The Bektaşı's Recrimination Against Allah

There was once a Bektaşı 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 Bektaşı 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 Bektaşı, "Get out of this village at once! I do not want to see your face here again!"

The poor Bektaşı 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 Bektaşı 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 Bektaşıs in Turkey in 1950.

As a folk type the Bektaşı is cynical in attitude and frequently irreverent in behavior. The Bektaşı 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.
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 Bektaşi 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 Bektaşi 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 Bektaşi.

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

Shocked by this information, the Bektaşi 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!"