

Story 1263 (1972 Tape 10)

Narrator: Haydan Tümer

Location: Çelebibağ village,
Alaca kaza,
Çorum Province

Date: 1972

Behlül Dane Urinates in Public

Behlül Dane was Harun Reşit's brother.¹ One day while Behlül was walking toward the market district of the city, urinated in the street. Several people observed this and were offended by Behlül's behavior. They wished to lodge a complaint with Harun Reşit against his brother, but the caliph had a reputation for severity, and most people were afraid to approach him about anything. Finally, a small group of people gathered sufficient courage to call upon the caliph and complain about Behlül

Harun Reşit answered, "Very well. Let me call him here to the palace and talk with him about this. I know already what I shall do." When Behlül Dane arrived at the palace, Harun Reşit said, "It has been reported to me by several people that you urinated in the street. You are my brother. How could you do such a thing?"

¹The two men are usually said to be half brothers, and Behlül is often said to be mad, though his supposed madness is like that of Shakespeare's clowns, a "cover" beneath which he can satirize with impunity the Moslem establishment. Behlül's historicity is very dubious.

Story 1263

"How can we be brothers? Your father was Naci, but my father was Ruhi Gürey. How can we be brothers? I do not accept that idea."²

The caliph answered, "But people think of you as my brother, and here you have done a very shameful thing."

"Who were the people who claimed they saw me urinate in the street, and where did they claim that this occurred?"

"They were citizens of this city, and they pointed out the street through that very window over there

Hearing that, Behlül Dane pulled his brother over to that window and had him point out the street in question. Then Behlül exclaimed, "That is not a street used by many people. How many people do you see on that street right now?"

Harun Reşit looked closely up and down that street, and he was surprised not to see any people on it at all. The only creatures that he saw on the street were domestic animals, such as dogs and cats. Harun Reşit was an intelligent man, and he realized that Behlül Dane had made him see what Behlül Dane wanted him to see. He said to his brother, "All right. From now on I shall not question your behavior. Depart and do whatever you wish."³

²This is a cavil, a stalling device on Behlül's part, for the two men must have rehearsed their heredity many times before this. In tales they are sometimes said to have had different fathers but the same mother.

³In numerous anecdotes Harun Reşit discovers that his allegedly mad and obviously unconventional half brother is a holy man who has close contact with the spiritual world and is capable of working what seem to be miracles. Several ATON tales demonstrate the mystic dimension in Behlül.