

Story 1855 (1984 Tape 6)

Narrator: Ali Çiftçi, farmer, by this time in late 60s or early 70s

Location: Çıkırıkçı village,
Sarıkaya kaza,
Yozgat Province

Date: March 1984

Zülfikar, the Sword of Ali

Zülfikar was a sword from heaven that was delivered to Mohammed to be given to Ali.¹ Allah sent the sword to Mohammed. The great horse Düldül² was also sent from heaven to Mohammed for Ali.

The Prophet Mohammed reared Caliph Ali. He did not send him to the home of Ali's grandfather but cared for him in his own house. The Prophet used to say, "I reared Ali with my own spit.³ When he enters battle, he can fight for days or even weeks without getting hungry, because I raised him on my own spit. His stomach always feels full."

¹Cousin and then son-in-law of Mohammed, Ali later became the fourth caliph. Zülfikar was a double-tipped sword.

²Düldül means "a worthless nag," but this Düldül actually became a great warhorse and carried Ali through many victorious battles.

³Whatever figurative meaning this may have is unknown to us.

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Zülfikar can grow as long as seventy meters. We have never seen that, of course. We heard that from people who had read about it in various books.

Forces of Mohammed engaged in the Battle of Harun⁴ for fifty days. Ali was left behind in Medina, but his older brother Cafer Tayyar⁵ became a sehit⁶ during the battle. Mohammed had known that this was going to happen. Before Mohammed became the Prophet, he was one day performing a prayer service. Ali was on his right. Cafer Tayyar came along with his father. When they saw that the place to the left of Mohammed was unoccupied, Cafer took that place and joined in the prayer service. When Mohammed saw him, he said, "Oh, Cafer, you will become a sehit."

⁴Inasmuch as Cafer Tayyar was killed at this battle, the context suggests that this was the Battle of Mu'ta, near the Dead Sea.

⁵Like Ali, Cafer was a cousin of Mohammed, though it is not clear that he was Ali's older brother.

⁶A sehit is a Moslem who dies in a holy war and therefore is carried immediately to heaven. That Cafer was a sehit is indicated by the epithet attached to his name after his death. Tayyar in Arabic means "he who flies into Paradise."