

Story 1012 (1984 Tape 1) Narrator: Hasan Tekiř, 35,
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Afyon Province

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Behlül Dane¹ and the Padiřah's Horse

In the old days the Friday noon prayer service was considered so important that it was often led by the padiřah² himself. One day the padiřah said to Behlül Dane, "You never come to the Friday noon prayer service at the mosque. What is the reason for this?"

"My Sultan, I have been unable to get there," said

¹Behlül Dane was supposedly the half-mad half brother of Harun Reřit, greatest of the Abbassid Caliphs, who flourished around 800. Tales about Behlül Dane seem to be mostly legendary, for there is very little historical substantiation for any of them. Whether real or imaginary, he was clearly not mad but used an antic disposition (like Shakespeare's fools) to escape punishment for his satirical comments aimed at the high and mighty of this world, especially Harun Reřit.

²It simply is not true that padiřahs led the Friday noon services, but there may be an exception here, for the only one at Baghdad in 800 who might possibly be called padiřah was Harun Reřit, and, of course, the Caliph might reasonably lead any religious service. It is true, however, that the Friday noon service at the mosque was the religious high point of the week, Friday being the Moslem Sabbath. This is still so for devout Moslems, though the official Sabbath in the Turkish Republic is now Sunday.

Story 1012

Behlül Dane.

"Very well, but you must be sure to come this Friday."

Following this order, Behlül Dane did appear at the mosque that Friday for the noon service. As usual, the padişah was leading the prayers, but he was thinking of other things. The padişah's mind wandered to the mosque garden, and he wondered where in the garden he should tie his horse the next time he came to prayer service. He thought, "I could tie it to the apple tree, except that it might eat all of the apples on the tree." Then he thought, "Well, I could tie it to the cherry tree, except that it might eat all of the cherries." Next he decided to tie it to a rose bush, but then he thought, "Oh, but it might then eat all of the roses!"

Finally, after the padişah could not think of any safe place to tie his horse, Behlül Dane shouted from the midst of the worshipers,³ "Just lie down on your back and tie your horse to your penis!!"

³One of the talents attributed to Behlül Dane by the folk imagination was mind-reading. On a very high level of spiritual attainment, Behlül could do a number of things impossible to ordinary people.