

Story #465

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Behlül Dane and Social Justice

One day Harun Reshid had confiscated the property of all non-Moslem subjects in his land. A Jew applied to Behlül Dane for help, saying that he and his family were left out in the street miserable and hungry. He asked Behlül to help him.

Behlül went to the mosque on Friday and listened in ecstatic mood to the sermon delivered there by Harun Reshid. He then asked for permission to conduct the prayer service, and he went forward and stood by the mihrab.¹ He said, "God is great! We begin with the name of God." And then he started reciting, "Elham dülillahi rabbul muslimi."²

But several in the congregation immediately corrected him, saying he should not say rabbul muslimi [God of all Moslems] but rabbul âlemin [God of all the universe].

They started the service all over again³ but again Behlül committed the same error. Harun Reshid became very angry and rebuked him, "Why do you not recite the prayer properly?"

¹The mihrab is the niche in the front of the interior of the mosque in the direction of Mecca.

²Praise be to the Him, the God of all the Moslems.

³When any error is committed during the prayer service, or when anyone breaks wind, burps, or spits, all that preceded this sacrilege is nullified, and the whole service must be repeated from the beginning.

Behlûl replied, "You too know the correct form of the prayer, but you do not carry out the commands of Allah, who is God of all the universe. Instead you create inequities among your people."

Harun realized then his error and henceforth treated non-Moslems more kindly.