

Story 1519 (1981 Tape 9)

Narrator: Ali Çiftçi, farmer;
in mid-60s by this
time

Location: Çıkırıkçı village,
Sarıkaya kaza,
Yozgat Province

Date: 1981

David and His Son Solomon

David was an unusual blacksmith. He used to hold the hot iron in his bare hands and mold it into any shape he wished. Instead of using an anvil and a hammer, he would place the iron against his knee and pound it with his fist. One day David and his wife had an argument about who possessed the magic power that made unusual forging of metal possible. His wife said, "You may do the work, but the miraculous power resides within me."

"No, that miraculous power resides within me," said David.

"Well, go ahead with your work, and I shall show you who really possesses that power," she answered.

That day Saadi Hacı went to their home. David's wife exposed just the tip of her little finger to the view of this guest. At that very moment David discovered that he could not pick up the hot iron in his bare hand as he had been accustomed to doing. When he returned home, he reported this to his wife.

"Now do you understand who it is who possesses the miraculous power? Because I exposed just the tip of my finger to a

Story 1519

male guest, the miraculous power was suddenly withdrawn from me, and as a result, you could not touch the hot iron. I was the one who held that power. Until today, I had never shown even one strand of my hair to a stranger."¹

Later that day a greyhound came along and lay down before David's house. You know how dogs stretch out their front paws while lying sleeping. David observed the extended paws of the greyhound, and this gave him the idea of pincers. Blacksmiths have ever since that time used pincers to handle hot metal.

David's son Solomon was a very powerful man. He had conquered the fairies and some other supernatural creatures and he had also brought the winds under his control. The winds blew his throne to whatever place he wanted to go. Fairies, jinns, and demons were all subject to his power. He also understood the language of animals. The ability to do this resided in a signet ring which had been made in heaven. The visible part of that ring was square. On one side was inscribed

"Bismillāhirrahmanirrahhim."² On another side was written

¹The narrator envisions the Hebrew David's wife as a Moslem woman completely veiled and covered with clothing. The anachronism (common in Turkish peasant narration) is obvious. By committing a sin (however slight) she had lost the divinely granted miraculous power.

²"In the name of God the All-Merciful."

Story

"Lailaheillallah."³ still another side was written

Solomon had made several of the demons his viziers. One day one of these demons stole his signet ring and ran away with it. That day when Solomon returned to his palace, where he had 300 wives and 700 concubines, he was not recognized by any of these woman, and so he was not permitted to enter his own home. He said, "But I am Solomon! Let me in!"

They answered, "No, you are not Solomon. If you were really Solomon, you would be wearing a certain ring on your finger." They refused to admit him into the palace, and they had him driven away from the door. He then wandered about for forty days without either food or water

The demon who had stolen the ring was the author of the Alawis' book.⁵ The other demons realized that it was he who had stolen the ring, and they immediately set out in pursuit of him. The thief ran away, but the ring glittered constantly and revealed its whereabouts. Discovering this, the demon thief realized that he could not escape with the ring, and so

³"There is no god but God.

⁴"Mohammed is God's Prophet."--There is no mention about what (if anything) was written on the fourth side of the face of the ring.

⁵This is sheer Sunnite fantasy. The Alawis--in Turkey usually known as Alevis--are a Shi'ite sect founded in northern Syria in the 9th century. Biblical Solomon lived

Story 1519

he threw it into the sea, where a fish swallowed it.

When Solomon wandered to the seashore, he saw a group of fishermen at work. He joined these fishermen and worked alongside them for some time. The fishermen spoke among themselves, saying, "This is a poor man. Let us make one cast of our nets for him and give him whatever we draw in our nets." They cast their nets and caught the fish that had swallowed Solomon's ring. He cut open that fish, took out the ring, and replaced it on his finger. When he returned to the palace this time, his family recognized him and allowed him to enter his home.

during the 9th century B.C. The word book here may be figurative. When Moslems inquire about someone's religion, they often do so by asking, "Who is your prophet and what is his book?"