

Story 1488 (1992 Tape 6)

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Location: Ankara, Ankara Province

Date: July 3, 1992

The Bektaşî's¹ Recrimination Against Allah

There was once a Bektaşî who observed a very beautiful girl as she was walking along the street of his village. He decided that he wanted to marry that girl, but his friends advised him that it would not be possible for him to do so. They said, "She is the daughter of the richest man in this village. He will never give his daughter to you."

But the Bektaşî refused to listen to their advice. Instead, he went to the girl's father and asked for her hand in marriage. The girl's father was angered by this request. He said to the Bektaşî, "Get out of this village at once! I do not want to see your face here again!"

The poor Bektaşî left that village and went to live in a

¹Member of a dervish order of that same name, founded by Hacı Bektaş Veli (d. 1516). The Bektaşî dervishes are often said to be Shi'ite more than Sunnite. Thus their religious position is equivocal in predominantly Sunnite Turkey. Throughout their history they have often been deeply involved in Turkish politics. They had a serious setback in 1826 when the Janissary Corps, with which they were allied, was destroyed. Along with other dervish orders, they were outlawed during the Kemalist Reforms of the 1920s. It was estimated that there were still 30,000 Bektaşîs in Turkey in 1950.

As a folk type the Bektaşî is cynical in attitude and frequently irreverent in behavior. The Bektaşî often drinks alcohol, refuses to fast, scoffs at orthodox Moslem clergymen, and is critical of the Deity. Despite his outrageousness, he is enjoyed, perhaps even admired secretly, by Turkish audiences.

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large city. There he found a job and went to work. By very great effort and good fortune he finally succeeded in becoming very wealthy himself.

As the years passed, the Bektaşî felt a greater and greater desire to visit his native village again. At last he decided to go there for a visit. When he arrived there, he stopped at the village coffeehouse. He said to one of the other customers there, "Oh, friend, do you remember me?"

The other customer looked hard at his face for a minute and then said, "Yes, of course I do. You are the Bektaşî who wanted to marry the beautiful daughter of the richest man in this village

After the two men had been talking for a while, they saw an old and very ugly woman coming down the street. "Who is that woman?" asked the Bektaşî.

The other customer answered, "She is the girl that you once wanted to marry."

Shocked by this information, the Bektaşî shook his head and said sadly, "O Allah, you know your work very well. First you make people old and ugly and then you take their lives!"