

Story #521 (Tape # , 1974)

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âşık

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(Ladikars formerly),
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Behlül Dane and the Miracle of Time Within Time

Well, as you know, Behlül Dane was the brother of Harun Reşid. One day Behlül said to Harun Reşid, "I am going my own way. Give me my share of our heritage."

"All right," Harun Reşid answered, "we shall divide the state into two parts." When Behlül refused this offer, his brother made other proposals. "I shall give you a certain amount of money or jewels."

But Behlül refused again. "No, I do not want such things. All I want is a piece of land as large as a threshing floor, but with the condition that you get the permission of all your subjects for this. I do not anything else."

Thereupon, Harun Reşid had the land Behlül wanted registered in his brother's name. Behlül carried rocks and stones with his own bare hands, without making use of any beasts of burden, and with these rocks he made a wall to surround his land. Within the wall he build a pretty garden, and in the center of the garden he constructed a bath.

Harun Reşid had two wives. The older one was a ^{pretty} pious woman rumored to be a saint, while the younger wife, on the other hand, was an evil person. One day the older wife went to Behlül Dane's property and addressed him: "Behlül, my brother! If I give you money, will you permit me to walk in your garden and use your bath?"

"Certainly," Behlül answered. "You are my sister. Do as you please."

He took the money from Harun Reşid's first wife and let her into the garden.

She walked about in the garden to her heart's content, took a bath, walked about in the garden again, and then left. Her visit to Behlül's garden and bath greatly improved her appearance and attractiveness. In fact, her physical appearance had improved so much by the time she reached home that the younger wife noticed it and asked her for the secret of her beauty. "Where have you been?" she asked.

"I have been to Behlül Dane's garden," the older woman replied. "I also bathed in the bath located in the center of that garden."

The younger woman resolved to do the same thing herself. "Tomorrow," she thought, "I shall go to Behlül's garden and take a bath there. I shall in that way become more beautiful too."

On the next day she went to Behlül's place and found him standing by the garden gate. "Good morning, Behlül, my brother," she greeted him.

"Good morning," Behlül responded.

"Will you allow me to walk in your garden?"

Behlül denied her permission, saying, "No, I cannot let you enter."

"I also want to take a bath," she continued, "and for this I shall pay you an extra amount of money."

"No," Behlül repeated.

"But I shall pay you money in return for this," she insisted. When Behlül remained implacable, this younger wife of Harun Reşid became so angry that she tore her face with her fingernails until it bled, ripped her dress, and ran to the palace.

When she appeared before Harun Reşid in this way, he felt disgraced by her appearance. Some of the officials who happened to be present in the courtyard asked her what had happened. "What do you suppose has happened!"

she cried. "Why do you not keep your madman, Behlül, under lock and key? He attempted to violate me!" (As they say [the narrator digresses], may heaven protect us from the wickedness of women!)

"Is that so?" Harun Reşid demanded. He drew his sword and dashed to Behlül's garden. Although he was angry, he did not neglect to greet his brother. "Behlül Dane, pray to Allah before you die, for I am going to kill you. Also recite the Moslem religious creed, as it is customary to do in our faith."

"You are going to kill me?" Behlül asked. "Very well, then, but first uncover your bosom that I may kiss it. Then you may slay me."

"Why do you wish to kiss my bosom?" Harun Reşid asked.

"Because it reminds me of my mother's bosom," Behlül replied. But as soon as he had parted his robe, Behlül pushed his chest with the index finger of his right hand and said, "Go away!"

Well, my friend, Harun Reşid suddenly found himself in a strange place-- call it a desert, a [unintelligible word], a wilderness. After he had walked for a long while, he began to wonder if there might not be a town nearby. He was feeling very hungry by the time he detected in the middle of this wilderness a house surrounded by a high fence. There was smoke rising from the chimney. When he knocked on the door, a very aged man (probably more than a hundred years old) answered. He greeted the old man, who then led him inside.

After the old man had served his guest some food, he asked, "My son, where do you come from?"

"I am from Baghdad," Harun Reşid replied.

"I swear that I have never heard of such a place," the old man said.

"Well, what am I to do now? Is there anyone here who might know where Baghdad is?" asked Harun Reşid.

*incom of
older brother
to provide
info*

"Let me see," said the old man. "I have a brother who is twenty-two years older than I. Perhaps he knows. It will take you a whole day to reach his house."

Harun Reşid started out in the direction of the older brother's house, and when he arrived there, he asked the older brother how to get to Baghdad. His host answered, "I am sorry that I do not know. Ask my older brother who lives about a day-and-a-half's walking distance from here."

Harun Reşid then went to the home of the third brother and became his guest. After a meal had been eaten, the older man asked, "Son, where do you come from?"

"Baghdad," Harun Reşid answered.

"Has this city been just recently settled?" the old man inquired. "I have never heard of such a place."

Then Harun Reşid told his strange story to the old man, who advised him thus: "There is a pretty village near here. Go to that village and wait there until Friday. Go to the attractive mosque there on Friday for the prayer service.¹ After taking your ablutions, go and stand at the rear² of the congregation. A certain moca will be there to lead the prayers, but do not raise your eyes to take a look at him during the service. After the prayers have been completed, leave before anyone else does and go stand in the hall to await him. Ask him if he knows where your city is located. If

Friday noon Prayer Service
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¹ Although Sunday became the official Sabbath after the founding of the Turkish Republic, Friday is still considered the more sacred day to many rural Turks. Friday had traditionally been Sabbath. The religious high point of the week was the noon service on Friday. Although the narrator does not name that particular service here, it is understood (if unspecified) to be the midday namaz.

he does not know, then nobody will know."

Harun Reşid followed the old man's advice. He went to the village and found the mosque. Then on Friday he took his ablutions and joined the congregation. After the service was over, he waited in the hall until everyone had left. As the ~~hoca~~ was leaving, he stopped him and asked, "Hoca, will you please do me a favor?" He suddenly noticed as he spoke that the hoca was his own brother, Behlül Dane. "I am from Baghdad. My hometown"

Before he could finish his words, Behlül pushed him with his index finger[the narrator imitates the action] and said, "Go!" When Harun Reşid opened his eyes, he found himself standing with the sword in his hand, before the garden gate of Behlül's bath, ready to slay his brother. He made a declaration of repentance, and when he reached home after that, he got rid of his younger wife. After that day, he never again interfered with Behlül Dane's affairs.