>3</sup>. He said to him, "You filthy fellow! Get a mirror and look in it to see what sort of thing your God has made you!"

<sup>1</sup> Mohammed [Mehmet] Ali was Pasha [military governor] of Egypt in the 1830s. Rebelling against the Sultan, he was also powerful enough to defeat the imperial forces at the Battle of Nezib.

<sup>2</sup> This is the Moslem posture for prayer.

<sup>3</sup> Many Turkish peasants erroneously suppose that Arabs are black. In folktales they are almost always pictured as Negroes, black with very heavy lips.