

Story 1087 (1976 Tape 28)

Narrator: Ali Çiftçi, farmer, 60

Location: Çıkırıkçı village,
Sarıkaya kaza, Yozgat
Province

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BD

Ali

"Time within Time"¹ and the Different
Aging of Three Brothers

Some people complained to Harun Reşit about Behlül Dane.² They said that he did not behave in the way that a religious man should.

When Harun Reşit spoke sternly to his brother about this, Behlül Dane said, "Very well. Now hold my hand and close your eyes." However it was that he did such things, Behlül Dane then had Harun Reşit transported to a distant country that was entirely strange to

In this land unknown to him Harun Reşit wandered about aimlessly for a while. Finally he encountered a farmer, and

¹"Time within time" (Zaman zaman içinde in Turkish) occurs when a person in a dream or a state of trance experiences many adventures and the seeming passage of years all within just a few seconds.

²Behlül Dane is largely a legendary figure in the Moslem past of the Abbassid Period. Whether there is any historicity to this figure is questionable, though until the 18th century there was a grave at Baghdad that was supposedly his. He was said to be the mad half-brother of Harun Reşit (Haroun al-Raschid), greatest of the Abbassid caliphs, who flourished around 800. There was method in his alleged "madness," for his antic behavior was a "cover" for his role as satirist and critic of worldliness of the powerful and wealthy--notably the caliph himself. At times he was, like the Jewish schlemihl, a saintly fool.

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he asked that farmer, "What country is this?"

"This is such-and-such a country," said the farmer
"What about you? What is your country?"

"I come from Baghdad in such-and-such a country,
Harun Reşit said. But, as it turned out, neither had ever
heard of the other's country.

The farmer took Harun Reşit to his home, where he had
two brothers. The oldest brother's beard was as black as
grapes. The middle brother, who had brought Harun Reşit
home with him, had a gray beard. And the youngest had a
beard as white as milk. But Harun Reşit didn't know the
ages of these brothers, and so he asked, "Which of you is
the oldest, and which of you is the youngest?" When this
had been explained to him, he was very surprised. He said
"Normally the youngest brother would have black hair and the
oldest would have white. Why is it so different in this
family?"

We shall show you before long," they said.

One day the oldest brother put on a dinner for his two
brothers and Harun Reşit. After they had eaten and drunk
enough to satisfy themselves,

his wife,

closet."

the oldest

brother looked at it and said, "This is not a good one.

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Bring another one." The woman returned the melon to the closet, but because there was no other melon there, she brought the same one back again. This happened ten times, and the woman kept going back to the closet and pretending that she was bringing a different melon each time to her husband. Throughout this going back and forth she offered no objections to her husband's demands.

On another evening the middle brother (the one with gray hair) entertained his brothers and Harun Reşit. Again, after the meal was over, the host called his wife and said, "Woman, bring the watermelon." When she brought a melon, the man said, "Not this one. Go and get another one

After this had happened three times, the woman said, "How many watermelons do you think we have, anyway?" So they cut the melon that she had just brought and ate it.

The following night it was the turn of the youngest and white-haired brother to entertain. After the meal, he ordered his wife to bring a watermelon, just as his two older brothers had done. When she brought the melon, her husband said, "Take it back and get another."

As soon as he said that, his wife replied, "How many watermelons do you suppose we have? There is no other one. Eat this one." They therefore cut that melon and ate it

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Then the oldest brother explained. He said to Harun Reşit, "Because my family shows so much respect to me, my days pass pleasantly and my hair does not become white. You saw how disrespectfully the wife of our youngest brother behaved toward him. That is the reason that his hair has grown white."

"Thank you!" said Harun Reşit. "Now I understand. But there is another problem which I do not understand."

"What is that?" they asked him.

"Because there is no one from my country here, and because no one here seems to know where my country is located, I do not know how I shall ever find my way home."

One of the brothers said to him, "Do you see that mountain over there?

come there to attend the noon prayer service. Go there and hide beneath a mat at the rear of the mosque. Perhaps some man from your country will attend the noon prayer, and if there is such a person, you can follow him back home when he leaves the mosque."

³ Although the official sabbath is now Sunday in Turkey, when all business comes to a halt, the important religious day of the week remains Friday, the traditional Moslem sabbath. The high point of the religious week is the Friday noon service, at which there are not only prayers but also a sermon.

*Dr. Jay Nom
Prayer service*

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Prayer service today noon

On Friday Harun Reşit went to that mosque at noon and hid himself near the door. The dervishes and saints arrived, and they filled the entire mosque. Eager to have the prayer service start, they said among themselves, "If only the hoca⁴ would come, we could have our prayer service."

Harun Reşit thought to himself, "If the congregation is like this, I wonder what their hoca is like?" Then he noticed that the hoca who was then approaching was his own brother, Behlül Dane.

The people said to him, "Where have you been, Hoca? Time is passing by."

Behlül started the prayer service, and Harun Reşit went to the threshold to listen. Those who come to the threshold usually leave quickly like grasshoppers, but Harun Reşit stayed, and after the service he and his brother met. Behlül asked, "How was it, brother? They permitted me to lead the prayers."

Harun Reşit replied, "Brother, may my tongue become speechless if I ever criticize you again."

Behlül then took Harun Reşit's hand. They both closed their eyes and opened their eyes, and they were again back in their own country

⁴The hoca is a preacher and formerly also a teacher.