

Story 765 (1970 Tape 13)

Narrator: Şerif Mehmet Ceylan,
36

Location: Ova Akça village,
kaza merkezi of Bursa,
Bursa Province

Date: July 1970

Behlül Dane Transports His Brother into Time Within Time

One day when Behlül Dane and Harun Reşit sat talking, the Caliph said to his brother,¹ "Behlül, let us go to some summer resting-place together."

right, brother," said Behlül, "let us go."

Taking their samovars (or whatever was used for making tea in those days) and some things to eat, they got into their cart and went to the bank of a river. There they lay under a shade tree and relaxed.

Of course, Harun Reşit's wives and children also went with them. Behlül's sister-in-law (the Caliph's wife) began brewing tea there. She was brewing this tea when Behlül suggested that he and his brother take a brief walk. After they had taken forty or fifty steps, the Caliph suddenly found himself in a rocky mountain area with barren rocky hills

¹Harun Reşit, who flourished around 800 A.D., was the most distinguished of the Abbasid Caliphs who ruled at Baghdad. A colorful figure in literature and legend, he is featured in several of the Arabian Nights. The divine fool Behlül Dane was supposedly Harun Reşit's half-brother, although there is no reliable evidence to support such a relationship.

Story 765

around in all directions. Looking to the left and then to the right, the Caliph could see no one anywhere. Even his brother had disappeared. He was amazed. As he was wandering about in confusion, he discovered that he was completely naked, with neither trousers nor a shirt. Then, as he observed his nakedness, he made the even more shocking discovery that he was now a woman! It was very difficult for him to believe what his eyes saw.

Soon after that, he saw a shepherd approaching with his flock of sheep. The shepherd said, "Selāmūnaleykūm."

Harun Reşit, now a woman, answered, "Aleykūmselām."²

"What are you doing here completely naked?" asked the shepherd.

How could he explain this? Even if he could explain who would ever believe him? He just shrugged his shoulders and looked blank.

The shepherd took off his own outer trousers and handed them to him so that Harun Reşit, now a woman, could cover shameful parts. He also gave him his shepherd's cloak. The shepherd and Harun Reşit grazed the flock of sheep until evening. Then they went to the shepherd's village together.

The shepherd took care of him there in the village for

²The traditional exchange of greetings passed between Muslim strangers: Peace be unto you / And unto you also.

Re de
change y

Story 765

a few days, and then he proposed that they get married. This they did, and after that they lived together as man and wife. A year after that they had a male child, and at the end of the following year they had a second male child. Then in the third year they had a female child. By the time the first son was two years old, they had been married for three years.

One day after their three children had all begun to grow, the shepherd said to his wife, "Let us go to the pasture and graze our flock together today." Taking their children with them, they led their flock to the place where they had first met.

Then Behlül Dane, who was standing about ten meters from Harun Reşit, shouted, "Hey, brother, your tea is ready My sister-in-law has the tea ready. Let us go and drink it."

Upon hearing this, Harun Reşit started blinking and rubbing his eyes. He looked about and saw no shepherd, no children, no flock. He was wearing his usual Caliph's clothes, and his brother was standing just a short distance from him. Harun's family was there, and tea was ready.

After that, Harun Reşit realized that his brother was endowed with miraculous powers

Peasant listener: "All this occurred then in five or ten minutes?"³

³This encapsulated stretch of time is known as Zaman Zaman İçinde--Time within Time. It occurs fairly often in

Story 765

Narrator: "Yes." 7

Turkish folktales. Its purpose is often didactic within the tale--to teach a truth or point a moral to a character. The audience learns the lesson too, of course, but by example rather than by precept.