

Story 826 (1974 Tape 18)

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Behlül Dane Teaches That Worldly Goods Are Worth But a Fart

One day Behlül Dane¹ and Harun Reşit were talking about property and other worldly possessions. Behlül Dane said to the Caliph, "Worldly goods are really not worth very much."

Harun Reşit did not agree with this kind of thinking. He said, "We need worldly goods in order to live comfortably." Harun Reşit was known everywhere for his great wealth.

A few days later Harun Reşit became ill. Doctors were called in from many places. They all examined the Caliph, but none of them seemed to be able to help him to get better. Finally, his advisers asked Behlül Dane to see if he could cure his brother

Behlül went to the Caliph and said, "If you will give

¹ Behlül Dane was a saintly man who often pretended to be a fool. He was like the wise fool in Shakespeare and the schlemiel of Jewish tradition. Legend had it that he was the half-brother of Harun Reşit (Haroun al-Raschid), the greatest of the Abbasid Caliphs, who flourished around 800. There is little or no valid evidence to support claims for this relationship. Like others of God's fools, he used his madcap guise in order to criticize the powerful and the rich. His contemporaries often thought him unqualifiedly mad.

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everything you own to me, I shall cure you." Harun Reşit agreed to this proposal, and Behlül began to pray for him. Before long, Harun Reşit was relieved of a great amount of digestive gas and felt much better.

Behlül Dane then said, "Look here, Brother, do you see now that worldly goods are not very valuable? All your wealth was worth but a fart!"