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as you would sacrifice your life for us, for me and Hamzai, I entrust in your hands everything I own: my life, my honor, my chastity. Give my greetings to Hamzai Sahip Kıran. Kiss his hands for me. Tell him that my life is his. If you want to take me to Hamzai right now, I am willing to go with you."

But Ömer Ümniye said, "O Mehli Nigâr, Hamzai did not give me an order to bring you to him. If he had given me such an order, I should take you to him at once without even consulting Nuşirvan. For now, you should remain here in your palace. I shall go and deliver your father's letter to Hamzai Sahip Kıran. Then, if he orders me to do so, I shall return and take you to him--a task which would be very easy for me to accomplish.

Mehli Nigâr gave him many valuable presents to take to Hamzai Sahip Kıran. Among these were two precious jewels. She said, "Take these as gifts from me to Hamzai Sahip Kıran." Placing all of these gifts in his pouch, Ömer Ümniye departed. Running very swiftly, he reached his own country in twenty-four hours

Now let us return to the three soldiers of Nuşirvan. They were asked, "What happened to you?"

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They answered, "We do not know. Hamzai Sahip Kıran's man, Ömer Ümmiye, gave us three lumps of helva to eat, and we cannot remember anything after that." The other soldiers who had now come to that place laughed loudly when they heard that

In the meantime, they had taken Mehli Nigâr to the hospital. There doctors operated on her ear and restored it to its former shape

Gentlemen, in twenty-four hours Ömer Ümmiye reached Mecca, where he delivered Nuşirvan's letter to Hamzai Sahip Kıran. As he handed over the letter, Ömer said, "My heart will not permit me to bring myself to tell you the news. Read it with your own eyes. Everything is written in this letter."

Hamzai Sahip Kıran read the letter to the end, where Nuşirvan had written, "Even if there were many, many men like you, they could not do any harm to my army or to my country. I do not have any daughter to give you. If you still think that you can take my daughter, let us see how you will do so."⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Again the wording of the recapitulation is not exactly the same as that of the original, but the meaning is unchanged.

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Ömer Ümmiye then asked Hamzai, "O my shah, do you have any wish for me to fulfill?"

Hamzai Sahip Kıran asked him, "Ömer, did you see Mehli Nigâr?"

Ümmiye answered, "Oh, yes, my shah. Look! This is her own handwriting."

"That may be her own handwriting, but did you actually see her?"

Ömer Ümmiye answered, "Of course I did! With God as my witness, I declare that I could not have returned to you without having seen her. My own two eyes were witnesses to the fact that Mehli Nigâr loves you deeply. I knelt before her when the tears were flowing from her eyes as a result of her having read Nuşirvan's letter to you. She recognized me at once. I can say that however much you may love her, she loves you three times that much. She said that she was ready to have me bring her here, but I told her that I feared to bring her here without first having had your order to do so

Ömer, may your tongue be cursed!" exclaimed Hamzai Sahip Kıran. "Go back and bring Mehli Nigâr here at once!"

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right," answered Ömer Ümmiye.

Before Ömer could leave, however, Hamzai Sahip Kıran stopped him, saying, "No, Ömer, wait! Wait! Anything achieved by consent will be a crown on one's head that will last to the end of one's life, but that which is gained with ill will may turn evil in the middle of one's life. I know that if I order you to bring Mehli Nigâr here, you would do so very quickly, but this gain of mine would also bring disgrace upon me. People would say, 'Oh, yes, Hamzai Sahip Kıran is a great man, but he flies beneath the wing of Ömer Ümmiye. He has a man whom he uses to do all of his very difficult tasks!'" Hamzai Sahip Kıran therefore ordered Ömer not to go.

At this time our Prophet, Mohammed, was not yet born. I told you something about this yesterday when I was starting this story. As I said then, people before our time set many good examples for us to follow, and we can be more effective if we do indeed follow them. Hamzai Sahip Kıran was three years older than our Prophet, but, even so, Mohammed was his uncle. Hamzai and our Prophet were just three years apart in age, but we are here pretending that they were forty years apart, because that is

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Gentlemen, our Prophet once said, "If even one of the Ömers accepts our religion, it will become much stronger." Who were these two Ömers? One of them was Ebu Cellidahi, whose name was also Ömer,⁶⁹ and the other was the Blessed Ömer.⁷⁰ "(Neither the Blessed Ömer nor the Blessed Ebu Bekir⁷¹ was in Mecca at this time, for they were both traveling somewhere in the world.)

Hamzai Sahip Kıran's army marched into Nuşirvan's country. Nuşirvan had been expecting this invasion, and he had stationed guards along all of his borders. He had given them these instructions: "Watch everyone and everything very closely. If you see Hamzai Sahip Kıran or any of his soldiers, inform me of this immediately."

When the army from Mecca had gone half the distance to Nuşirvan's country, Hamzai called Ömer Ümmiye to him and said, "Ömer, we have reached the midpoint of our journey. Without revealing your identity to anyone, go

⁶⁹This reference here may be to Ebu (Abu) Cehl (554-624), an influential contemporary of Mohammed; but we have no record of his having ever been called Ömer.

⁷⁰Hazreti (or Blessed) Ömer was the second caliph.

⁷¹The Blessed (Hazreti) Ebu Bekir (sometimes Abu Bakr) was the first caliph.

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to Mehli Nigâr and give her the good news that I am coming.

"I shall do so with great pleasure," answered Ömer
Ümmiye, and he set out for Mehli Nigâr's palace through
lines of Nuşirvan's border guards

(Gentlemen, ten years ago I presented a question to
a group of minstrels. That question just came to my mind,
and so I shall repeat that question to you. I did not
ask this question of mollas,⁷² nor did I ask it of common
people. This is the riddle I asked:

"I saw something that did not look like a human
being.

/Line was unintelligible to translator, Necibe
Ertaş/

It is two hundred and ninety years old,
And it has only six months of life left;
But still it is complete and lacking nothing.

I gave them ten years to solve this riddle, and now
seven years have elapsed without their having answered it.
Even distinguished teachers have been unable to solve it.
Why can't they answer it? Well, gentlemen, can a sleeping
baby be nursed? No! The baby is sleeping.

⁷²Theological students or specialists in Islamic
doctrine.

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Last year I was told that Karabey⁷³ was going to test a student, and I said to myself, "I shall go to that examination to see whether the questions are difficult or easy." His eye was inside my eye.⁷⁴ May God not withhold such people from us!

When I entered the room, he [the student?] said, "Test me. Come and test me! Is there gold, silver, or a poor man? Come and test me!"

I said, "Why?"

Gentlemen, I have been working at Atatürk University for the past sixteen years. The pay may not seem to be very much, but the job is very gratifying to me. They have respect for me here, and they do not meddle in my business. May God make respected people of those who have shown respect to me.⁷⁵ But the work that I do is not worth the pay I am receiving. Therefore, the money that I am receiving is not helal for me. I do not deserve that much

⁷³The single name used here suggests that the reference may be to a minstrel or poet.

⁷⁴Is this simply a figurative way of describing insight?

⁷⁵It should be noted that Behçet Mahir was an odacı-- a room attendant at Atatürk University.

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money for the small amount of work that I do. The money is not helal because it is not fruitful.⁷⁶

Recently no one has asked me, "O poet, what more do you have to tell us?" I am here now, but soon I may be gone. May there be some people after my time who will still be deriving some benefit from my words.

So the minstrels to whom I presented the riddle ten years ago have only three more years to answer it. Four years ago I posed the same question to some literature teachers. They looked into each other's faces for answers, but they could not solve it.

If someone were to ask you how many components⁷⁷ the kible⁷⁸ has, the answer is five, like the number of daily prayer services. The first one is arş.⁷⁹ The second one

⁷⁶The Turkish word used here is bereketli.

⁷⁷Perhaps five dimensions or aspects or implications would be better than five components. The narrator says simply that there are five--but five what?

⁷⁸Kible may refer to 1) the direction of Mecca, 2) the mihrab (niche in mosque wall which indicates direction of Mecca), or 3) the Kaaba (the small building which houses the sacred black stone of Islam within the walls of the Great Mosque at Mecca). The word kible is said by some to be derived from Kaaba.

⁷⁹Heaven.

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is küş.⁸⁰ Following this, the third one is Beytülezem.⁸¹ The fourth is Beytülmamur.⁸² The fifth is Kabeibeytullah.⁸³ If anyone should ask you what these are made of, you should say that the first one is made of rubies, the second of emeralds, the third of gold, the fourth of silver, and the fifth of stone.⁸⁴ If someone should ask you why the ezan⁸⁵ that is chanted five times daily for the prayer services is not chanted before the requiem service for the dead, you should answer, "If a baby is born and enters this world, the ezan can enter its ear, but though the ezan cannot enter the ear of a corpse, the death service must be held for him anyway."

⁸⁰The word küş often refers to killing. It may refer to death, or in this religious context it might refer to a sacrifice. Behçet Mahir never explains in literal terms just what he is getting at in this riddling situation.

⁸¹It is difficult to discover the meaning of this word Ezel and Ezelî refer to eternity, and thus Beytülezeli could mean House of Eternity. We are uncertain, however, about the meaning of Beytülezem.

⁸²A small palace at the seventh level of heaven.

⁸³This is clearly a reference to the Kaaba.

⁸⁴Because the objects themselves do not form any obviously meaningful pattern, the possibly symbolic meanings of the materials of which they are composed have little apparent significance. Apparently the narrator has omitted some of the links of logic that would unify this passage.

⁸⁵The call to prayer service made by the muezzin (mosque official).

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I can give accounts of many more small incidents like those I have been presenting to you. I spent seven years with Hafız Muğdat⁸⁶ and was his apprentice for all of that time. Now I should like to be the kind of master storyteller that he was and teach others. He used to say to me, "Here, son! Take this piece of information store it in your brain. I shall leave this world one day, and so you should learn what you can from me now and learn it well." But that long tradition has now been lost, and things do not happen as they did even as recently as when I was young. We cannot bring up young people that way any more. Young people that I used to help in that way now place watermelon rinds beneath my feet.⁸⁷ There are very few of the young people I taught who still appreciate me. They mistakenly think that I taught them all I know, but they didn't know that I had taught them only half of what

⁸⁶The professional raconteur under whose tutelage Behçet Mahir learned to become a storyteller. He was a famous meddah (storyteller and mimic) of the coffeehouse circuit in Erzurum Province. Behçet was his apprentice from the age of 13 to the age of 20. As was traditional in some areas, the apprentice did not perform in public until after his master had died.

⁸⁷That is, they try to make him slip and fall.

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I know. They think that they are complete, that they know everything, that they no longer need me. I suspected that day they might even become my enemies, and what I suspected became reality in several cases. One day when I entered a room, there were four poets who had been students of mine sitting on chairs as they sang and played.⁸⁸ One of them--I shall not mention his name, though he is well known now--saw me and said, "The slave of the dean has entered."

I said, "Stop, my son! You have gone a little too far this time." That was the way in which I responded to him. He thought that he had obtained from me everything that I knew, but, in fact, I had taught him no more than half of what I knew. To himself he had probably said, "Behçet Mahir is old now, but I am young and I can surpass him easily." He was incapable of realizing that even forty men of his ability could not surpass me. I recited this poem to him.

⁸⁸Although Behçet Mahir did not play musical accompaniment to his youthful or later verse, most poets and some storytellers do so. The instrument of the modern folk poet (âşık) is the saz. Shaped like a lute, the saz has three strings. On one the melody is played, and the other two provide chords or near chords as the hand sweeps by them. Those two unfingered chords actually provide what may be described as drone notes--like those of a bagpipe--rather than true chords.

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My wish is that you know the human heart.
 Work hard to learn the secret of its ways.
 Look sharply while the caravan still moves
 And learn the lessons life alone can teach.

former student immediately came to kiss my hand, but it was by then too late. He said that he was sorry, but the damage had been done already. He realized then that weight of that stone would not easily be lifted. He had mistakenly thought that I had given everything to him that I was now empty. But then, all masters are that way. They do not tell everything that they know, for they do not want to find themselves later competing with their apprentices.)⁸⁹ Now I shall tell you a story about ingratitude.

One day when a young man was traveling along his way, he saw a trunk from which he heard a voice coming. The voice was saying, "Is there no human being nearby who can rescue me from this trunk?" But as soon as the young man

⁸⁹The last eight paragraphs constitute one of Behçet Mahir's most regrettable lapses in the art of storytelling. Maundering, filled with self-pity, and often lost in obscurity, they break the narrative line and contribute nothing functional to the overall plot. They reveal an ordinarily excellent raconteur at his very worst.

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opened the trunk, a snake jumped out and began to coil itself tightly about his neck

The young man was greatly confused by what had happened. As the snake began to squeeze more and more tightly the young man said to the snake, "What did I ever do to you that would cause you to treat me in this way? You were imprisoned in that trunk, and I released you from it. Will you kill me as my reward for saving you?"

The snake answered angrily, "Was it your business to save me? You should mind your own business."

The young man became confused even more now, and so he said, "O snake, let us go and get advice from someone else about this matter."

"Very well," answered the snake. The two of them proceeded along the road until they met an ox.

The young man addressed the ox: "O brother ox, this snake was trapped in a trunk until I saved him from his imprisonment. But the moment it was released from the trunk, the snake coiled about my neck and tried to kill me. Did I do something wrong in opening the lid of the trunk and saving him from imprisonment?"

When the ox heard this, he said, "O brother snake

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human beings drink a great amount of milk. Don't hesitate to strangle this young man. My master forced me to work very hard for fifteen years. I was whipped and made to suffer throughout all of those fifteen years. But when I grew old and could no longer work as hard as I had in former times, my master decided to kill me so that he could eat my flesh and make shoes from my hide. He is having me graze here now so that he will get more meat from my carcass."

When the young man heard this comment, he really became very frightened. He said, "O brother snake, stop! Let us go and consult someone else about this matter.

"All right," answered the snake.

After they had traveled together for some distance the young man and the snake met a fox. The young man called the fox to his side and explained what the situation was. After he had explained everything that had happened the young man said, "Now tell me, brother fox, do I deserve to be strangled by someone whose life I had saved?"

Speaking to the snake rather than to the young man the fox said, "Human beings drink much milk. If you have the opportunity to strangle him, do not miss the chance to do so. These same human beings cause greyhounds to

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chase us. Then they kill us, give our flesh to the dogs, and wear our furs as coats. The human being is an ungrateful creature. Strangle him!" After a while, however, the fox took pity upon the young man and called out to the snake, "Stop, stop, brother snake! I want to ask you something before you kill him. I just cannot believe that a snake your size could possibly have gotten into so small a trunk as the young man is carrying."

snake answered, "It was not very difficult to do. just coiled up very tightly in order to fit inside that trunk. Here! I shall show you."

After the snake had uncoiled from the young man's neck, he wound himself up very tightly and squeezed into the trunk. As soon as he was completely inside the trunk, the fox closed the lid tightly. In this way the snake was once again imprisoned.

sometimes a person may suffer as a result of his kindness, but kindness also has its rewards. It is not so bad if a person you have helped does not appreciate your kindness, for eventually a helpful person will himself receive help when he needs it. There is a proverb which says, "Do a good deed and throw it in the ocean. Even if the fishes do not recognize it, God will." Help

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others without expecting any reward. God will know about good that you have done. Your good deed as well as your evil act will be recorded in the Great Book, and sooner or later you will be rewarded for your good deed. Don't leave the right way during your life. Be compassion- for God knows that your kindness is often unappreciated. After the Last Judgment you will be rewarded in the other world.⁹⁰

Now we should continue with our story. The soldiers of Nuşirvan's large army were everywhere. Nothing seemed to pass through that area, and even birds were unable to fly over it without being killed. But nothing could

Ömer Ümmiye. Dressing himself as a priest, he pulled a lute from his magic pouch and proceeded toward Nuşirvan's singing and playing songs from the Bible. The soldiers welcomed him, and their commanders asked him, "Where have you come from?"

Ömer Ümmiye answered, "Jesus sent me here. He wants you to know that Hamzai Sahip Kiran's army is approaching but that He will always be with you. He will never cease

⁹⁰This interpolated story is a folktale in its own right. In order to avoid losing its identity entirely in this extremely long tale, we have (for purposes of indexing and cataloguing) entered it in the ATON holdings as No. 1580.

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helping you. He sent me as an ambassador to tell you this good news." Nuşirvan's soldiers were very pleased that Jesus would help them in the battle that was coming.

Ümmiye then left the soldiers and went on to Nuşirvan's palace. There the ruler said to him, "O priest, come and stay in my palace so that I shall be able to hear your songs from the Bible."

But Ömer Ümmiye replied, "No, my pasha,⁹¹ no. I am a wandering priest who cannot remain at any one place. I must travel. I came here just to bring a message from Jesus. He sent me here to inform you that Hamzai Sahip Kırın's army is approaching this city

After leaving Nuşirvan, Ömer Ümmiye went to Mehli Nigâr's palace, where he was shown into the presence of the princess. "Oh, Ömer, have you really come?

"Yes, I have really come, and I bring some good news for you. Hamzai Sahip Kırın is on his way here. He sent me ahead to inform you of this. He has by now covered half the distance to this place. It will not be long

⁹¹The word pasha now means simply general. During much of the Ottoman era the word referred to the military governor of an area which might be as large as a province. Inasmuch as this tale is set more than 600 years before the founding of the Ottoman Empire, it is difficult to know what the term might have implied then. But, actually, it undoubtedly has the modern or Ottoman meaning here, for Mahir's diction is controlled by his own time.

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before swords begin dancing. O beautiful lady, what do you have to say now about that?"

"I do not want anything, Ömer Ümmiye. Just tell Hamzai Sahip Kıran that he should show his full power to my father."

"All right," answered Ömer Ümmiye, and he then left Mehli Nigâr's palace. He returned to Hamzai Sahip Kıran's army not only with a message from Mehli Nigâr but also with information about the size of Nuşirvan's army, for he had been sent to Nuşirvan's country partly as a spy.

When Hamzai Sahip Kıran was told that Ömer had returned safely, he was meeting with his wrestlers. He said to the messenger, "Bring Ömer Ümmiye to my tent at once." And when Ömer arrived there, Hamzai said, "Oh-h-h, Ömer Ümmiye, have you indeed returned safely?"

"Yes, I have returned well in every way.

"Did you see my Mehli Nigâr?" asked Hamzai Sahip Kıran.

"Yes, Hamzai Sahip Kıran, I did see her, and she sent her greetings to you."

"Did you manage to go to Nuşirvan's palace?"

"Yes, I went there, too, and while I was at his

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palace, I sang him a song from the Bible

"Were you also able to learn how many soldiers Nuşirvan has ready to meet our attack?" /Beginning of 1977 Tape 137

"I was there, and I saw his soldiers, but they were so numerous that there was no way in which they could be counted. O Hamzai Sahip Kıran, you could more easily count the stars in the sky than you could count his soldiers. They were everywhere. They were lined up in rows awaiting our arrival.

"Oh, Ömer, do not worry. The decision about the outcome of our war will be made by God. I have been an honest person all my life. I shall never depart from the right path, God's way. God's words are the right words, and nothing can happen unless He has said it will happen." He then ordered his troops to continue traveling day and night until they reached Nuşirvan's city.

Soon the guards of Nuşirvan reported to that ruler, "The troops of Hamzai Sahip Kıran have now come in sight. They were all afraid that Ömer Ümmiye might be somewhere in their country acting as a spy. They did not know that he had been there, had spied on them, and had by now been gone for some time

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Gentlemen, Hamzai Sahip Kiran rode his horse into the open field between the two armies. Lifting his right hand, he gave a mighty shout. It was so loud that it terrified many of Nuşirvan's soldiers, causing them to let their swords fall from their hands to the ground. Then Hamzai Sahip Kiran drew his sword from its scabbard and shouted at Nuşirvan's soldiers, "Is there any brave man among you?"

A very strong man rode out from among Nuşirvan's soldiers. He was a wrestler and the strongest man that Nuşirvan had. This man asked Hamzai, "Are you the one who let forth that strange yell?" Without waiting for an answer, this wrestler rode straight for Hamzai Sahip Kiran

Hamzai said to him, "The first blow is yours. Prepare to make your first move!" The wrestler galloped his horse straight forward and swung his sword at Hamzai Sahip Kiran. Hamzai warded off this blow with his shield, and then, grabbing the wrestler by the collar with his other hand, he lifted him right out of his saddle. Holding the wrestler up in the air with one hand, Hamzai Sahip Kiran said, "Oh, wrestler, the Last Prophet will soon come, and he will lead everyone to God's way. Come to

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God's way now and join my religion. Otherwise I shall not free you, and no one can save you from my hands

The wrestler answered, "Oh, Hamzai, stop! No one else could pick me up with one hand. No one else could take my sword from my hand, and I know that you will probably be the last one who can do so. I have killed more people than the number of hairs in my head, and I killed each with only a single stroke of my sword. Oh, Hamzai, put me down, and I shall accept your religion. Your religion must be the right way.

Hamzai Sahip Kıran then called Ömer Ümmiye and said, "Ömer, pierce this man's ear and hang a circular earring from his ear, for he is now on our side." After Ömer had done as he had been directed, the wrestler knelt before Hamzai Sahip Kıran and kissed his hand.

Nuşirvan's soldiers had watched all that had happened, and they were amazed at what they had seen. However, one of Nuşirvan's commanders spoke to them, saying, "Soldiers, do not allow yourselves to be influenced by what you saw. That wrestler must have had a spell placed upon him."

The converted wrestler then spoke to Hamzai Sahip Kıran. He said, "Oh, my shah, now that I have chosen the

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right way of religion, allow me to fight for you."

"O brother," said Hamzai Sahip Kıran, "welcome to the battle! May God make you a great fighter." Then Hamzai again shouted at Nuşirvan's army, "Is there any strong man among you who is willing to fight with me?"

When another strong wrestler came from the ranks of Nuşirvan's army, Hamzai grabbed him round the chest and lifted his feet off the ground. "Oh, wrestler, come to the right way and become a Muslim."

But the wrestler began cursing at Hamzai Sahip Kıran, and then he said, "I shall never accept your religion, even if you cut me to bits!" When Hamzai Sahip Kıran heard this, he became very angry. He threw his opponent up in the air, and as he fell back down toward the ground, Hamzai cut him in half with one swing of his sword

On that first day Hamzai Sahip Kıran fought with fifty-six wrestlers, six of whom accepted the Muslim faith. When night came, the fighting stopped. Nuşirvan's men reported to their ruler what had happened. They said, "O padishah Nuşirvan, most of our strongest wrestlers"⁹²

⁹²Wrestling has long been a popular sport among Turkish people. Although wrestlers are usually strong men, it is somewhat fanciful to picture them as the elite corps of any army. The word wrestler has, by extension, become synonymous with strong.

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have been killed by Hamzai Sahip Kıran. Six of them accepted Muslim religion and went over to the side of Hamzai Sahip Kıran."

When Nuşirvan heard this report, he grew very angry but also very sad. Taking off his crown, he threw it away. He said, "Why doesn't the Fire God help me?"

On the other side of the battlefield Hamzai Sahip Kıran called Ömer Ümmiye to him and said, "O Ömer Ümmiye, are the only person upon whom I can depend completely are the only one whom I can always trust. I want you to sit on top of that nearby hill and guard us tonight, keeping watch in all four directions. That will enable us to get a good night's sleep."

"Do not worry, Hamzai Sahip Kıran," answered Ömer. "First may God protect us, and then I shall be able to insure our safety throughout the night."

Everyone went to sleep in his tent but Ömer Ümmiye. He remained awake and watched carefully in every direction.

Meanwhile on the other side of the battle line Nuşirvan was holding meetings with his men. He said to them, "We must find some way to kill Hamzai Sahip Kıran tonight. We must kill him if we expect to win this war. Send someone to kill him tonight!"

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The commanders said, "Yes, our padishah

While Ömer Ümmiye was standing on top of the hill doing guard duty, he saw a soldier of Nuşirvan leave his camp and start toward the tent of Hamzai Sahip Kıran. That soldier was trying to go unnoticed, but Ömer Ümmiye observed him before he had gone only a few steps, and

Ümmiye knew that that soldier's intentions were not good. He left the hill in order to intercept that soldier, and a few minutes later he confronted him. Ömer Ümmiye said to this soldier, "I was sent by Nuşirvan to tell you

to attempt to kill Hamzai Sahip Kıran but to let me do so. Wait for me here in this tent. I shall go to Hamzai Sahip Kıran, cut off his head, and bring it to you. Then you may take that head to Nuşirvan.

As soon as the soldier entered the tent, however, Ömer Ümmiye jumped upon him, knocked him down, and tied him up very tightly to the tent pole. During the rest of the night Ömer Ümmiye captured three more of Nuşirvan's soldiers in exactly the same way. Then when morning arrived--may God make every morning as good as this one--Ömer Ümmiye went to Hamzai Sahip Kıran's tent and said, "Good morning, Hamzai

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"Good morning, Ömer--but why are you smiling so broadly?"

Ömer answered, "O Hamzai Sahip Kıran, during the night I captured four of Nuşirvan's men right here in our camp. Inasmuch as you did not give me permission to behead these men, I have come to ask what you want done with them."

Hamzai Sahip Kıran said, "Ömer, bring those men to me."

Ömer brought the four captives to the tent of Hamzai Sahip Kıran. The hands of all four of them were tied very tightly behind their backs. Hamzai said to them, "Soldiers, I am drawing my strength directly from God. Even if there were one hundred thousand soldiers like you, they would not be able to harm me in any way; they could do nothing to me. Come and accept the true religious faith, and then I shall set you free

They answered, "Oh, Hamzai, we are soldiers of Nuşirvan, who is an extremely powerful man. How dare you tell us to accept your religion and join you--you who are a poor and unimportant person?"

When Hamzai Sahip Kıran heard these words, he said to

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Ömer Ümmiye, "Ömer, now you do have permission to cut off their heads." Ömer took them from Hamzai's tent and beheaded them. Then he took from their clothing all of the gold and silver they had and put it into his magic pouch

Later that day the two sides again faced each other on the battlefield. As he had done the day before, Hamzai Sahip Kıran rode out into the open space between the armies to challenge combat with one of the enemy warriors, but as he did so, he was attacked on all four sides by soldiers of Nuşirvan. They came at him like a huge herd. But Hamzai Sahip Kıran's wrestlers, as well as the six wrestlers who had formerly been Nuşirvan's men, also rode their horses onto the battlefield. It became a very fierce battle, with blood flowing from swords and foam flowing from the horses' mouths. The forces became so intermingled that no one could tell who was Hamzai or who was Ömer, who was Hasan or who was Hüseyin. Heads were cut from bodies and fell to the ground.

This battle lasted all day until night came, when the birds went to their nests and the sun returned to its home in the west. A horn was blown to signal the end of the fighting for that day. When the soldiers of Nuşirvan returned to their tents, they were very tired but they

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were also very confused by something that had happened that day. They had been repeatedly struck by large stones which fell from above upon them. These stones had been hurled by Ömer Ümmiye from the same hilltop where he had kept guard the night before. Back in their tents, Nuşirvan's soldiers said, "Aman,"⁹³ During the battle, stones rained from the sky! Where did they come from?"

The battle continued for another two days, and each day Nuşirvan's army drew back closer and closer to the city. During this same time Hamzai Sahip Kırان's army was advancing closer and closer to the city. Each night Nuşirvan received many notes from his soldiers saying, "Stones were raining down on our heads today. What is happening to us?"

Nuşirvan gathered his council about him and said to them, "Why isn't the Fire God guiding us any more? How can we stop Hamzai Sahip Kırان? We must find a way to do so very quickly.

One of the men in the council went to Nuşirvan and said, "O my shah, order me to bring Hamzai Sahip Kırان to you tonight and I shall do so."

⁹³A mild exclamation meaning alas! or my goodness! or good heavens!

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Nuşirvan answered, "My councilman, you are too valuable to me to be killed. Could you really bring Hamzai Sahip Kıran here?"

"O my shah, just order me to bring him to you tonight, and you will see that I can do so."

Nuşirvan said, "If you can do that, I shall give you whatever you want. I shall fulfill your every wish."

While this was going on, Ömer Ümmiye was again in the palace of Nuşirvan. He came this time disguised as a sergeant. Since there were more than 150 sergeants in the army of Nuşirvan, it was easy for him to move around unnoticed in the uniform of a sergeant. When the member of Nuşirvan's council offered to capture Hamzai Sahip Kıran, Ömer Ümmiye stood up and asked for permission to speak. When Nuşirvan gave his approval, Ömer Ümmiye stood up in his sergeant's uniform and said, "O my shah, let me accompany your councilman to get Hamzai Sahip Kıran. Two of us working together can accomplish more than one."

Nuşirvan was so touched by this offer that he said to his men, "Look at this sergeant! What a brave man he is! Yes, you may go along to help bring Hamzai Sahip Kıran to me."

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Ümmiye and the councilman left the palace together to bring Hamzai Sahip Kiran there. When they came to a fountain, Ömer Ümmiye reached into his pouch and withdrew from it a glass of liquid that looked like water. He said to his companion, "Councilman, let us take a brief rest at this place and drink some water. Here! Drink this, and you will feel refreshed." Speaking in this way, Ömer Ümmiye handed the drugged drink to the councilman. As soon as he drank this, the councilman lost consciousness

Ümmiye decided to take this unconscious man to Mehli Nigâr. Picking up the councilman, he put him on his back and carried him to Mehli Nigâr's palace. After she had been awakened, Mehli Nigâr recognized Ömer Ümmiye immediately. She asked, "Ömer, what are you doing here? Who is that man on your back? Is he dead? He seems to be dead."

Ömer Ümmiye replied, "O Mehli Nigâr, your father gave permission to this man to kill Hamzai Sahip Kiran and bring him to his palace. I received permission from your father to accompany this man and help him bring back the head of Hamzai Sahip Kiran. When we came to a fountain, I pretended to give this man water to drink, but I really

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gave him a sleeping potion instead. He is now sleeping very deeply. I brought him here to ask you what should be done with this body."

Mehli Nigâr answered, "Ömer, he is your captive, and you may do whatever you wish with him."

"No, my princess. I am going to leave him here so that you may dispose of him as you wish." Ömer Ümmiye then left the palace.

When morning came, the drugged councilman opened his eyes and was very confused and embarrassed when he beheld Mehli Nigâr. She spoke to him, saying, "You were brought here by Ömer Ümmiye. Don't you remember that you and he were on your way to kill Hamzai Sahip Kıran? At midnight he brought you here unconscious. By doing so, he indicated that he had forgiven you and that you could return to my father."

By this time Ömer Ümmiye had reached the tent of Hamzai Sahip Kıran. Ömer said to him, "Hamzai, I captured one of Nuşirvan's men who was on his way here to kill you."

Hamzai Sahip Kıran asked, "But you did not kill that man--did you?"

Ömer answered, "No, Hamzai, I did not kill him. Instead, I took him to Mehli Nigâr's palace and left him there."

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When Hamzai Ship Kıran heard Mehli Nigâr's name mentioned, he became excited. He asked, "Did you see Mehli Nigâr?"

"Yes, I did, and she is well," said Ömer Ümmiye.

At the same time the drugged councilman of Nuşirvan gained complete consciousness. Mehli Nigâr directed him, "Go to my father's palace now and tell my father what happened to you. Tell him about Ömer Ümmiye, Hamzai Sahip Kıran, and their invincibility."

The councilman did as he had been directed. He went to Nuşirvan's palace and when he had been admitted into the presence of the ruler, he told him about everything that had happened. When Nuşirvan heard this almost unbelievable story, he became very worried. He ordered that more guards be placed on duty at every door of the palace. "Be especially careful about any stranger whom you see."

When morning arrived, both armies again went to the battlefield. As before, Hamzai Sahip Kıran rode forth into the open space between the armies, and as before, Nuşirvan's soldiers attacked him from four sides. The clash between the two armies in battle raised a large cloud of dust. Men on both sides were fighting with a

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willingness to continue until they had shed their drop of blood.

/Ahmet Uysal: Behçet Mahir will tell us the third part of the tale of Hamzai Sahip Kıran this evening. Today is January 11, 1977.⁷

We have all kinds of stories in this country. Some of them might make you cry, and others might make laugh. That is the way life passes. We also have stories that teach lessons or provide good advice. We need all of these kinds of stories

We left the forces of Hamzai Sahip Kıran fighting with those of Nuşirvan. It was very bloody fighting. After twenty-eight days of such warfare, Hamzai Sahip Kıran was still fighting like a lion. Every day Nuşirvan's men brought back reports with which that ruler was not happy. He was disappointed with the results of the battle being carried on by his troops. Again he called his council of advisers together and asked them, "What are you thinking about this situation in which we find ourselves? We do not seem to be able to defeat Hamzai Sahip Kıran. Can you think of any solution to our problem?"

The wise men of the council said, "O our shah, you

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are very rich, but your great wealth does not help us to defeat Hamzai Sahip Kıran. We should call a halt to the fighting long enough to find some way in which we can overcome that man. We can trick him by proposing an armistice." They did not know, of course, that Ömer Ümmiye was still in the palace disguised as one of Nuşirvan's sergeants and listening to everything that they said

Without being aware of the presence of Ömer Ümmiye in the conference room, Nuşirvan said, "I like the idea very much. Write a letter to Hamzai Sahip Kıran from me.

They wrote, "O Hamzai Sahip Kıran, my astrologers warned me that you would attack me. Although you were reared on my bread, you are now using swords against me But I forgive you for that. You want my daughter, Mehli Nigâr, as your wife, but you will never get her by fighting. Come to my presence, for we should talk together. Many soldiers have been killed on both sides. Let us keep alive those who are left. You make your preparations, and I shall make mine. After that, I shall give Mehli Nigâr to you as your wife in a very large wedding ceremony." (All the while that this letter was being dictated, Ömer Ümmiye was listening to every single word. The letter was given to Civaniyyar with this instruction: "Do not give this letter to

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anyone but Hamzai Sahip Kıran!"

Civaniayyar took the letter and set off on his journey, but Ömer Ümmiye had left the palace ahead of him and was already well on his way to the tent of Hamzai Sahip Kıran. When he arrived there, he said, "Hamzai Sahip Kıran, Nuşirvan and his council have concluded that they cannot stop your sword by fighting. They said, 'We can stop him only by trickery.' They have, therefore, decided to offer you an armistice in order to gain time and reorganize their army. What do you want me to do now? I can get the letter from Civaniayyar, or I can kill him. Just give me your orders."

[Beginning of 1977 Tape 14] Hamzai Sahip Kıran laughed and answered, "Sit down, Ömer Ümmiye; sit down and relax. Let him come here. Let us learn clearly what they want." After some time had passed, a guard informed Hamzai Sahip Kıran that Civaniayyar had arrived. By this time, Hamzai's wrestlers had also come to Hamzai's tent. "Bring him into my presence," Hamzai Sahip Kıran ordered.

When Civaniayyar was brought into the tent, he saw Ömer Ümmiye sitting among the others there, but he did not know that Ömer had arrived there from the palace shortly

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before he himself had, and he did not know that Ömer had already informed Hamzai about the contents of the letter. Civaniayyar greeted Hamzai Sahip Kiran and handed him the letter. Hamzai read the letter, observing that its message was exactly the same, word by word, as Ömer had reported to him. It said, "O Hamzai Sahip Kiran, we must stop our warfare. Many people have died so far, and we must save those who are still alive. We can solve this problem by talking about it." Hamzai called his council together and read the letter to them. Although they all knew about the trick that Nuşirvan was trying to play on them, they all said that they were willing to accept Nuşirvan's offer of an armistice. When Civaniayyar heard this decision, he was very pleased. He left very soon after that to take the message to Nuşirvan. But once again, Ömer Ümmiye preceded the messenger and arrived first at Nuşirvan's palace. He wanted to learn what kind of welcome they were planning for Hamzai Sahip Kiran.

When Civaniayyar arrived at Nuşirvan's palace, the ruler asked, "Hey, Ayyar, what is the news? Tell me the news!"

Civaniayyar replied, "O my shah, the news is very

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good. Your offer has been accepted by Hamzai Sahip Kıran and he will be arriving here tomorrow with some of his wrestlers."

Nuşirvan was delighted with this news. He at once gave orders that preparations be made for the visit of Hamzai Sahip Kıran. While all of this was going on, Ömer Ümmiye was observing everything very carefully to determine whether or not they really planned to kill Hamzai Sahip Kıran. He decided that at this point they were being sincere and that their immediate intentions were not evil.

On the next day when dawn arrived--may God give everyone good mornings--Hamzai Sahip Kıran went to Nuşirvan's palace accompanied by forty of his wrestlers. The palace people greeted him with great respect and took him and his forty wrestlers into the presence of Nuşirvan. Almost immediately Hamzai noticed Ömer Ümmiye working among the servants, and Hamzai smiled at him. A short while later Ömer Ümmiye took from his pouch a lute and accompanied himself with it as he recited a poem from the Bible. Nuşirvan was pleased by this performance.

Now we are coming to the best part of our story, and

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that is the part which concerns our Prophet, the Blessed Mohammed. Eighteen thousand countries /sic/ yearned for him. They loved his holy face and the light that glowed from it. It was not just his friends but also many of his enemies who came to love him. Love cannot be contained; it is unpredictable. Love can make you behave insanely; it can make you jump into the ocean or into a fire. That is the reason that I am going to recite for you a poem.

My greetings to you, O Sultan, and my love
Beautiful and graceful are your ways.
You give the intercession that we need.
How beautiful and graceful are your ways.

How beautiful and varied are your names.
Tested by life, I grew tired and weak
But you became my wings and both my arms.
How beautiful and graceful are your ways.

Your love drew me to you and captured me.
My wistful sadness groped for Arş⁹⁴ above.

⁹⁴See Footnote 79 above

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Does love within the heart commit offense?
How beautiful and graceful are your ways.

The love within my heart will never fade
My words but echo what my heart has said
Only your hand can guide me heavenward
How beautiful and graceful are your ways

I squeezed a thousand hours into one
I walked, felt weak, grew thin, and moved no
more.

Know how your love affected my travail.
How beautiful and graceful are your ways.

Your hands are branches of the tree of joy.
Both sun and moon draw strength from you to
rise.

And eighteen thousand lands reflect your face
How beautiful and graceful are your ways.

Behçet Mahir speaks from this mortal world.
What's seen today tomorrow disappears

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Know your dependence on the Day of Doom
How beautiful and graceful are your ways.

Yes, gentlemen, everyone felt love for him, his enemies as well as his friends.

Nuşirvan welcomed Hamzai Sahip Kıran with great respect, and everyone was invited to be seated. Nuşirvan's council members went to Hamzai and said, "Hamzai Sahip Kıran, you know our proposal. We do not want any further fighting. We wish to resolve our differences in a more humane way. No solution can be reached by force."

Hamzai Sahip Kıran answered, "If you are really sincere about this, and if you have no hidden intent, then I shall favor your proposal and accept

Nuşirvan then said, "O Hamzai, we are not trying to deceive you. We have no hidden intent. We are honestly asking you for time."

"Very well," said Hamzai. "How many days do you want?"

Nuşirvan answered, "Give us seven years. During that time I shall make my preparations."

Hamzai stood up and said, "O my padishah, you ask for seven years, but how can any of us know that we shall

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live that long? Only God knows how long we shall live. Nevertheless, I shall suggest that we add three years to your seven, which will give you an armistice of ten years.

When Nuşirvan heard this offer of a ten-year truce, he was very pleased. He ordered his men, "Give gold and silver to Hamzai Sahip Kiran's wrestlers."

Hamzai Sahip Kiran responded, "No, we cannot accept any of your gold or silver. We seek neither tribute nor alms." When Nuşirvan heard this response of Hamzai Sahip Kiran, he realized how mature and wise Hamzai was.

They drew up a peace treaty and made it binding for ten years. They signed this agreement to maintain a truce for ten years. All of Nuşirvan's council members appeared to be satisfied with this arrangement. The grand vizier went to Hamzai and spoke softly in his ear, "Very soon our Prophet will arrive. In case I should fail to meet him, ask him on my behalf not to forget to intercede for me on the Day of Judgment."

"I shall be pleased to do that," said Hamzai Sahip Kiran.

Hamzai and his army left Nuşirvan's palace and returned to their own country. Before they departed, however,

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Hamzai called Ömer Ümmiye to him and said, "Ömer, go and see Mehli Nigâr and find out what she thinks of all this."

Mehli Nigâr had already sent two maids to her father's palace to get news about whatever events had taken place. "Go and learn what has been decided and then bring news of that decision to me," she had said. Those maids had returned to Mehli Nigâr with the news before Ömer Ümmiye reached her palace.

The maids had reported, "Here is good news for you. A ten-year truce has been signed. Until that much time has passed, there will be no more warfare between the two armies."

Just a few minutes after that report had been delivered to Mehli Nigâr, Ömer Ümmiye arrived at her palace. Because her room was filled with servants, Ömer Ümmiye pretended that he was one of Nuşirvan's men. He said, "O Mehli Nigâr, inasmuch as this is a very fortunate day for our country, I have come to play my lute and recite some poetry from the Bible." He then began his recital

After a few minutes Mehli Nigâr said to one of her servants, "Take the lute player to another room where I can ask him what he wants from me for his performance here

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A few minutes later she went to the room where Ömer Ümmiye had been taken.

Ömer Ümmiye said, "O Mehli Nigâr, have you heard the news? There will be no more fighting for ten years, and I have been sent by Hamzai Sahip Kîran to discover what your feelings are about that ten-year truce.

Mehli Nigâr answered, "I have heard the news that is said to be good news, but I am now wondering if there is no compassion in the heart of Hamzai Sahip Kîran. Does his heart have any feelings at all? Does he not know that I cannot wait for ten years? I cannot repress my feelings for ten years! I cannot live without him for ten years!"

"I understand you, my princess, but be patient. Patience is a strong weapon even against sorrow over the death of someone. Even God exerted great patience in creating the universe in six hours, as some say, or in six days, as others said. He was capable of creating the universe in one second, but He took His time and showed great patience. I shall carry back and forth the news between the two of you every two or three days. I shall be your messenger. Hamzai really loves you more than you love him."

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Mehli Nigâr then gave Ömer Ümmiye some gold and silver, which he immediately put in his pouch. As you know, he was in love with gold and other valuable things. When night came and the moon was bright, he would bury his treasures beneath the earth. But in the morning after the moon had disappeared, he could never locate the place where he had buried the gold and silver

Leaving Mehli Nigâr, Ömer Ümmiye returned to his own country in the space of an hour. There he reported every word of Mehli Nigâr's comments to Hamzai Sahip Kîran.

The coming of Mohammed⁹⁵ was now very near at hand. Hamzai Sahip Kîran remained in Mecca with his army. He had not been there long, however, when suddenly the Kaaba was flooded with heavenly light. Three divine beams of light fell from the sky. One fell on the top of the Kaaba. Another of them was diffused from north to south.⁹⁶

All idols but one were smashed to pieces on the night when Mohammed's soul arrived from heaven and he was born.

⁹⁵The narrator here calls Mohammed Rahmet-ullahi.

⁹⁶Although the text does not say so specifically, the context would seem to suggest that the third bolt of light bore to earth the soul of Mohammed, which had been waiting in heaven since the earliest moment of Creation.

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On that night our mother, Emine,⁹⁷ saw the miracle with her own eyes. She realized that the last prophet was arriving, that the sultan of eighteen thousand lands was on his way

Gentlemen, all idols were demolished on the night of Mohammed's birth except the idol of Satan which was on the wall of the Kaaba. Our Prophet let his name be known to everyone. He made the peoples of eighteen thousand lands hear his name. All intelligence, compassion, and awareness of justice were given to him by God.

(Gentlemen, we have to realize that it is a person's character rather than his handsome face which is important. Without character behind it, the handsome face means nothing. Moral qualities are of the greatest importance. Any lasting love for a person is based on that person's character rather than on his appearance. Unless you have moral standards, neither your wealth nor your education will be of much use to you. They alone cannot raise you to the highest level attainable by human beings.)

⁹⁷Emine (transliterated from Amina in Arabic) was Mohammed's mother. The narrator here calls her "our mother," making her somewhat parallel in Islamic lore to Mary in Christian lore.

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In Mecca the Blessed Ebu Bekir,⁹⁸ who was the richest person in the city,⁹⁹ went to the Prophet Mohammed's house. He was one of the first believers in Mohammed. But the people of Ebu Leheb¹⁰⁰ were throwing stones at that house; however, Ebu Bekir and his men confronted those stone throwers and protected Mohammed. Ebu Leheb, who was Mohammed's uncle, was the son of Abdül Muttalib, who was the richest person in the whole land. Why was Ebu Leheb throwing stones at the house of Mohammed? He was doing so because he was, in an important way, blind. He could not see the right way, even though the followers of Mohammed were increasing in number day by day. Those people who were able to see the right way became Moslems, and the Moslem religion gained strength every day.

Mohammed's mother became blind when he was seven years old.¹⁰¹ She worried continuously, and that made her cry

⁹⁸The first Caliph.

⁹⁹Although he did come from a well-to-do family, this is probably an exaggeration.

¹⁰⁰His real name was Abd al-Uzza b. Abd al-Muttalib, but in the Koran (Chapter CXI, verse 1) he is designated as Abu Lahab (father of flame, i.e. man of hell). He was Mohammed's uncle but one of his steadiest and fiercest, and most violent opponents.

¹⁰¹According to the Encyclopaedia of Islam, Mohammed's mother died when he was six years old.

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frequently. It was her crying that caused her blindness. When Prophet Mohammed placed his fingers on his mother's eyes, she began seeing again. God give us strength to endure all of our sorrows! Say three times, "My God of Gratitude," because one of the names of Allah is Gratitude.¹⁰² The eyes of Mohammed's mother began seeing again, and everyone heard about that miracle. Ebu Leheb kept quiet about this, for he had by now grown afraid of Hamzai Sahip Kiran

Time passed. One night another of our mothers, Sefiye,¹⁰³ had a dream. The following morning she went immediately to Mohammed and said, "O light of my life, I had a dream last night."

Mohammed responded, "May your dream be auspicious!"¹⁰⁴

¹⁰²Moslems speak of the ninety-nine names of Allah, but the word name is a misnomer. They are referring to epithets which indicate the qualities of Allah. The narrator here cites Teşekkür Yarabbe (My God of Gratitude). This epithet is Al-Shakur (The Grateful) in Arabic. See Islamic Ritual Practices, ed. Frederick M. Denny et al. (New York: ACLS, 1981), p. 93.

¹⁰³This is, as the tale subsequently shows, the mother of Ali (fourth caliph); her name was actually Fatima (which, by coincidence, was the name of Ali's wife also). Ali's father was Abu Talib (another uncle of Mohammed).

¹⁰⁴According to Turkish folk belief, one should never reveal the contents of one's dream until the person with whom one is speaking first says, "May it be auspicious." There are ATON tales in which the plot pivots upon the refusal of the second person to make this ritualistic remark.

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Gentlemen, the master barber of that whole area was named Selmani Taş. He had immigrated into Mecca from elsewhere. When he arrived there, Ali had not yet been born. Selmani became Mohammed's barber. One day when he was shaving the Prophet, he accidentally cut Mohammed's with the razor. The barber immediately licked the blood of Mohammed. Mohammed said, "O Selmani, I have news for you. My blood has been mixed with your blood, and so you will be my neighbor in heaven."

Sitting to the left of Mohammed was a man named Mavyar. When Mavyar heard what Mohammed had said to the barber, he said very quietly to Salmani, "Let me cut his face, too." Taking the razor, he nicked the face of Mohammed and then licked his blood.

Turning to his left, Mohammed said, "Mavyar, you have become my enemy!"

Starting to cry, Mavyar asked, "Why, O light of my life? Why have I become your enemy?"

Mohammed said, "The first time I was cut, it was an accident, but you cut me deliberately. Therefore the people who are born to you will be enemies of my people." Mavyar was so shocked by this that he never married. He

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did not want to have children who would be the enemies of Mohammed.

Gentlemen, one day Ömer¹⁰⁶ said, "O Mohammed, give your people some dates. They are hungry." The women especially wanted dates from Mohammed, but he could give them any, for there were none. These people were very poor.

However, God created a very large date tree for Mohammed, and He sent the angel Gabriel to place it in position. God said, "I have created everything for Mohammed."

There was a large date palm tree in Mecca which had seemed to be dead for seven years. If a tree does not have any leaves or any fruit, it is useless. (And people are like trees. If they do not have children or work to help others or leave behind anything useful to humanity, they are dead trees. They are useless except as wood--like a dead tree.

Many people had become followers of Ebu Cehl because he had control of much of the food supply in Mecca. After

¹⁰⁶This is not the blessed Ömer, second caliph, but Ebu Cehl, whom Behçet Mahir calls Ömer. He was an enemy of Mohammed and was killed subsequently at the crucial Battle of Bedr (Badr).

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Mohammed had announced that he would provide the people with a great amount of dates from the dead palm tree, thousands followed him to the tree to see if he could do that. When Prophet Mohammed reached the tree, he touched its trunk and said, "O tree, with the permission of Allah, I want to see dates on your branches."

Ebu Cehl turned to the crowd and said, "People, watch this mad man! He has lost his mind completely! He is speaking to a tree which has been dead for seven years and asking it to produce dates.

Gentlemen, that dead tree suddenly put forth leaves and became a green tree. It produced fruit. In fact, all of the branches of the tree were loaded with dates. All of Mohammed's followers were given great quantities of fruit. Then Mohammed said to the followers of Ömer, "Come! You too may have fruit. Come and take as much as you want. It is all God's fruit, and its supply is endless."

Gentlemen, at that time Moslem worship was carried on secretly. The prayer services were performed in hidden, underground places. Although the number of Moslems was increasing, they still worshiped secretly. Prophet Mohammed said, "If one of the Ömers is converted to our religion, we shall then be able to worship openly

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Besides the Ömer whose real name was Ebu Cehl, there the Ömer whom we now call the Blessed Ömer [subsequently the second caliph]. But at that time the Blessed Ömer was not yet a Moslem. Instead, he was an enemy of Islam, and many people were afraid of him, for at that time there were only two very powerful men in Mecca. One was Hamzai Sahip Kıran, and the other was this Ömer. This Ömer was at that time an ally of the other Ömer [Ebu Cehl]. This was the main reason that Moslems were worshipping secretly. Unknown to the man who would later become the Blessed Ömer, there were some Moslems within his own family.

sister and her husband and their children had seen Mohammed at a moment when his face was beaming with divine light, and they had accepted the religion of Islam.

One day Ebu Cehl called his followers together at his palace. He said, "We must finish the activity of Mohammed very soon because his religion is gaining strength every passing day." He said to [Blessed] Ömer, "If you will bring the head of Mohammed to me, I shall give you forty sacks of gold."

Ömer buckled on his sword and said, "I shall bring his head to you right away."

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At this time when the Moslems were still worshipping in secret, Ömer left Ebu Cehl's palace to behead Mohammed. But as Ömer set out, Gabriel appeared to Mohammed and warned him of Ömer's intention. He said, "O Mohammed, Ömer is coming to behead you

While Ömer was proceeding in a great rush to accomplish this act, he was stopped by a man who asked, "Ömer, where are you going in such a hurry?"

"I am going to behead Mohammed. Then I shall take his head to Ömer /Ebu Cehl/.

The man asked, "Why, Ömer?"

"Because Moslems are increasing in number and becoming stronger day after day

"Oh, Ömer, this is very strange. You are going to behead Mohammed, but your own sister is a Moslem." Ömer did not believe the man's words. The man realized this and added, "If you doubt my words, kill a sheep and have your sister cook its meat for you. Then watch her and see whether she will eat any of the meat which you have brought."

"All right! I shall do that," said Ömer. Ömer went to his sister's house, but before he could knock on the door, he heard his sister's voice as she was reading some-

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thing aloud inside. His sister was reading from the Koran, and as she did so, all of the trees and all of the birds around the house had prostrated themselves at the sound of the words. Ömer listened to his sister reading for a while, and the more he listened, the longer he wanted to listen. A great emotion passed through his three hundred and sixty-six veins.¹⁰⁷

Finally he knocked on the door. When his sister discovered who it was who knocked, she quickly hid the Koran before opening the door. He said to her, "Sister, bring me a lamb." When the lamb was brought to him, he slaughtered it and told his sister to cook it.

"All right, Brother," she said.

After she had cooked the meat and prepared the table for dinner, Ömer said, "Sister, come and eat with me."

She answered, "Thank you, Brother, but I have already eaten and I am very full.

"But can't you eat even one small bite?" he asked.

(Yes, gentlemen, the meat that is prepared by Moslems

¹⁰⁷For Behçet Mahir, one's mental and emotional condition were somehow connected with one's veins. Until he was in his seventies, he always insisted on standing to narrate so that his three hundred and sixty-six veins could vibrate freely.

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can be eaten by everyone, but Moslems cannot eat the meat that is prepared by non-Moslems. That meat is forbidden to them by Moslem religious law. But if you are on a journey and that is the only meat you can get, then you are allowed to eat it. [1977 Tape 15 begins here.] Or if you are in a restaurant and unknowingly eat that kind of meat, it is all right. Our religion is a very convenient religion. It has no rules which are hard to comply with. It accommodates to human needs. For example, if you are on a journey during Ramazan, you are permitted to eat even though it is a time of fasting. Then after your journey has ended, you are to fast for the number of days you failed to fast during Ramazan itself. Such easy conditions cannot be found in any other religion.

/Unidentified man in the audience: But some people eat ham while they are in Germany. What will happen to them?

Behçet Mahir: If they eat it without knowing that it is ham, then it is no sin; if you eat it knowingly, then it is a sin. One has to go wherever necessary in order to earn a livelihood for your family. You have to go anywhere in the world, with God's permission, to do that. If God does

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grant your bread to you, your hard work will not mean anything. You may work and work, earning money--even great amounts of money--God can take it all away from you in a minute. We can see examples of this every day--even among people close to us.⁷⁾

Now we must return to our story. When the sister of said, "I will not eat," he realized that the man he met along the road had told him the truth about his sister. He said, "All right, Sister. If you do not want to eat, do not eat." He ate all the meat he could, and then he said, "Sister, when I arrived here, I listened from behind the door to what you were reading. What was it that you were reading? Where is it? Bring it to me I should like to see it."

His sister was now frightened, and she tried to deny she had been doing. She said, "I wasn't reading anything, Brother

"Don't be afraid, Sister. I should like to read it myself."

"Oh, Brother, please do not kill me.

"Sister, I shall not harm you in any way. Bring it to me so that I can read it." When his sister brought

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him the book, he began to read it. As he read more, he began to cry. Tears were pouring from his eyes.

As this was happening, Gabriel went to Mohammed's house again. This time he said, "O my Prophet, Ömer very soon be coming to see you. When he arrives here, you should open the door to him yourself."

"Very well," said Mohammed.

Gentlemen, love is a very powerful emotion. It can make you jump into the ocean or into a fire. It can make you sacrifice your life. After Ömer had read more of Koran, his three hundred and sixty-six veins became filled with love of Mohammed and love of God. He went weeping to Mohammed's door. When he knocked at the door, Mohammed's followers were very startled, but Mohammed advised them, "Don't be frightened. Sit down. I shall open the door." Bilal the Ethiopian¹⁰⁸ and Ebu Bekir both wanted to go to the door and open it, but Mohammed would not permit them to do so. He said, "Sit down! I shall open the door myself, for Ömer has come to accept our religion." It was, therefore, the Blessed Mohammed who opened the door for Ömer.

¹⁰⁸A slave who was one of the earliest admirers of Mohammed, he was persecuted for his support of Islam. Ebu Bekir (Bakr), who was much later to become the first caliph, purchased Bilal and then gave him his freedom. He died in 641.

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When Ömer entered the building and saw the divine light shining from Mohammed's face, he cast himself, weeping, at the feet of the Prophet. He said, "Please forgive me, O light of my life."

The Blessed Prophet made Ömer stand up, and then the Prophet hugged him tightly and took him into his heart. Taking Ömer by the hand, he guided him in taking the ritual ablution. Ömer knelt before Mohammed and said, "O Blessed Prophet, O light of my life, I did not know myself until today. Not until today did I become fully aware of what it meant to be a human being. Only today did I discover who I really am."

Mohammed said, "Oh, Ömer, from now on you will experience that feeling every day."

Crying again, Ömer said, "Alas! All of my life until today was wasted. I used my days for nothing."

"Don't cry, Ömer," said the Blessed Mohammed. "God forgive a thousand bad hours for one good hour."

(Yes, gentlemen, God can pardon you. If you find yourself in a situation where you cannot succeed no matter how hard you may try, the only advantageous step you can take is to extricate yourself from the whole

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matter as soon as possible.

Time passed, and the hour for the morning prayer service was approaching. Ebu Cehl kept thinking that it would not be long before Ömer brought to him the head of Mohammed.

When the hour arrived for the morning prayer service, Billali Habeş prepared to go underground to chant the ezan and call the worshipers together. When Ömer saw him doing this, he asked, "Where are you going?" Billali Habeş explained the situation to him. After listening carefully to this explanation, Ömer said, "There is no need for you to go underground. There is no longer any need to hide. Come with me to the roof, and you can issue the call to prayer from there."

Bilal the Ethiopian said, "If we do that, they will throw stones at us and shoot arrows at us."

"Don't worry, Bilal, for I shall be with you, and as a result, no one will find the courage to harm you." Ömer drew his sword and stood close to Billali Habeş so that nobody would be able to get very close to him. On that morning God gave Bilal the Ethiopian a uniquely beautiful voice. No one had ever heard anything like it

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before. Bilal's heart was filled with the love of God as he sang the ezan that morning.

People of the tribe of Kuriş were awakened that morning by the sound of the ezan. They poured forth from their houses in great confusion. Once outside, they saw Bilal the Ethiopian singing on the roof, and they heard his divinely inspired voice. They also saw Ömer standing beside him with his sword drawn. No one dared approach them to do them any harm because of the fear of Ömer. A few people threw stones at the house from a great distance.

As you will remember, gentlemen, Mohammed had said earlier, "If one of the Ömers accepts the Moslem religion, we shall be able to appeal to other people openly in public places." After Ömer had become a Moslem, many others did the same thing. And in that way Islam began to spread out rapidly day by day

Ebu Cehl was unable to do anything to change this situation. He said to himself, "I shall have to go to the Fortress of Wealth." Christian people from all over the world used to come to visit with the commander of that fortress, a man named Habib. He was a very wise

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scholar of the Christian community. He had read all of the Bible very carefully, and he was a very learned man.

Ebu Cehl and half of the people of Mecca went to Habib's fortress. Gentlemen, the events in stories roll swiftly off the tongues of narrators, but it took days and nights of travel before these people reached that fortress. When Habib's men reported to him that Cehl and half the population of Mecca were arriving at the fortress, Habib ordered that they be welcomed properly. From his reading in the Bible, Ebu Cehl knew that Mohammed would be the last of the prophets. Gentlemen, there were four divine books revealed to mankind from heaven. Three of them were revealed to Jews and Christians, but the fourth, the Koran, was for us. The richness of the Koran was worth that of the other three books combined. Habib knew about and read all of these books

Ebu Cehl and his people were welcomed at the Fortress of Wealth. There they prepared beds for Ebu Cehl and his men, for Ebu Cehl was a powerful and very influential man. After dinner, Ebu Cehl said, "I have come here to consult with you about a very important problem.

When Habib heard this statement, he gathered all of

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his men there and then said to Ebu Cehl, "Tell us your problem. We shall listen as a group, and as a group, we shall try to find a solution to your problem."

Ebu Cehl then began to explain to them the situation that concerned him. He said, "His name is Mohammed."

(Look, look, gentlemen, and listen! If God favors you, He causes even your enemies to speak well of you. He may even make your enemies praise you. After a while you will realize why I am saying this.) Ebu Cehl continued his comments. "He has a very appealing personality. He never tells lies but only the truth. He does nothing evil or unjust.

(Gentlemen, the most important principle in the Moslem religion is truth. If a man's word does not express truth, the man's heart does not contain justice. Our mothers told us, "Your words and your heart should reflect truth always.")

Habib was taking notes all the while that Ebu Cehl was speaking. Ebu Cehl added, "He is also a very handsome being."

(Gentlemen, if you are a believer, you will also be handsome. Men of great faith speak so pleasantly that

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their listeners think, "I do not want to eat or drink but simply to listen to these words. Believers are able to chat in an engaging way, so that conversation with them is always pleasant.)

Habib asked, "How tall is he?" After Ebu Cehl had described Mohammed's height and appearance, Habib asked, "Does he have compassion?"

Ebu Cehl answered, "There is no more compassionate man in this world than he. He is so compassionate that if someone asked him to cut himself, he would do so out of compassion for that person.

Habib opened his Bible and examined certain parts of it. Everything that Ebu Cehl had said about Mohammed conformed exactly with accounts that were in the Bible /At this point an unidentified listener addressed a question to the narrator. He was, however, so far from the microphone that his query is not audible on the tape It may in part be inferred from the narrator's answer.

Behçet Mahir: "I shall try to answer your question
God himself once wished to test Mohammed's
compassion. He called the angels Michael
and Israfel to Him. Then He said, 'Michael,

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I want you to become a pigeon. Then fly to Mohammed's window and place yourself under his arm.¹⁰⁹ Israfel, you are to become a hunter who will go there and demand your prey from Mohammed.'

The pigeon flew to Mohammed's window and began speaking to the Prophet. It said, 'O Mohammed, light of my life, please protect me!'

After a short while the hunter arrived and said, 'O light of my life, give me back my prey.'

Mohammed responded, 'Please relinquish your prey this time. Give it to me.'

But the hunter replied, 'O Mohammed, this is my family's livelihood. I cannot give up my family's daily food'

Mohammed said, 'Get a sheep for your family's food. This pigeon requested my protection.'

¹⁰⁹To be under someone's wing or arm is not meant literally. In Turkish tales, it is a figurative expression for being protected by someone.

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The hunter then replied, 'No, I cannot do that. But if you will give me a piece of your own flesh, I shall accept that in exchange for the pigeon.

Mohammed said, 'Very well, I shall give you some flesh from my own body in exchange for this pigeon. Saying that, he picked up a knife and was just about to cut himself when he was stopped by Israfel.

Israfel said, 'O light of my life, don't cut yourself! Don't! God simply wished to test your compassion, and He sent us to do that testing.'"7

(Gentlemen, I am seventy years old and I have been telling this tale for fifty years. Today is today; this hour is this hour. The past does not return. Once it has gone it is gone forever. I shall now recite that poem that reveals the story of my life. I recited it for you earlier, near the beginning of this tale.)

/He does indeed repeat here, word for word, the autobiographical verse that appears on pages 000-000 of this tale. It will not be repeated here in the ATON text.7

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Ebu Cehl told Habib and his men about the Blessed Mohammed. When Ebu Cehl had finished his comments, Habib said, "You have answered my questions. You reported that he would not tell lies, and that is a great credit to him. Than you indicated that he was a just and compassionate man."

"Yes," said Ebu Cehl, "and all of my words were accurate. You asked me about Mohammed, and I told you the truth about him."

right," said Habib. "Now collect your men to return to Mecca, and I shall go along with you. I should like to see this man with my own eyes. I shall also collect my soldiers, and we shall all go to Mecca together I shall test Mohammed to see if you are really telling the truth about him."

be aware about what is going on in Mecca," said Ebu Cehl. "Half of the people of Mecca are believers in his religion. The other half are my people, who have chosen to block what he is doing."

They all went to Mecca, and Habib invited all of the people to witness his testing of Mohammed. They came from all directions to see this spectacle. Habib had an infant

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daughter who lacked eyesight and had withered arms and legs. She looked like a pile of lifeless flesh. Everyone knew that Habib had a daughter, but only God and Habib knew how abnormal she was. Inasmuch as Habib felt embarrassed about her condition, he had never said a word about it to anyone. He said to himself, "I shall take my daughter to Mohammed. If he is really a holy man, he be able to change her condition so that she will be a normal human being." Ebu Cehl had told Habib how very powerful Mohammed was.

When the large group went to Mecca, Habib took his and daughter along, too. Habib had read in the Bible soon the last prophet would arrive. He said to himself, "I shall ask him some questions and determine whether or not he is the last prophet."

Those people of Mecca who believed in Mohammed were of the Hashimi tribe, and the other half of the people in Mecca were of the Kurişi tribe. Tents were pitched, and Habib's wife and daughter were placed inside one of those tents. Habib allowed no one else to enter that tent but himself, for he did not wish anyone else to know of the condition of his daughter

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After dinner had been eaten, the Blessed Mohammed was called. He went to Habib's tent, where Ebu Cehl was sitting alongside Habib. As soon as Habib saw Mohammed, he immediately arose and welcomed him. He had Mohammed sit down beside him, but this politeness of Habib to Mohammed infuriated Ebu Cehl. He could not understand it.

After they had talked in a light manner for some time, Habib said to Mohammed, "I have heard that you founded a new religion and that you are spreading it in every direction. I have also been told that you have cursed our churches and our idols, saying that our idols could not be gods

Mohammed answered, "Yes, there is only one God, and it was He who created our universe. He gives life, and He also takes life. Your idols, like fire and like the ocean, were all created by God

Habib said, "Very well, then. I respect your religion. It is your religion and your god."

Mohammed answered, "No, He is not only my God but also yours, for He created yours, too. Your idols cannot create any living thing, nor can they perform miracles.

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God created you from nothing. Your way of thinking is the wrong way. The right way is God's way

Habib answered, "It may be so, but to prove it, you are requested to do something for me, and I want everybody here to observe you doing it. If you are really telling the truth, and if your god is as powerful as you say he is, then you should be able, with his help, to do almost anything. I want you to bring both the moon and the sun down from the sky. Then you are to split the moon into two moons. One of them is to go to the south and the other to the north. After that you will reunite them into one moon again. And while you are doing this, the whole world will be observing you

Mohammed answered, "Very well. If God is with me, He will not allow any obstacle to hinder me from doing that."

That night Gabriel visited Mohammed, who was rather sad. Gabriel said, "Mohammed, do not be sad. O brother, God sent His greetings to you. He said, 'Tell my beloved Mohammed not to be sad and not to worry. He may request from Me anything that he wishes.'"

Mohammed was greatly cheered by these words of Gabriel. Mohammed went and ascended nearby Kureyiz

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Mountain.¹¹⁰ Not only would the people of Mecca but also all the people of the world would witness what he would do, for they would all see the same sun and the same moon. He called to the people, "Do not be frightened!" He then looked upward and said, "O Sultan of the sky and earth I want the sun and the moon." It was noontime by then Suddenly it grew dark everywhere. The sky was no longer visible. The sun had gone from the sky to the chest of Mohammed, where it remained for some time. Not only Habib but everyone else also observed that miracle. Later the sun returned to its place in the sky. That night he called to the moon, saying, "Come, come!" Again it grew dark everywhere. The moon, now split into halves, went to Mohammed, one piece to his left arm and the other to his right. Then, when he said, "Return to your regular place," the two halves reunited and went back to the sky. All of the people observed these miracles.

After Habib had observed these events, he turned to Ebu Cehl and said, "Boo¹¹¹ to you, Ebu Cehl! How could

¹¹⁰ Apparently on one of the outskirts of Mecca where (according to the Encyclopaedia of Islam) the Kurişî /Kuraish/ tribe lived.

¹¹¹ The most common Turkish word for boo is yuha. The narrator here uses tuu.

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you fail to see His power? Why didn't you believe in him? These miracles are written about in the Bible. If the sun and moon were both under his spell, how can you have any doubt about his being a prophet?" Then turning toward the mountain, he called, "Don't come to me, Mohammed! I shall come to you." Going then to Kureyiz Mountain, he prostrated himself before Mohammed and said, "O Mohammed

anyone who looks at you with evil intentions have his eyes blinded! Even your enemy Ebu Cehl praised you greatly. O Blessed Mohammed, I have just one more request to make to you

"What is it, Habib?"

"Come with me to my tent, and I shall explain my wish to you there. If I explain my request here, everyone would hear it." Habib led him to the tent, where his daughter was sleeping. With her were her mother and Habib's brother, who had one blind eye. Habib said to those in the tent, "Come and accept the religion of Moham-

and kiss his hand." Then, turning again to Mohammed, he said, "O Mohammed, let me pull back this blanket.

/1977 Tape 16 begins here./ I have a daughter here who lacks eyesight and has shrunken arms and legs. Only I,

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my family, and God know about this. Can you cure her?"

"I shall ask God about this. If He wills it, we can do it. All strength comes from Him." Placing his right hand on the girl's forehead, he said, "Bismillahirrahmanirrahim."¹¹²

The eyes of the girl were suddenly opened. Then her arms and legs were restored. Although she was only a three-or-five-month-old baby, she started speaking and said, "O Mohammed, you are the last of the prophets."

When Habib saw this, he took Mohammed's hand and said, "Forgive me I did not believe that you could do that. May the eyes that don't believe the miracles you perform be blinded!"

Then Habib's brother spoke up, saying, "Mohammed, one of my eyes was blinded in an accident. Please place your blessed right hand on my eyes, too."

After Mohammed had placed his right hand on the man's eyes, he said, "Bismillah." Immediately the blind eye of

¹¹²Bismillah (In the name of Allah) is the first part of the expression with which the Koran opens, Bismillah-irrahmanirrahim (In the name of Allah the Compassionate and Merciful). The full expression is used at the beginning of prayer services. Bismillah is usually uttered at the beginning of any undertaking in order to gain divine approval (or good luck) for that venture.

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Habib's brother began once again to see.

Nobody from the outside saw what happened in the tent of Habib's family. It was all kept secret. But people observed that the blind eye of Habib's brother had been healed. They saw the result of what had happened.

But even after all this evidence of Mohammed's favor in the sight of God, Ebu Cehl went on saying that the man was no more than a magician. His eyes were blind in a different way. He could see clearly the divinely inspired power of Mohammed, but he did not believe what he was. His family home in Mecca has now become a latrine. Yes, it became a latrine.

Habib and his army returned to their own country. After that, the number of Moslems increased rapidly and steadily. Habib permitted his people to become Moslems, and the Moslem world spread more and more. The voice of Islam was heard from north to south.

Now we shall give the news about Hamzai Sahip Kïran. Years passed rapidly, and the first seven years of the truce had been completed, but Hamzai Sahip Kïran had granted Nuşirvan an additional three years. He had offered a ten-year armistice to Nuşirvan. Now let us

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turn to the Mirror of Fate¹¹³ and find out what we can see in it. What does it reveal to us?

Gentlemen, the people who lived in this world before our time often had greater difficulties than those we experience. One day a man entered the Mescit İaksa and asked, "O light of my life, when the giants were killed, why were three of those infidel, demonic giants spared?"

When Solomon, the son of David, was on the throne, he said to the three infidel giants, "I could have had you smashed to pieces except for the fact that God had already assigned the power of controlling your fates to three Arabians." The fate of the first one, the Giant, had been assigned to Hamzai Sahip Kıran. The fate of the second one, the Kasır¹¹⁴ Giant, had been put in the control of İmam Ali.¹¹⁵ And the fate of the third,

¹¹³Few objects have had as much folklore generated about them as has the mirror. Middle Eastern literature and mysticism are filled with mirrors, real and figurative. For an analysis of the concept of the world as a mirror of God's will, see Chapter 3 of Eva de Vitray Meyerovich's Mystique et poésie en Islam. For discussion of the mirror in Middle Eastern religious art, see Chapter 6 of Johann Christopher Bürgel's The Feather of Simurgh.

¹¹⁴We do not understand the meaning of this word.

¹¹⁵Later to become Caliph Ali, fourth caliph

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the Black Giant, had been given over to Çırman Şah.¹¹⁶

now, in the time of the Prophet, the people began complaining about the abuses they were suffering at the hands of the Red Giant. They said to Prophet Mohammed, "This giant cuts off our source of water. He has taken many people from among us, people whom he either eats or enslaves. Help us, O Mohammed! Help us!"

When Prophet Mohammed looked at the faces of the men around him, Hamzai Sahip Kiran at tha moment jumped to his feet. He said to the Prophet Mohammed, "My master, order me to do so, and I shall go and kill him."

Prophet Mohammed answered, "Hamzai, God made you stand up, and God made you say what you said. I cannot, therefore, tell you to sit down." (Hamzai was the uncle of the Prophet Mohammed. "I cannot tell you to go. Orders come from God. You are older than I, and you are my uncle. You have recieved your orders from God, not from me."

¹¹⁶ Kirman is a province of Iran, and Kırmanşah is its capital. A leader named Kirman Şah (or Kerman Şah) is the protagonist of a long heroic romance. The ATON text of this romance (also by Behçet Mahir) has been translated but not processed at this time (May 1993). --Although he does not usually do so, Behçet here uses the sound Ch for K, a pronunciation common in extreme eastern Anatolia, especially among people speaking or influenced by Azeri Turkish--like the Karakalpak Turks of Kars Province.

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When Hamzai Sahip Kıran buckled on his sword, one of those who had been seated near him asked, "How many days will you be gone, Hamzai? How long will it be before you are back here?"

Hamzai answered, "I shall be back in seventeen days." But because he failed to say İnşallah,¹¹⁷ God turned each one of the days he thought he would be away into a year! (That is the reason I request that you say İnşallah for everything that you wish to do. You must remember God's name and say "İnşallah!" You must also start doing anything only after first having said "Bismillah." If you undertake to do anything, even to eat, first say "Bismillah," because the virtue of "Bismillah" is great. Even before you start reading your Koran you should say "Bismillah.")

Hamzai traveled night and day until he finally reached the fortress of the Red Giant. But because everything is under God's dome, it does not matter how far you travel, for you will still be beneath that dome.

(One day I went to call upon Zinci Ağa.¹¹⁸ I found him

¹¹⁷If Allah is willing or God willing.

¹¹⁸An ağa (English, agha) is a rural landowner, sometimes wealthy, often powerful. The word does not indicate an official title but describes an economic status. They are often the principal employers of farm workers, and they

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outside staring at the sky. He was a very much respected man who liked me, and so I did not interrupt him but stood patiently near him for thirty minutes. When he noticed me after a while, he said, "Oh, Mahir, come here and sit down with me! Aleykümselam!"¹¹⁹

He ordered tea, and after we had finished drinking that tea, I asked him, "Zinci Ağa, why were you standing with your head back looking upward for so long?"

He said, "I was looking at the dome of God. Did you guess why I was doing that?"

"Yes," I answered. "I stood by your side for thirty minutes and I thought that you were probably looking at the dome of the sky and comparing it with mere man-made domes."

are often viewed by their employees as harsh, driving, and abusive. The term ağa is also used in a complimentary way, as an honorific, for a distinguished or just older person than the one using the term. Thus an older brother is called ağa bey by his younger siblings. Ağa bey may be used as a deferential term to one older or more prestigious than the speaker. A taxi driver may refer to his passenger as ağa bey; a salesman speaking to a male customer may call him ağa bey.

¹¹⁹Selamünaleyküm/Aleykümselam--traditional exchange of greetings between Moslems not well acquainted with each other. It means roughly May peace be unto you/And may peace be unto you, too. If Selamünaleyküm is not responded to, the speaker should be wary of the one so addressed. Only the response is given here. Perhaps Zinci Ağa simply assumed that the initial greeting had been made.

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He said to me, "Mahir, you are very intelligent. I was indeed looking at God's dome and comparing it with those made by human beings."

We talked with each other for some time. There were three men with whom I used to talk at length in those days. We used to tell our problems and our concerns to each other. Those men were Zinci Ağa, Kindar Hakkı Efendi,¹²⁰ and a dervish named Hacı¹²¹ Mehmet Baba, who used to sell soap. We used to tell all of our problems to each other, and when we did so, we never hid anything. All three of them passed away and are now beneath the surface of the ground. I am the only one who is still alive.

Gentlemen, Hamzai traveled night and day. Along the way he saw an old man. Looking at this old man, he thought "Alas, neither human being nor jinn lives in this desolate area--nobody. Why, then, is there an old man standing here?" He dismounted from his horse.

¹²⁰ A mild honorific, comparable to Sir, it usually follows a first name: Hasan Efendi. At one time it was used to show respect to distinguished people, but it has become so devaluated in the twentieth century that it now is used only for servants and children.

¹²¹ Hacı means pilgrim. One who has made the pilgrimage to Mecca has this honorific prefixed automatically and permanently to his name.

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The old man said, "Stop, Hamzai! Stay where you are I should be the one to come to you!" The old man was the Blessed Hızır ¹²²

"How did he come to know my name?" Hamzai asked himself.

The Blessed Grandfatherly Patron Saint ¹²³ went to Hamzai and kissed his eyes. Then he said, "Thank God I have kissed the eyes which have looked upon the Prophet Mohammed."

(Someone once asked the Prophet Mohammed, "O Mohammed is there really someone named Hızır?"

Mohammed answered, "Yes, Hızır really exists, but he is not seen by everyone. He remains invisible much of the time. He often goes to the rescue of those in deep distress.)

¹²²Once a water deity and fertility god--and still both those figures to most farmers in southern Turkey--Hızır is more widely known now as a granter of wishes, a last-minute rescuer from disaster, and a special messenger and agent of God. In these latter three functions he appears fairly frequently in Turkish folktales. Not mentioned by name in the Koran, a chapter of that work was later named after him. He is assumed to be the person instructing Moses in Chapter XVIII of the Koran, where he is referred to by God simply as "our servant."

¹²³The narrator's words here are Hazreti Piri Dede.

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Hızır said to Hamzai, "When you return, tell our Prophet not to forget to serve as my intercessor on Day of Judgment.--Oh, Hamzai, because you failed to İnşallah, God lengthened your journey from seventeen days to seventeen years. But I have prayed for you, requesting that God keep you from ever feeling fatigue, hunger, or thirst." Having spoken in this way, the old man suddenly vanished.

Between this evening and tomorrow evening when we meet again, all of the seventeen years of Hamzai's punishment will have passed. We shall stop telling the story for now, and we shall continue it tomorrow evening.

/December 12, 1977--Part IV of "Hamzai Sahip Kıran"/

Before I return to our story, I wish to recite for you some quatrains of the late Summani Father

A dirty dungeon is our earthly life
 In all my views of it I see but blots,
 Both in our errors and our better deeds;
 In everything the blots and stains prevail.

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Tyrants abuse Islam without rebuff.
 Both left and right betray the virtuous man.
 With gardeners thieves, the gardens yield no
 fruit

As honor fades, it is replaced by blots.

 scholars fail to give each other air
 They fail to offer or to seek advice
 artisan neglects to use his skills,
 every craft and trade is smudged with spots.

With every passing day our lot grows worse.
 There is no remedy for all its ills
 The miserable, the poor endure their plight,
 And weakening wisdom sullies all good thoughts.

/In the last two quatrains it is Behçet Mahir, not Summani,
 who continues this jeremiad.7

Behçet laments the failure of our youth
 Who curse the past but fail to set new goals,
 Who cannot see beyond the present time,
 To empty days, the heirs of all their ways.

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Declining Summani foretold our lot,
 Foresaw our workers' sloth and negligence,
 Guessed at the vapid sermons preached to us,
 Anticipated all our blemishes

Gentlemen, please begin to quiet down. As you can see, in all of this noise I have almost forgotten what I was going to say. If someone is speaking, it is proper to listen and discover what he has to say. Whether he says good things or bad things, listen to everything he says, and then keep the thoughts that may be useful to you and leave the rest behind. Let me also say that moving new thoughts through your mind may in itself be beneficial. If water stands in the same place for a long period of time, it may develop a very bad smell after a while.

Yes, Hamzai Sahip Kiran had been continuing on his way. After a while he saw a fortress which belong to Firdevs Shah.¹²⁴ The guards at the gate reported to Firdevs Shah, "There is a rider approaching. He and his horse are each more magnificent than the other." This Firdevs Shah had dreamed of the Prophet Mohammed, and both he and all of his people had become Moslems. He

¹²⁴Not identified.

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believed in God with all his heart, and he accepted Mohammed as the last prophet. (Firdevs had only one child, a daughter named Mine Hatun.) Firdevs Shah said to some of his men, "Go and find out who that rider is.

Those men went to Hamzai Sahip Kiran and asked, "Hey stranger, who are you? Where have you come from, and where are you going?"

Hamzai Sahip Kiran answered them with a question of his own. "Who sent you to me?"

The shah of this fortress sent us."

"What is his name?" asked Hamzai Sahip Kiran.

The soldiers replied, "His name is Firdevs Shah."

Hamzai then said, "Go and tell him that I have come from Mecca and that I do not have anything to do with this fortress. I am only passing through, and I shall continue my journey." When they again asked who he was, he said, "My name is Hamzai Sahip Kiran."

Firdevs Shah had heard that Hamzai Sahip Kiran was going to be in that area at about that time. He said to his men, "He is the uncle of the Prophet Mohammed. Go and make him very welcome." The soldiers did as Firdevs Shah had ordered, and they welcomed Hamzai Sahip Kiran with great respect

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When Hamzai was brought into the presence of the owner of that fortress, Firdevs Shah said, "I have just one child, a beloved¹²⁵ daughter. I should like to join my family to yours by having her married to you."

This confused Hamzai Sahip Kiran, who said to himself, "I did not even mention his daughter, but here he offers to give her to me in marriage!" After a few moments he said to Firdevs Shah, "Thank you, but please give me some time to think about this."

When night came and everyone else in the fortress had gone to bed, Hamzai Sahip Kiran took his ablutions and performed four rekats¹²⁶ of the prayer service. Shortly after he had gone to bed he had a dream in which the Prophet Mohammed spoke to him: "Hamzai, take Firdev Shah's daughter as a wife. It is your fate to do so, and your offspring from that marriage will bring great benefit to you." Upon hearing this, Hamzai jumped from his bed, renewed his ablutions, and performed four more rekats of prayer.

¹²⁵The father does not actually use the Turkish equivalent of beloved. He expresses his affection for his daughter by describing her as "a corner of my liver" (ciğerimin kösesi).

¹²⁶A rekat is a series of physical movements and gestures performed during prayer. The number of rekats performed varies with the particular services of which they are a part. At a service at which a dozen or more rekats are required, there is a considerable amount of energy expended.

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In the morning Firdevs Shah went to Hamzai's room and asked him, "What do you have to say about my offer?"

"I have nothing to say about it, but someone more important than I did. In a dream last night, I received the answer to your question. If you give your daughter to me, I shall accept her, but I must tell you first that I am in love with Mehli Nigâr, the daughter of Nuşirvan."

Firdevs Shah said, "That is all right, Hamzai."

The two were married according to the custom of the day, and after sherbet¹²⁷ had been drunk, he entered the bridal chamber with the daughter of Firdevs Shah before he did with the daughter of Nuşirvan, Mehli Nigâr.

On the following day Hamzai Sahip Kıran said to his father-in-law, "O Firdevs Shah, I am on a mission which I still have to complete. With your permission, I should like to leave now." After securing that permission he said to Mine Hatun, "My beloved wife, if we have a daughter, you may name her what you wish; but if we have a son, I want him to be named Hamzai Yunan." He then departed from the fortress of Firdevs Shah.

¹²⁷In the Middle East sherbet is a fruit drink, not the frozen confection it is in some countries. It is often drunk at ceremonies as a token of commitment or pledge.

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Mine Hatun was pregnant, and Hamzai Sahip Kiran continued on his journey. After nine months, nine days, nine hours, Mine Hatun gave birth to a child. It was a boy, and Mine Hatun named him Hamzai Yunan. While the child is growing, let us turn to the activity of Hamzai Sahip Kiran. After a year had passed, he reached the garden of Solomon, son of David. There he saw a sign which said, "O my beloved child, remember me to the last prophet. Give him my greetings and tell the Prophet Mohammed not to withhold his intercession on my behalf on the day of the Last Judgment. Oh, Hamzai, I was here long before you, and I had seven large stones placed here. The first three have already been thrown, and the fourth is for you to throw. After you there will be three more visitors to this garden, each of whom will cast the stone left here for him. These stones were assigned to different people according to their respective ages and strengths. Oh, my son Hamzai, do not be overly influenced by your great power. I ruled this land long before you came into this world, and I can tell you that the end of this mortal is death. Live all your life, until the very last day of it, doing good deeds. Do not leave God's way. Later,

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after three days' travel, you will come to another garden, the Garden of God's Wisdom. That Garden of God's Wisdom does not look at all like my garden. You will see many different things there. When you blink your eyes, you will see before you there a sign, which you will be able to read

Hamzai looked along the right side of the garden and he saw where the seven stones had been placed. He saw that three of the stones had already been removed. His name was on the fourth. Picking up this fourth stone, he threw it, saying, "O my great God, You are mighty. You are able to do everything."¹²⁸

Then Hamzai Sahip Kiran remounted his horse, Askeri Devzade, and rode steadily for three days. On the fourth day he came to a garden with a sign on the gate which read "Garden of God's Wisdom." Dismounting from Askeri Devzade, he said to himself, "I cannot very well enter this garden with my horse."

¹²⁸Up to this point in the tale there is no clue to the symbolic significance of the seven stones or why they were to be thrown--at what?--by seven different men who came along. In Turkish tales Solomon seems to be a convenient agent of various kinds of supernatural lore, but there is no suggestion as to why he is a mover in this episode.

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Before he entered the garden, however, he saw by the gate a pregnant dog whose puppies, though still in the womb, were barking at him. Hamzai thought, "O God, what is this? They are not yet even born, but they are barking at me!" After entering the garden, the first thing that he observed were forty pomegranates, thirty-nine of which were empty, and the fortieth was only half full. As he passed the pomegranate tree, he said, "O God, what kind of wisdom of Yours is this?" Then he saw a group of people sitting around two large pieces of meat, one of which was permitted /ḥelal/ for human beings and the other forbidden /ḥaram/. For some reason which he did not understand, all of the people were eating only the forbidden meat. Then he came to a fire over which were hung three cauldrons. The two cauldrons on the outside were full of something which was boiling. The center was empty, though the fire beneath it was burning furiously. When he walked a little farther, he came upon a man who was struggling to lift a large bundle of wood. Because the bundle was too heavy for him, he could not lift it, but in spite of this, he kept adding piece after piece of wood to the top of the bundle. Then, with the additional weight on the bundle, he again tried

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in vain to lift it. Passing on, Hamzai came to a bird who was reading the Koran as it pecked on a tree. Next he came to a group of people who were crying and begging something from a beautiful young lady seated upon a throne, the young lady just looked past the people and laughed. Finally he came upon a camel, into the open mouth of which water of the ocean was flowing.

When Hamzai Sahip Kıran blinked his eyes, he found himself outside of the garden and standing beside his horse. Then he saw nearby a large sign upon which were written explanations of all of the things he had witnessed in the garden. This sign read, "Hamzai Sahip Kıran, you first a pregnant dog whose puppies were barking at you from their mother's womb. That represents that fact that the younger generation will one day no longer have any respect its elders. It will fail to behave properly or speak courteously. The pomegranates were meant to show that eventually thirty-nine out of every forty people will be completely lacking in religious faith, and the fortieth will be only a halfway believer. /Behçet Mahir addressing the audience quite outside the tale itself: "God keep us from ever seeing such days!"

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Several members of the audience: "Amen Amen!"

third thing that you saw was the group eating forbidden meat. This represents the unfaithfulness of men who leave their wives and consort with other women. In doing so, they are forsaking what is permitted and indulging in what is forbidden. The fourth thing you observed was the set

three cauldrons. The two filled cauldrons stand for rich people, and the overheated empty cauldron between them stands for the poor, who will burn with hunger and suffer even as they stand between wealthy people. The fifth spectacle that you observed was that of a man trying unsuccessfully to lift a very heavy load of wood and yet adding more wood to the load. This indicates that we shall

the time when people will not only sin from dawn to dark but will also fail to repent of their sins. Each failure to repent will add still more weight to their heavy load of sin. The seventh scene showed a bird reading

Koran but at the same time pecking away at a tree.

represents the preacher who will include in his sermon the virtue and high morality of the Koran but who will himself later engage in sin. He illustrates the fact that knowledge without sincere belief is not enough. The

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eighth scene pictured a beautiful young woman seated upon a throne and ignoring those who begged her for help. world seems as attractive as that beautiful young lady, but, like her, it will smile at us and lead us astray. It will give us the impression that there is no death, no final ending. Finally, you saw a camel that was drinking an ocean of water. That camel was like those people who are never satisfied with what they have in this world. They always want more, more, more

Hamzai blinked his eyes again, and both the sign and the garden disappeared. Hamzai then continued on his way. After a while he saw again the old man, Grandfather Hızır. He immediately dismounted from his horse, Askeri Devzade, and embraced the old man. Grandfather Hızır then said, "My beloved son, you are now getting quite close to your destination, but from this point forward you will have to be committed to your faith with all your heart. You must believe in and trust God completely. If you encounter difficulties, you must seek their solution from God. is even closer to you than you are to yourself!" The Patron Grandfather gave him this advice and said that he was leaving him in the care of God. Hızır then vanished

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Gentlemen, now let us hear some information about the tyrannical giant. Solomon, son of David, had known this giant long before this, and he had said to the giant, "I could have you killed and torn into pieces, but it is not in my fate to do so. You will die at the hands of Hamzai Sahip Kıran. The appointed hour when Hamzai will kill you has already been set.

When most of the giants had been killed, there were three allowed to continue life for a while longer. One of them would eventually be killed by the caliph Ali, one by Kirman Şah, and the third by Hamzai Sahip Kıran. This third giant took every precaution to avoid Hamzai Sahip Kıran.

Hamzai finally came to Crystal Mountain¹²⁹, which was aglow with fire at its base but covered with snow at its peak. Hamzai rode Askeri Devzade through the fiery part in order to reach the snowy peak above. Only with God's assistance would he be able to have reached the snow-covered top of the mountain. He prayed, "O my great

¹²⁹The context more than the words in the text suggests the title used here. The actual words of the narrator are Billuri Elzem (Crystal Indispensable).

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God, the helper of those in trouble, now help me to pass unharmed through this fiery zone." After he had uttered those words, a strong wind arose. It at once blew out the fire below and melted the snow above. The weather became pleasantly warm

Gentlemen, this giant secluded himself in a very deep well.¹³⁰ As Hamzai was approaching that well, he suddenly heard a voice speaking to him. It said, "Hamzai, you will not return without having killed this giant, no matter how much time it takes to do so. Because you did not say, 'Inşallah,' God lengthened your seventeen-day journey to seventeen years."

Hamzai saw a very heavy smoke rising from the mouth of the well. He tied Askeri Devzade to a stone. Then tying himself to another stone with a very long rope, he lowered himself very slowly into the well. When he reached the bottom of the well, he heard a very strange noise. Turning his head to right and left to locate the source of the

¹³⁰In Turkish folktales the word often does not mean well literally. The secondary meanings of pit or deep hole would be more appropriate when the protagonist descends to the underworld via a break in the surface of the earth; in such cases the "well" rarely contains any water.

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noise, he saw a very beautiful girl who from her waist downward had the body of a snake. She said, "Oh, Hamzai, welcome, welcome!"

Surprised, Hamzai asked, "How do you know my name? How do you know who I am?"

She answered, "Solomon, the son of David, told us about you, and then later God told us about you. I am the Sultana of Snakes, and my name is Şahmeran.¹³¹ Before you arrived here I warned all of my people not to harm you, and so you should not be afraid of them. [Tape 17 begins here.] Every one of them will help you. O Hamzai, I should like to make a request of you. Ask the Prophet Mohammed not to forget to intercede for me on the Day of Judgment

"All right. I shall tell him that," said Hamzai.

Hamzai Sahip Kiran started to search for the giant in the depths of that cave as well as above ground. With sword in hand, he pursued the giant, but for some time he did not get any closer to the monster. The giant had a

¹³¹Şahmeran, ruler of the snakes, appears in many Turkish tales, but this serpent monarch is usually male. In most tales about him, his life is sacrificed so that his flesh may be used to cure an ailing padishah.

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very keen sense of smell, and he could detect Hamzai's approach by his human scent. Dreading the arrival of Hamzai, the giant had for years been building barricades and other means of defense, and he kept retreating to one of these after another as Hamzai approached. As this pursuit continued, more and more time passed. Hamzai had said he would return in seventeen days, but because he had failed to say, "İnşallah," God had extended those seventeen days to seventeen years. Those seventeen years had now expired, and his son, Hamzai Yunan, had reached the age of fifteen.

In the meantime Ömer Ümmiye had been visiting Mehli Nigâr every month, and every time that he did so, Mehli Nigâr would ask him whether Hamzai had returned. He would answer, "No, my coquettish beauty. When he does return I shall inform you of this immediately.

But Hamzai Sahip Kıran had been gone for such a long time that many people felt that he must have died. Nuşirvan decided to take advantage of this situation. He said, "We must use this opportunity well," and he gave orders to his troops to attack the Moslem forces from all directions. The Moslems resisted as hard as they could,

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but Nuşirvan's soldiers kept attacking from all four sides and capturing fortress after fortress. The forces were growing weaker and weaker day by day.

While this was going on, Hamzai Yunan's mother to him, "O my son, your father went to kill a giant, but far he has not returned. I believe that he will soon return, but there has been no message from him. As his son, you have his blood in your veins, and you have an obligation to help the Moslem forces who are growing weaker and weaker every day under the attacks of Nuşirvan's soldiers. Your duty is to help them in their fight. I reared you to be able to help the Moslem cause."

Hamzai Yunan was given a horse and a sword, but it was only his mother and God who knew that he was the son of Hamzai Sahip Kırın. Hamzai Yunan rode to the battle front to join the greatly weakened Moslem forces. There had been many sehits¹³² among them. When the young man saw this, he put his hand on his side and let forth a great shout. Then he said, "If you know me, then you know me; but if you do not know me, I am called Hamzai Yunan." He

¹³²A sehit is a Moslem who had dies in battle for the cause of Islam.

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then began attacking the soldiers of Nuşirvan who were besieging the Moslem fortress and drove them back. When night came, they opened the gates of the fortress and welcomed the young warrior. He then said, "I am Hamzai Yunan, son of Hamzai Sahip Kıran.

Ömer Ümmiye immediately reported this news to Mehli Nigâr. He said, "Mehli, our forces have been rescued, and I have news for you. Hamzai Sahip Kıran is alive, and it was his fifteen-year-old son, Hamzai Yunan, who saved us."

Mehli Nigâr grew very sad. In tears she said, "Oh, I never suspected that Hamzai would marry anyone else! It now seems that whenever he sees a pretty face, he falls in love. I sacrificed my sleep, and I sacrificed my father's love for the sake of Hamzai's love. But he cared nothing for me, for he married someone else and now has a son who is fifteen years old. If he and I had been married, we would now have a son of that same age." Ömer Ümmiye now regretted having given the news to Mehli Nigâr, but it was too late now to do anything about it.

We must return now to Hamzai Sahip Kıran, who was still searching for the giant. One day he approached a very large castle. As he drew closer, the castle gate

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opened and men came riding out toward him. "What do you want?" he asked.

They said, "This castle belongs to the Grapevine Fairy, and she wants to have you come into her presence. It seems that God had caused the Grapevine Fairy to fall in love with Hamzai Sahip Kiran, but Hamzai knew nothing whatsoever about this. No one knows what Fate has prepared for him. Prophet Joseph had no idea that Züleyha¹³³ had developed a passion for him, but God had caused her to have that passion. The women were laughing about her love for Joseph. Her first and last word was always Joseph. One day when she was being teased excessively by the other women, she decided that her love for Joseph was not without cause. She said, "I know that you are laughing at me because of my great love for Joseph, but I shall show you why I have that love. I am going to give you each a cucumber and a knife, and when I shout, 'Joseph, you are to start peeling the cucumber.'" Each woman took a cucumber and a knife and prepared to do as Züleyha had directed. Züleyha called, "Joseph," and the young man entered the room. When the other women saw Joseph's handsome face, they all peeled their fingers instead of the

¹³³The wife of Potiphar the Egyptian.

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cucumbers. Züleyha said, "Do you see now? Do you understand now the reason for my love of Joseph? You saw his face just once, but I see it every day. How do you suppose that I could fail to love him?"

told you before, love is a great and powerful feeling. It is able to conquer anything. You can understand this by observing the condition of Mehli Nigâr while all of these other things were going on. She was crying, "Oh, Hamzai, Hamzai!" But at the same time she was consoling herself by thinking, "Some day Hamzai will marry me, too."

let us gaze into the Mirror of Fortune to see what it will show us. Only seventeen years had passed, but during that time Hamzai Sahip Kiran had suffered a great deal. He went into the presence of the Grapevine Fairy, who said to him, "O Hamzai, God caused me to fall in love with you! I am the padishah of all the fairies.

Hamzai was astonished by what he heard. He stood in silence, quite bewildered. When Hamzai looked into the face of the Grapevine Fairy, there was something that passed from her heart to his heart, as if his heart had been struck by some strange, powerful arrow. What was

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the power? What was that arrow? I shall answer these questions with another story. We shall leave Hamzai there, and I shall tell you a story from Erzurum Province, which is my native region

Once in the past there was a bey¹³⁴ who was very rich. This bey had a servant, a very honest young man, who had worked for him for seven years. One day the bey's wife said to the bey, "Husband, our servant has now been working for us for seven years, and he has been a good man. Let us now show him what kind of a master you are and what kind of a master's wife I am. I shall look for a suitable bride for him, and then after I have found one, you can give him some money with which to start a business of his own. After that has been done, we can let him live in the building which is attached to the back of our own house." The bey liked very much these thoughts of his wife

One day the bey's wife said to their young helper, "Son, get the carriage ready. I am going to take some of the neighborhood girls and go to Cermik¹³⁵ for a day's

¹³⁴In earlier times a bey was a landholder and an aristocrat roughly equivalent to a British baron. Thus bey was similar to the English lord. There are no longer beys of that type. The word, placed after a man's first name, is now a term of respect or flattery: Hasan Bey.

¹³⁵This is Çermik. (In eastern Turkey the sounds

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outing." The servant hitched the horses to the carriage and then drove the bey's wife and the girls to Cermik. When they arrived at Cermik, he pitched a tent for the ladies.

As the wife of the bey and the girls were preparing to go to the hot mineral bath at Cermik, they took off all of their jewelry. The bey's wife wrapped all of this jewelry in a large handkerchief, but instead of putting the handkerchief into a chest in the tent, as she had intended to do, she placed it in her bosom. When they were ready to go to the bath, the woman said to her servant, "Get the meal ready for our return, and you should eat something, too."

She then started walking to the bath with her girls. Along the way she stumbled and fell to the ground. Although no one noticed it, when she fell, the handkerchief full of jewelry dropped from her bosom and slid under a stone.

The bey's wife was not injured, and so they proceeded to the bath. After they had finished bathing, they returned

of the Turkish letters c, ç, and k often deviate from their pronunciation in Standard Turkish.) Çermik is a village or nahiye just west of Erzurum. It is named after the hot-spring bath there, for the word çermik (synonymous with kaplıca) means hot-spring bath--much preferred to baths using furnaces to heat their water.

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to the tent, where the servant had the meal prepared for them. But when the bey's wife opened the chest, she could not find within it the handkerchief of jewels which she thought she had left there. She immediately called the servant and asked, "Son, have you seen a handkerchief full of jewelry which I placed in the chest before we went to the bath?"

The helper answered, "No, lady, I have seen no such handkerchief. I did not touch the chest during your absence

She repeated the same question, and the helper gave the same answer. Because the jewelry was very valuable, she wanted some explanation of what had happened to it. She questioned him very rigorously and accused him of having stolen the jewelry. They then returned home in great haste

The woman went to her husband and said, "Sit down, Husband. I have something very serious to tell you. It has snowed upon the mountain that we had thought was safe I am very sad, because the male servant who has hitherto always been so honest today stole all of my and the neighborhood girls' jewelry. But he denies this completely."

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The bey called the helper to him and asked him the same questions that his wife had asked. He got the same answer that his wife had received. This made the bey very angry, and so he decided to take the helper to court.

On the day of the trial the judge said to the helper, "Son, take your ritual ablutions and then take an oath in the name of God that you neither took nor even saw the jewelry.

But when the helper had taken his ablutions and had placed his hand upon the Koran to take his oath, he saw the sword of God descending from the ceiling over the head of his master because the master had accused him falsely. When he removed his hand from the Koran, he saw that the sword ascended again into the ceiling. The judge said to him again, "Son, do not be afraid. Tell us the truth."

The helper thought for a moment. He looked at his master, at his master's wife, and at their children. He thought, "If I take that oath on the Koran, I believe that sword will cut off my master's head. Therefore, I shall not take that oath." To the judge he said, "I cannot take an oath upon the Koran. Tell me how many years I shall be

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required to work to pay for the missing jewelry."

judge said to the bey, "Your servant was afraid to take an oath on the Koran. Tell me how much time he would have to work to pay for the jewelry."

"Very well," answered the bey. "To do that he would have to work for seven years without any pay." The servant agreed to this, and he began at once to work for another seven years.

passed, and at the end of a year the bey's wife said to the helper, "Son, take me to Cermik again. Last year at this same time we went to Cermik, and I had a very bad experience there. This time I want to go there and enjoy myself."

The helper got everything ready, and they went to Cermik again. There he pitched the tent at exactly the same spot it had been the year before. The bey's wife then said, "This time I shall give you my jewelry with my own hand so that we shall not have any confusion about it later

helper said, "Yes, lady. Now I am placing your jewelry in this chest. When you return from the bath, I shall give it back to you. In this way you will be

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able to go anywhere you wish with peace of mind

The wife left the tent and started toward the bath. Along the way she saw her old handkerchief on the ground under the edge of a stone. Taking the handkerchief up from the ground, she opened it up and found inside all of the jewelry that she thought had been stolen. She was greatly surprised and puzzled. Returning at once to the tent, she said, "Son, I have found all of the jewelry that I lost last year. But, son, you knew that you had not stolen it. Why did you not take an oath to that effect?"

The helper said, "I shall answer that question only if we return to the same court and the same judge."

They again returned home from Cermik in great haste. Then the master, his wife, and their helper went back to the same judge. After the recovery of the lost jewelry had been explained to the judge, the judge asked the helper, "What was the matter, son? Why didn't you tell the truth to us a year ago here in this court?"

The helper answered, "O judge, when I was about to take the oath, with my hand upon the Koran, I saw the sword of God descending upon the head of my master. If I had taken the oath, my master's head would have been

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cut off by that sword. That is the reason that I did not take the oath."

The judge then arose and kissed both the eyes of the helper.¹³⁶

Oh gentlemen, you may not be able to see the sword of God, but it is there anyway. If you act unjustly or injure defenseless people, the sword of God will punish you in one way or another. You will be severely punished. There is a proverbial piece of verse that warns us about this:

Avoid the curse of those without defense.

Their curse can bring you lengthy suffering.

A faith in God can shatter even thrones

And make the rulers suffer at great length.

He who is cursed by those he has oppressed will never prosper. The curse of a sufferer damns the oppressor to failure.

Hamzai Sahip Kiran fell in love with the Grapevine

¹³⁶This interpolated story is a folktale in its own right. In order to avoid losing its identity entirely in this extremely long tale, we have (for indexing and cataloguing purposes) entered it in the ATON holdings as No. 1581. --Five months later (May 1977), Behçet Mahir inserted this same tale into his rendition of one of the greatest Middle Eastern love stories, "Ferhat and Şirin" (ATON No. 1701).

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Fairy's appearance. He therefore married this girl, too. Then he said to his new bride, "O Grapevine Fairy, O my great beauty. I did not even know that you were here, but God led me to you and made me fall in love with you. But I have been traveling for seventeen years on a mission that is still not completed. I must kill the red giant who lives in this area."

The Grapevine Fairy's subjects had been complaining for some time about the abuses they suffered from that giant. Hamzai Sahip Kiran finally caught up with the giant while he was sleeping. He drew his sword quietly and approached the giant. Then Hamzai gave a shout so loud that it was heard in all four corners of the world.

shout was not only a battle cry but it was also an expression of Hamzai's great fatigue. After seventeen years he was so tired that his mother's milk ran out of his nose.¹³⁷ If I were to attempt to tell you about all of the difficulties he had to contend with during those seventeen years, this story could not be completed in an entire year. Because of its great length, storytellers

preceded me told this tale in one word instead of

¹³⁷ Annesinde emdiği sūt burnundan gelmek.

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three. So I am telling the story in the same way that they did--with one word instead of three words. One word to the wise is sufficient.

When the giant was awakened by Hamzai's great shout, he said, "Ah-h-h, Hamzai, you have come!"

"Yes, infidel, I have come. Get up and fight. It is your right to attack first. Come on!" (The first attack belongs to your enemy. When he has used his turn without success and all his hopes are gone, then you invite him to join the Moslem religion. If he accepts your invitation, he will become your brother. If he refuses you will then kill him. But the first attack belongs to your enemy, not to you. This giant had seven heads and fourteen eyes. He made his first move, but it was wasted. Then Hamzai made his first move, which split the giant's shield into halves; there were words of a prayer written on Hamzai's sword. (I always say that we do not have anything greater than the Koran. The answers to all of our problems are written in the Koran.)

There were three great medical doctors in history. The first one was the Blessed Lokman.¹³⁸ The second was

¹³⁸Legendary Arabian sage, among whose many roles was that of physician.

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Eflatûn Zaman.¹³⁹ And the third was Çüllü Hekim.¹⁴⁰

The Blessed Lokman found his answers to medical problems in herbs. He even found a cure for death in herbs. Herbs could speak, and they could speak so well that they even chanted the ninety-nine names of God. Lokman's real name was Camasep; the word lokman simply means doctor.¹⁴¹

When he found the cure for death, Lokman said, "From now on no one will have to be buried in the earth." Wish-
ing to test this cure, Lokman cut Apprentice Joseph to
pieces and then poured his medicine over the parts. After
a short while the apprentice's body was reunited, and he
stood up. Lokman then said to Joseph, "Now it is your
turn to cut me to pieces and pour the medicine on the parts
of my body. I found the cure for death, but we shall all
still have to go through the Last Judgment. I do not want
to be one of those questioned about his deeds on earth.

¹³⁹Plato.

¹⁴⁰Unidentified.

¹⁴¹Although one cannot dogmatize about what is "correct" or "incorrect" in a folktale, one can say that this sentence indicates confusion on the part of an aging storyteller of considerable fame. Camasep is a character usually associated with the snake king Şahmeran. See Şahmeran tales in ATON. Lokman or Luqman was the actual name of the ancient legendary doctor.

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(Gentlemen, we must all give thought to the day of the Last Judgment. Don't think, "I cheated this or that person. I committed many injustices against him. He took me to court, but I won the case. He could not do anything to me." Don't say that you have won any case in this world. What will you do on that day? How will you answer the questions that God will ask you? Don't say, "Oh, I killed that person and thereby got my revenge." You may have gotten your revenge in this world, but have you considered how the matter may go in the next world? Gentlemen, we must all face the Day of Judgment. We will be questioned, and we will be judged on the basis of our deeds in this mortal world.

Yes, gentlemen, Apprentice Joseph cut Lokman to pieces as he had been directed. But at that very moment God called Gabriel to him and said, "Gabriel, Lokman has found a cure for death. Go and knock the apprentice's arm so that he spills the medicine against death." The medicine was spilled at once upon the ground.

Only three parts of Lokman's body were touched by any of the medicine. Those three parts came to life and cried out, "Joseph, pour the medicine on the other parts!

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Pour it!" But Joseph was helpless. There was nothing that he could do to save Lokman ¹⁴²

After Lokman's time there was his student Plato. Plato found the answers to medical problems in the Koran. ¹⁴³ He read the Koran very carefully. One day when he was walking along with the Koran under his arm, he was met by Gabriel on a bridge. Gabriel asked Plato, "Where are you going?"

Plato answered, "I am going to a certain mountain to get the herb which can cure death. I read about it in the Koran."

¹⁴²We have found no evidence in any other folktale or any scholarly study that the life of the legendary Lokman ended in this way.

¹⁴³This whole passage on Plato is unusual. All of its action is associated with Lokman in most folk accounts. Inasmuch as Plato is outside the Arabic/Turkish tradition, Turkish peasants know virtually nothing about him beyond his name. Books were marvelous and mysterious objects to the illiterate masses, and most wise men, sages, and magicians impressed others by carrying some tome--never mind its subject matter!--and consulting it (or pretending to consult it) for information. Lokman often carried a notebook into which he had written all of the medical knowledge he had accumulated. He never consulted the Koran, which was compiled more than 800 years after Plato's death and an even longer time after Lokman's death. Furthermore, there is precious little medical knowledge in the Koran.

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Gabriel said, "Very well! If you are such a learned man, you can probably tell me where Gabriel is at very moment."

Plato answered, "Let me look in my book." He opened the Koran, read from it for a minute, and then said, "He is neither in the sky nor on the ground. He is on water."

As they stood there on the bridge, Gabriel said, "Look again, and more carefully this time."

"All right," said Plato, and when he looked into the Koran again, he understood. He said, "You are Gabriel."

Gabriel fluttered his great wings, and in doing so, he knocked the book out of Plato's hands and into the water. Only three pages remained in the hands of Plato, but from those three pages was derived all medical knowledge. All of the other pages fell into the river which watered the barley fields along its banks. That is why they now say that barley water can cure many ills

After Plato there came Çüllü Hekim, who could detect the presence of death or the absence of death by means of smell. One day as he was going somewhere, he saw a crowd of people before a certain house. He asked, "What has happened?"

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One of the people of the crowd said, "There was a young pregnant woman here who has died. She died very suddenly in the middle of her period of pregnancy."

Çüllü Hekim sniffed the body of that woman, and the smell told him that she was not really dead. He asked, "Where are the relatives of this woman? I want to inform them that she is not actually dead." When the relatives appeared, he told them of the woman's condition and asked them for a long, narrow piece of glass. He said, "This woman is not dead. The fetus in her womb has grasped her life vein and shut off the flow of her blood. That is the reason that she seems to most people to be dead." He measured and calculated very carefully, and then he inserted the strip of glass into the woman's womb. As soon as he did this, the woman regained consciousness immediately. She became conscious again because the strip of glass had struck the fetus's hand and forced it away from her life vein. Çüllü Hekim said to the people standing there, "When the baby is born, you will see that it has a hole in its right hand." Then he left. Time passed. In fact, a year and two days /sic/ passed, and finally the woman gave birth to a baby girl. It was then seen

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that the baby had a large hole in its right hand. --But, gentlemen, all the doctors in the whole world could not find a cure for death.

The world of Islam had fallen to a very weak condition during the seventeen years that Hamzai Sahip Kiran had been gone on his quest to kill the giant. Hamzai Yunan had received many wounds, and he was growing weaker day by day, just as the whole Moslem force was getting weaker and weaker. But we have forgotten to finish the fight between Hamzai Sahip Kiran and the giant, and we must return to do that. Hamzai Sahip Kiran said, "Ho, giant, you have used your turn and now have nothing to hope for and no way to protect yourself. It is my turn now. Do you recognize the true way of God? Do you accept the Moslem religion and believe in the Prophet Mohammed? If so, then I can forgive you." But when in response the giant began to curse all Moslems, Hamzai drew his sword and cut the giant into two pieces. He struck the giant such a terribly hard blow that his sword also cut the giant's throne in half. After wiping the giant's blood from his sword, Hamzai replaced it in its scabbard. Then he prayed, "O my great God, it was You Who gave me the

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strength to kill this giant, and You gave me the courage to face this giant. I am not even as large as one of the feet of this giant, but with Your help I killed him."

After the giant had been killed, the Grapevine Fairy ordered her fairy forces to take Hamzai to his own country. Before he left, however, she said to him, "Hamzai, we have just been married, but now you are leaving. Do not forget me, Hamzai

"No, my fairy, I shall not forget you." The fairies then returned him to his own country in twenty-four hours.

(Gentlemen, God created human beings, and nothing has been created superior to human beings so far. The human is the best thing that has ever been created in this world.

Back in his own country, Hamzai saw at once that everyone there was engaged in war. This fighting had raised such a large cloud of dust that it hung over the whole country. Hamzai Sahip rode to the battlefield and there he raised one of his loud shouts. Immediately the fighting stopped, and everyone gazed upon Hamzai Sahip Kiran sitting on his horse with great majesty. Hamzai Yunan also saw his father for the first time, and Hamzai

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Sahip Kıran saw the boy but did not recognize his son right away. The father dismounted, and the son did the same. Then Hamzai Yunan ran to his father and threw self at his feet.

Confused, Hamzai Sahip Kıran asked, "Son, who are you?" [Tape 18 begins here.] "What should I call you? To what family do you belong?"

Hamzai Yunan kissed his father's hand and said, "You are my father, and you named me. I am Hamzai Yunan."

Hamzai Sahip Kıran was delighted to find his son there, but he asked him, "Son, you haven't revealed your identity to anyone, have you?" He was worried that Mehli Nigâr might have heard about this son and might have been saddened by the news. Hamzai did not know that Ömer Ümmiye had already informed Mehli Nigâr of the presence of Hamzai Yunan.

All of the Moslem forces were greatly pleased to discover that Hamzai Sahip Kıran had returned alive. began celebrating this happy day, but Hamzai Sahip Kıran's return had a very different effect on the idol worshipers. It made them uncomfortable, even afraid. They said among themselves, "We thought that Hamzai Sahip Kıran was beneath

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the ground by this time, but he isn't!" (But, of course in time Hamzai would go beneath the ground like everyone else.

When Hamzai Sahip Kıran saw what the situation was, he said, "The Moslem world is living in very difficult times. It is my duty to fight until we win this war." Drawing his sword, he passed throughout the length of the battlefield. When the Moslem soldiers saw Hamzai Sahip Kıran's courage, their own courage returned, and they renewed their fighting. Yes, without a shepherd the flock can scatter easily and quickly.

Many of the idol worshipers said, "Stop, Hamzai! We are willing to pay you tribute if you will end the war."

But Nuşirvan rejected that solution. He said, "No, I shall never pay tribute to Hamzai Sahip Kıran. We shall carry on the war in the future." Nuşirvan was the richest and most powerful ruler in the area. But some of the lesser rulers agreed to pay tribute to Hamzai Sahip Kıran in order to make him stop attacking their troops.

Hamzai said to Ömer Ümmiye, "Go and take this good news to Mehli Nigâr and let her know that I have returned alive.

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Ömer replied, "I gave this news to Mehli Nigâr some time ago. She was very happy to hear of your return, but she is also disappointed about you. She is offended by you."

"Why, Ömer?"

Ömer said, "I told her about your son, Hamzai Yunan."

"Why did you do that, Ömer?"

"Oh, Hamzai, after I had told her about him I regretted having done so, but by then it was too late."

Hamzai Sahip Kîran's forces made many attacks against Barber Castle,¹⁴⁴ but they were unable to conquer it. Ali also tried to take it, but he failed, too. They had a very heavy hailstorm during an attack on that fortress during which a Moslem named Ömer, one of the strongest wrestlers, was taken prisoner of war. But Prophet Mohammed received a divine message from God which said, "Mohammed, do not worry. Ali will eventually capture Barber Castle."

You may tell a lie in order to save the helpless from injustice. If you tell a lie for that reason, it is not a sin. Prophet Mohammed was once asked if his people lied. He answered, "No, Moslems do not lie." But

¹⁴⁴Not identified

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still you can lie if you have to do so in order to save Moslems from tyranny.

First you must save your own life and then the lives of your loved ones. Unless you preserve your own life, you cannot preserve the lives of those you love. If you are dead, you cannot very well save others. I am reminded now of one of my poems, which I shall recite for you.

A cloud of smoky grief surrounds my head.
Encircling sorrow aches without a cure.
There is no cure unless a Lokman comes.
A bloody sadness stains my very heart.

This love of mine has driven me insane.
When I'm awake, I'm like the dizzy moth
That flutters round and round the flame of love.
A bloody sadness stains my very heart.

Behçet Mahir now grieves for lovers' grief,
For those who suffer all the pangs I know.
You live within the throb of my own pain.
A bloody sadness stains my very heart.

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You need your life to find the loved one's life. Without your life you cannot offer prayers to God.

Gentlemen, the smaller rulers paid tribute to Hamzai Nuşirvan refused to accept that solution. He was not the strongest ruler in that part of the world, but he had also become one of the most just. He felt, therefore, that he could defeat a thousand Hamzai Sahip Kırans and that there was no one who could defeat him. Hamzai Sahip Kıran never defeated Nuşirvan. Why? Because Nuşirvan was a very just ruler, and his justice saved him from defeat.

One of Nuşirvan's wrestlers fell in love with a girl named Miyase, but her father said, "You must bring me my daughter's weight in gold and silver before I shall give to you." The wrestler went to Nuşirvan's room in tears. Nuşirvan asked this man what was bothering him. When the wrestler explained his difficulty, Nuşirvan ordered his attendants to give the wrestler enough gold silver to pay the bride price for Miyase. Oh-h-h, if someone is as just a man as Nuşirvan was, there is no way he can be defeated.

Hamzai Sahip Kıran knew that inasmuch as Nuşirvan

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fed him throughout his childhood, his sword would never be able to kill that ruler. Hamzai therefore wrote a second letter to Nuşirvan and had Ömer Ümmiye deliver

Ömer took the letter and placed it before Nuşirvan. When the ruler saw Ömer Ümmiye, he grasped his crown and held it tightly, for he knew that Ömer could steal it and it into his pouch without being detected.

Nuşirvan read the second letter from Hamzai Sahip Kïran. It said, "O Nuşirvan, this is my second letter to you. You supported me during my childhood. I ate your bread. As a result of that, I felt that I should go and visit you, but I shall not visit you a second time. Because of our quarrel over Mehli Nigâr, many people have been killed, and if we continue fighting, all of the rest may die, too. Let us end this war. Give your daughter to me. I can get your daughter by means of my sword, but since I ate your bread, I should prefer to get her with your permission

At a meeting of his council, Nuşirvan asked his grand vizier for his opinion about how to settle this matter. The grand vizier said, "O my padishah, God will eventually ask questions about the number of people who

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have been killed here. We have had enough fighting. Your daughter, Mehli Nigâr, wants Hamzai Sahip Kîran as much as he wants her. They want each other, and they have now been wanting each other for a very long time. If you are a just man, a just padishah, you will not cause your daughter to cry any longer. Allow them to be married. Let these two young lovers attain their wish."

But others in the ruler's council said to the grand vizier, "You sit down!" Then turning to Nuşirvan, said, "O Nuşirvan, if you give your blessing to this marriage, people will think that you are a very weak padi-shah and that you are afraid of Hamzai Sahip Kîran. Secondly, Hamzai is a very poor person. How could you see Hamzai as a suitable husband for your only daughter, Mehli Nigâr? You are a very rich and powerful padishah. Don't listen to what your grand vizier says. If there were a hundred Hamzais, they still could not defeat us."

As a result of these latter comments, Nuşirvan did not accept the request in Hamzai Sahip Kîran's letter. He said to Ömer Ümmiye, "Write down my answer, Ömer Ümmiye. Say, 'I do not have any daughter for Hamzai Sahip Kîran, and then deliver this letter to him.'"

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After Ömer Ümmiye had received this answer from Nuşirvan, he went at midnight to the palace of Mehli Nigâr. He said to her, "Mehli Nigâr, some members of your father's council influenced your father again against giving you in marriage to Hamzai. The fighting will now begin again, and many more people will die."

When she heard this report, Mehli Nigâr became even sadder than she had been before. Speaking in tears, said to Ömer, "Give my greetings to Hamzai Sahip Kıran Hasn't he grown tired of using the sword? He can get me without the use of his sword."

Ömer Ümmiye delivered Nuşirvan's letter to Hamzai Sahip Kıran. After reading it, Hamzai ordered his army to prepare to continue the fighting. Every soldier mounted his horse or camel and began riding toward Nuşirvan's country. While this was going on, Nuşirvan had prepared his army for renewed fighting.

Hamzai Sahip Kıran knew that Nuşirvan's army was very strong, but he sent Ömer Ümmiye to determine exactly strong it was. He said, "Ömer, go and study Nuşirvan's army to see just how strong it really is."

Ömer Ümmiye went to the enemy country to get the

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information that Hamzai had requested. Ömer arrived there at midnight and saw that Nuşirvan's army was waiting for the attack of Hamzai's forces. There was no moon that night, and everywhere it was pitch dark. While Nuşirvan's army was sleeping, Ömer began to throw large stones upon them and to shout, "Hamzai Sahip Kıran's army is here! Hamzai Sahip Kıran's army is here! Start fighting them!" Nuşirvan's soldiers were thrown into utter confusion. They began fighting wildly in the dark, but no one knew whom he was fighting. This battle continued until dawn, when they discovered that they had been fighting each other. None of Hamzai's troops were there, and they then realized that all night long they had been killing each other. Yes, the cleverness of Ömer Ümmiye had caused the enemy to spend the night killing each other.

Ömer Ümmiye went back to Hamzai Sahip Kıran and reported on the enemy strength. "But they are fighting among themselves and killing each other. We, on the other hand, are ready to attack."

The Moslem forces moved to the battlefield. Hamzai Sahip Kıran rode out in front of them into the open space between the armies. There he shouted with all of his

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strength, "Ho-o-o-o! I am called Hamzai Sahip Kiran," and then he rode his horse forward at a gallop against the enemy. The battle raged until the end of the day, and all of the streams in the area ran with blood instead of water.

That night Nuşirvan gathered his men and said to them, "The heavenly light of the Fire God is no longer helping us." As you know, they were fire worshipers, and they had been expecting the Fire God to help them.¹⁴⁵ Now the Moslem army was conquering Nuşirvan's fortresses one by one. What had been Nuşirvan's fortresses were steadily becoming Moslem fortresses. Nuşirvan said to his men, "What are we to do? We are losing this war very badly. We are losing a fortress every day to the Moslems. What should we do? Shouldn't we give up and surrender?"

Nuşirvan's men said, "No, no, Nuşirvan! We cannot do that! You are much stronger than Hamzai Sahip Kiran, and you are too just a person to be defeated by him. We shall win this war eventually."

¹⁴⁵ This reference to a Fire God (as well as two earlier such references) indicates quite clearly the historical fact that they were considered to be Zoroastrians. To refer to the Zoroastrians as fire worshipers is a common oversimplification. In the duotheistic religion of Zoroastrianism, Ahura Mazda was the god of the world of light, often symbolized by fire.

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During that meeting Ömer Ümmiye was in the room all the time, but nobody could recognize him because he had disguised himself as one of Nuşirvan's soldiers. Ömer thought, "If I cannot somehow stop Mehdi /one of Nuşirvan's commanders/, he will surely influence Nuşirvan to continue fighting against Hamzai Sahip Kıran." Therefore after the meeting he began to follow Mehdi. If Ömer had wished to kill Mehdi or even Nuşirvan, he would have been capable of doing so, but he was under very strict orders from Hamzai Sahip Kıran not to commit such a crime. Ömer now posed as one of the guards of Mehdi, and when midnight arrived, he went to Mehdi's tent. After he saw that Mehdi was sleeping, Ömer took from his magic pouch a strong herb and held it under Mehdi's nose. After a few minutes Mehdi became completely unconscious. Ömer then put this military commander on his back and carried him to a very isolated place in a nearby forest. There he undressed Mehdi and, after tying him to a tree, he inserted into Mehdi's anus a candle and lighted that candle. Ömer then left him there.

When morning arrived, it was discovered that Mehdi was missing. Everyone began to search for him, but for some time nobody could find him. Then some horsemen were sent to search in places farther and farther from the city

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for Mehdi. After a lengthy search they finally heard the voice of Mehdi. By then his voice was very hoarse from calling and calling for help day and night. In most ways Mehdi was not seriously injured, but he had a very severe red burn all around his anus. They returned him to his tent, but he was too sick to sit up. They asked him, "Who did this to you?"

He answered, "It must have been Ömer Ümmiye.

When Mehdi's experience was reported to Nuşirvan, the ruler laughed. By then Ömer Ümmiye had changed his appearance again, this time disguising himself as one of Nuşirvan's regular soldiers. In the twinkling of an eye he stole Nuşirvan's precious crown. When the palace people realized this, they shouted, "Stop that man! Catch that thief!" But all their effort went for nothing. The crown was gone, and there was no way to recover it.

Now let us find out what Mehli Nigâr was doing at that time. Mehli Nigâr had been thinking and thinking about her situation. She said to herself, "What am I going to do? The fighting between my father and Hamzai will not end soon. They may continue to fight forever. Then she decided to call Ömer Ümmiye.

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When Ömer arrived at her palace, she said to him
 "Oh, Ömer, I have thought and thought about my problem,
 and I have finally found a solution for it. I have said
 to you repeatedly, 'Take me to Hamzai,' but you refused to
 do that. Listen now to what I have decided to do. I shall
 mount a horse, unsheath my sword, and ride against my
 father's army. I shall attack them from one side and you
 will attack from the other. In this way I shall be united
 with Hamzai by the strength of my sword. When I proceed
 in this way, Hamzai will have no responsibility for my
 going to him."

Ömer Ümmiye answered, "O beauty, I cannot say anything
 without consulting Hamzai. I must ask him about this first."

Mehli Nigâr said, "All right, Ömer Ümmiye. Go and
 tell Hamzai about my plan. Then return and tell me his
 final words on this matter."

Ömer Ümmiye left Mehli Nigâr's palace and went to
 Hamzai Sahip Kıran. He told him Mehli Nigâr's idea word
 for word. After listening to this carefully, Hamzai said,
 "Ömer, these words spoke the same thoughts that have been
 crossing my mind. But I said nothing to Mehli Nigâr about
 these thoughts, for I did not wish to force her into a

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difficult position. But inasmuch as her thoughts are the same as mine, ask her if she can make her attack tomorrow evening. I shall attack from another side, and you will do so from a third side, and in that way we shall be able to end this fighting."

Returning to Mehli Nigâr's palace again, Ömer reported Hamzai's words to the girl. "O Mehli Nigâr, I have good news for you! I told Hamzai about your thoughts, and he said that they were the same as his thoughts. He wants you to think about it all again very carefully, however, before you carry out your plan.

Mehli answered, "Ömer, I have been dying forty times every day. I have thought this over very carefully already. It would be better to die just once instead of dying forty times every day. I have made up my mind about this."

Gentlemen, Mehli Nigâr selected a good horse for herself. Then mounting her horse and unsheathing her sword, she passed through her father's army. Ömer Ümmiye attacked from another side, and Hamzai Sahip Kıran advanced from still another side. This battle lasted for three days and three nights, and during that time Mehli Nigâr was wounded. Hamzai said to Ömer, "Mehli Nigâr has received several

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wounds. Take her to my tent and tend to her needs." Following this order, Ömer took Mehli to Hamzai's tent and there wrapped her wounds.

Soon after the battle had begun, messengers arrived at Nuşirvan's palace. They announced, "O Nuşirvan, your daughter has left us and has gone over to Hamzai Sahip Kıran's side."

Nuşirvan asked, "Who came and got her and took her there?"

"Nobody," they said. "She went over to Hamzai by herself, and it was as a result of her own will that she did that." When Nuşirvan heard that, he was stunned. He suddenly realized at that moment that he had lost not only his daughter but also the war

Now let us see what is happening on Hamzai's side of the battlefield. Hamzai gathered all of his wrestlers and said to them, "I did not have any individual combat with Nuşirvan. My only concern was to get Mehli Nigâr. Since she is now here with me, I can no longer continue the war against her father's forces. It would not be proper for me to do so. I got what I wanted." Gathering all of his troops, he turned back toward his own country

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On their way home, they stopped in a deserted area to rest. While they were there, Hamzai noticed a white deer standing on the top of a small hill. He said to his wrestler friends, "I shall shoot at that deer, but my arrow will strike only its ear. When it passes through its ear, it will think that a fly is on its ear, and it will scratch its ear. My arrow will not harm the deer in any other way." Placing an arrow in his bow, Hamzai aimed very carefully. The arrow passed through the deer's ear, and the animal, thinking that it was a fly, began to scratch its ear. Hamzai then turned to Mehli Nigâr and asked, "Did you see that, O Mehli?"

Mehli answered, "Yes, my shah, I saw that, but it must have been the result of a great amount of practice

When Hamzai heard this remark, he became furious. He said, "Vay, vay!"¹⁴⁶ You do not accept my good marksmanship! I do not want to see you any more!" Then turning to Ömer, he said, "Ömer, call the black executioner to me." And when the black executioner arrived, he gave him this command: "Take this woman to an isolated place, kill her, and bring her bloody dress back to me

Mehli Nigâr began to cry. All of the wrestlers

¹⁴⁶Interjection expressing surprise or regret.

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begged Hamzai to change his mind, but he remained steadfast in his decision; he did not alter his position.

The black executioner placed Mehli Nigâr on his horse behind him and started to search for a lonely place. As they were riding along, Mehli said to the black executioner, "If you kill me and take my bloody dress back to Hamzai, he will sooner or later kill you. He made his decision in great haste, and it will not be long before he regrets that decision. He will then hold you responsible for my death, and he may even try to kill you, because you will have been the one who actually took my life. Instead of killing me, catch an animal, kill it, and dip my dress in its blood. Then take the dress to Hamzai as evidence that you have killed me. If you do that, you will not regret it, for I shall some day have occasion to repay you."

The executioner thought for only a moment before he realized how reasonable Mehli Nigâr's remarks were. He took her to his home and hid her there. After Mehli had taken off her dress and given it to him, the black executioner killed an animal and soaked up its blood with her dress. Taking that blood-soaked dress, he returned to Hamzai Sahip Kîran.

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"What did you do, black executioner?" asked Hamzai

"Oh, Hamzai Sahip Kiran, as you ordered me to do, I killed Mehli Nigâr and brought you this dress soaked with her blood

When Hamzai saw Mehli Nigâr's blood-stained dress, he was shocked, and he realized how rash his sudden decision had been. He then said to the black executioner, "I do not want to see you any more. Remove yourself permanently from my presence

When the black executioner heard what Hamzai said, he thought, "I did the right thing. I listened to wise words of Mehli Nigâr and decided not to kill her."

The cow of the black executioner had a calf on the day that Mehli Nigâr arrived there. Mehli Nigâr carried the calf in her arms to her room. To do this, she had to take it up the flight of forty steps that led upstairs to the living quarters of the executioner's house. She petted the calf for a while and then carried it back down forty stair steps to its mother. She did this twice a day. Every morning and every evening she carried the calf up to her room, petted it, and then returned it to its mother. Of course, the calf grew and grew, getting heavier and heavier. And of course as she continued to

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carry it up and down the forty steps of the stairway, Mehli Nigâr became stronger and stronger.

As the days passed, Hamzai Sahip Kiran grew sadder and sadder. He was living with his son, Hamzai Yunan, but his eyes were not seeing anything, for he grieved continuously about the death of Mehli Nigâr. He hardly knew whether he was dead or alive. He did nothing but breathe in and out, not caring about anything that was going on around him. He was frantic with sorrow and with regret for his decision to have Mehli Nigâr killed. He kept her bloody dress, and every time he looked at it, he cried. He thought over and over, "Oh, God, how could I have decided to kill Mehli Nigâr when she was the person for whom I cared most? How could I do that? If I that black executioner, I shall kill him. I shall strangle him with my own hands. How could he kill my Mehli Nigâr? He had no compassion in his heart." But the black executioner was so afraid of Hamzai that he did not leave his house even for a single moment.

The calf reached the age of one year, and Mehli Nigâr was still carrying it in her arms up and down the forty steps twice a day. But, gentlemen, this is as far as we

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can carry our story this evening. We shall continue tomorrow evening by seeing what Mehli Nigâr will do about her situation

/Editorial note: Earlier in this tale the narrator inserted a passage on three legendary physicians: Lokman, Plato, and Çüllü Hekim. This passage was totally unrelated to the story of Hamzai Sahip Kıran, but we included it because there was no break in the recording, and the passage was Behçet Mahir's spontaneous offering, not something solicited. At this point, however, Ahmet Uysal queried the narrator about the three physicians referred to earlier. There followed then a very lengthy question-and-answer dialogue on the three physicians, plus an offshoot anecdote, which had nothing whatsoever to do with the Hamzai story. This extraneous material was recorded on Tapes 13 and 14 (1977), tapes which are primarily devoted to the Hamzai story. We have omitted this extraneous material

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here but have preserved it in ATON tales 1582 and 1583. ATON 1582 contains the earlier unsolicited passage on the three legendary physicians plus the lengthy question-and-answer dialogue between Uysal and Mahir. ATON 1583 contains the anecdote that was an offshoot of that dialogue.⁷

/January 14, 1977--Tape 19

Mehli Nigâr was living at the home of the black executioner. The calf was now a year old, and every since its birth she had been carrying it up and down forty stair steps twice a day. Whenever the calf saw her approach, he stood perfectly still and waited quietly for her to carry him up the flight of forty steps.

Hamzai Sahip Kiran remained very angry at the black executioner, and he made a vow that he would take vengeance against that man. He said to himself, "What a heartless man he is! How could he separate me from a beauty like Mehli Nigâr? How could he kill her? How could he obey an order of mine given in a moment of weakness? How could he be heartless enough to kill a beauty?"

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In the meantime, the black executioner knew that Hamzai Sahip Kiran would find him and avenge himself against him. He did not know, however, at what time that would occur.

day while Hamzai Sahip Kiran and his wrestlers were hunting, their course led them past the house where the black executioner and Mehli Nigâr were living. The hunters were very impressed by a house so high that it had to have forty steps leading up to the living quarters. They asked who lived in that house, and one of the local people told them, "That mansion belongs to the black executioner."

Hamzai Sahip Kiran said to his wrestlers, "Bring the black executioner into my presence

When the wrestlers brought the black executioner to Hamzai, he said, "Yes, my shah? What is your wish?"

Hamzai Sahip Kiran said, "I should like to see the inside of your house."

The black executioner answered, "Of course, my shah! Come in." Then he went to Mehli's room and said to her, "O beauty, Hamzai is here, and he is looking for an excuse to take his revenge against me. I have kept you in my

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house, and your secret in my heart. Now it is time to keep your promise to help me. Save me from the rage of Hamzai Sahip Kiran

"Don't worry, black executioner. I shall save you. I have experienced nothing but kindness from you. You spared my life and you have kept me in your house. I shall in turn help you now."

(This is something that we should all know. Do a good deed and then throw it into the ocean. Even if the fish don't recognize it, God will.

While Mehli Nigâr began to make coffee,¹⁴⁷ Hamzai Sahip Kiran and the black executioner began to talk. Hamzai was still looking for a reason to take vengeance against the black executioner. He said to him, "Tell me, black executioner, how do you manage to climb all those steps several times a day? It made me very tired to climb them just once. What is your secret? Tell me."

The black executioner answered, "O my shah, you complain about climbing those steps just once, but I have a daughter who climbs and descends those steps twice a day with a year-old calf in her arms."

¹⁴⁷This is almost certainly an anachronism. Most authorities indicate that coffee drinking began in Arabia sometime during the thirteenth century, some 600 years after the time of the action of this tale.

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Astonished, Hamzai said, "If this is the case, then tell your daughter that I should like to see her."

The black executioner called Mehli Nigâr immediately and said to her, "Oh, my beauty, it is time now! He is looking for an excuse to kill me. Help me now!"

Mehli Nigâr went immediately to the barn below. She picked up the year-old calf in her arms and carried him up the stairs in a single breath. Hamzai Sahip Kîran was bewildered when he saw Mehli Nigâr before his eyes. He could not believe what he saw. He closed his eyes and then opened them again, and he still saw Mehli Nigâr standing before. Yes, she was Mehli Nigâr, the daughter of Nuşîrvan. The three hundred and sixty-six veins of Hamzai began to flutter, and he said, "Oh, Mehli, I thought that you were dead, and my heart missed you badly! Now I have discovered that you were alive!"

Crying, Mehli Nigâr grasped Hamzai's hand, but she said, "Stop, my shah! Stop!" As soon as she spoke, Hamzai fainted. Mehli rubbed some rose water on his face, and he soon recovered consciousness.

After a brief pause, Mehli Nigâr said, "Oh, my shah, do you remember that some time ago many of us were resting on the way from my father's country to your country?"

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We saw a deer on a nearby hill, and you said, 'Look at my marksmanship, Mehli. I shall shoot an arrow through the ear of the deer, and the deer will think it is only a fly on its ear and will scratch it with its foot.' You did shoot the deer through its ear, and it did scratch its ear as if a fly were there. I said, 'Hamzai, you were able to do that because you have had a great amount of practice shooting arrows for a long time.' You became furious, and you gave me to this executioner. This black executioner has taken care of me as if I were his daughter. During the first day that I spent in his house, his cow gave birth to a calf, and from that time until now I have twice daily carried that calf up the forty steps to my room and back down again. Now you cannot do that, but I can because I have been practicing. Such difficult things can be accomplished only by practice and hard work."

Mehli Nigâr then picked up the calf and placed it before Hamzai Sahip Kîran and said, "I can carry this calf up and down the forty steps while taking just one breath in each direction. You can try to do the same thing, but it may not be possible for you to do it right away. After practice you will be able to do it. Everything must be

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accomplished through practice. You were a great marksman because of your lengthy practice."

Hamzai Sahip Kiran realized that Mehli was describing reality and that she had been right all along. Turning to the black executioner, he said, "Executioner, I forgive you for not carrying out my order. You did a good deed in disobeying that order. I am very pleased with you." He then kissed the eyes of the black executioner and said, "If you had actually killed Mehli Nigâr, I should not have left this house without having killed you."

This was the way that Hamzai Sahip Kiran found Nuşirvan's daughter, Mehli Nigâr. This was the way in which his happiness was restored. Then Mehli and Hamzai joined the wrestlers for the return trip. Before they left, however, Hamzai said to the black executioner, "You have now become one of my eyes. No one can look at you with evil intentions from this moment onward, for if they did, they would find me their enemy." He gave several presents to the black executioner. Then they left the home of the black executioner and returned to their own country

But while this was going on, something different was

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happening elsewhere. There is a proverb which says, "Although a friend may sleep, an enemy never does " treacherous advisers of Nuşirvan were sowing discord trying to plant suspicions in the mind of Nuşirvan They said to him, "You were unable to prevent Hamzai from getting your daughter, but Mehli Nigâr deserved a far better husband than that. She was worthy of a greater man."

Nuşirvan answered, "All right! All right! But what can we do about that?"

These advisers said, "Oh, there is an easy way to handle that. We should pretend to be friendly to Hamzai Sahip Kiran and invite him here for a big feast. Then it will be a simple matter to put poison in his food. After that, your daughter, Mehli Nigâr, will remain here with you."

Nuşirvan answered, "That is a very clever plan

(We should all learn something from this. May God keep us from having friends of this kind! Their tongues seem friendly, but their hearts are hostile. Such treachery has caused the suffering and deaths of a great many brave men. No one but God knows for certain what is in the hearts of others.

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Everyone knows that our father Adam was created from mud by God. It was at a time when Satan was the chief of all the angels. When he heard that God had created Adam from mud, Satan entered that body before it was given life and tried to examine all of its parts. The human body has three hundred and sixty-six parts, and each part has its own function. But God hid one part of Adam from Satan's eyes, and that was Adam's heart. Later Satan said to the other angels, "I entered the body of Adam and examined all of its parts except one; that one part somehow remained hidden." God hid the heart of Adam and all of Adam's heirs have hidden hearts. That is the reason that no one but God understands the heart of another person. If Satan had been permitted to see the heart of Adam, then everyone would be able to see into the hearts of others, but as it is, they cannot see inside the hearts of other.)

Following the suggestion of his evil advisers, Nuşirvan invited Hamzai Sahip Kıran to his palace for a feast. Nuşirvan wrote to Hamzai, "O Hamzai, we have been at war for a long time, and many people have been killed on both sides. Inasmuch as my daughter chose, by her own

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will, to move to your side, I cannot any longer hold anything against you. Come, and let us become friends. Come here and be properly married to my daughter

Hamzai Sahip Kıran received this letter from Nuşirvan. After he had read it, he concluded that Nuşirvan was no longer angry at him and that Nuşirvan now wanted peace. He therefore called together all of his wrestlers and Ömer Ümmiye and ordered that preparations be made for the journey to Nuşirvan's country. At the same time, other preparations were being made at the palace of Nuşirvan for the reception of Hamzai Sahip Kıran

After a journey of a few days, Hamzai Sahip Kıran and his people reached Nuşirvan's land. There they were welcomed warmly by Nuşirvan's attendants and shown into

presence of Nuşirvan. When everything was ready for feast, Nuşirvan had everyone sit down. Food was placed upon the table; music was played; and the servants were bringing the drinks. The eating and drinking then began.

But at that point Ömer Ümmiye asked Hamzai Sahip Kıran for permission to leave the room. As soon as he was outside the room, he disguised himself as one of Nuşirvan's servants. Mingling with the other servants,

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he listened to their conversation and discovered the deadly plot against the life of Hamzai Sahip Kiran. He heard their plan to poison Hamzai and all of his wrestlers. But it was now too late for Ömer Ümmiye to foil this plot, for everyone was already eating and drinking. Hamzai and all of his followers began to shake and quiver, and their bodies began to swell. One by one they began to die. At first bewildered and unable to act, Ömer Ümmiye then decided that he must get Hamzai out of the palace. Returning to the dining room, he grabbed Hamzai, put him on his own back, and rushed out of the palace. /Tape 19 ends here and Tape 20 begins with the next paragraph./

Ömer Ümmiye ran steadily with Hamzai on his back until he reached Mecca. He then took the very sick Hamzai to the house of Mehli Nigâr, who burst into tears when she realized the extremely bad condition of Hamzai. She was so shocked that she was unable to look at him a second time. The strong poison was lethal, and Hamzai was dying.

Ömer Ümmiye knew what kind of poison had been given to Hamzai Sahip Kiran, and he consulted all of the doctors about medicine that could overcome the effect of the poison. Most of the doctors said, "There is no antidote for that poison. Furthermore, people should not enter the room

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in which Hamzai is lying, or they too might be killed by the fumes given off by his body."

But one doctor said, "There is a medicinal plant which could save Hamzai, but it grows in a very distant place. It would take six months to go there and return, and you do not have that much time before Hamzai dies. When Ömer Ümmiye heard this, he immediately began racing to the location of that plant, and his speed was so great that he completed the six-month journey in forty-eight hours. While Ömer was gone, they kept Hamzai in a large room and they allowed no one to see him. Mehli Nigâr was so distraught that she never stopped sobbing. But Ömer Ümmiye sped like the wind and brought back the medicinal plant

Let us now return to the palace of Nuşirvan. All of the wrestlers who had gone there with Hamzai Sahip Kıran were now dead. All of Hamzai's strongest and bravest men had been killed by the poison. None of them survived. Nuşirvan's men knew that Hamzai had been rescued by Ömer Ümmiye, but they also knew that he must be very close to death. Consequently, Nuşirvan ordered his army to attack Hamzai Sahip Kıran's country.

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Let us now look again into the Mirror of Fortune. Ömer Ümmiye went to get the medicinal herb and returned with it within the space of forty-eight hours. He was given the herb by a physician in the distant land to which he traveled when, in tears, he said that it was to be used to save the life of Hamzai Sahip Kıran. The physician knew everything about the Bible, and he had known Hamzai would be born and that he would engage in battle against Nuşirvan.¹⁴⁸ He asked Ömer, "Is your name Ömer?"

"Yes, my name is Ömer."

"Very well, then," said the physician. "I would not give this medicine to anyone else, but I shall give it to you."

Ömer Ümmiye secured the medicine and returned to Hamzai within forty-eight hours from the time he had departed. He rubbed the medicine all over Hamzai's body, and then he forced him to swallow some of it. By this time Nuşirvan's army was attacking Hamzai Sahip Kıran's country, and so to protect Hamzai, Ömer took him to the

¹⁴⁸Most Turkish peasant narrators know a fair amount about Biblical characters, but their information usually comes not directly from the Bible, but from either the Koran or the folk tradition. Throughout this tale there are repeated indications that Behçet Mahir thinks that the Bible contains many predictions about the coming of Islam and about the activities of many early Moslems.

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fortified city of Aleppo.¹⁴⁹ At that time Aleppo was surrounded by very high walls. It was not long, however before spies of Nuşirvan discovered the whereabouts of Hamzai. Nuşirvan then ordered his troops to attack Aleppo and to conquer the citadel at its center. Nuşirvan's troops were so numerous that they were able to attack fortified city from all four directions at the same time.

Mehli Nigâr, Nuşirvan's daughter, was crying as she climbed up to the tower of the citadel. She saw Nuşirvan's soldiers attacking the city, but she also saw that the Moslem forces were prepared to defend the fortress.

Hamzai Sahip Kıran was kept in a secret room, the location of which was known only to Ömer Ümmiye and Mehli Nigâr. Ömer continued to give the herb medicine to Hamzai. The open sores on Hamzai's head and face were beginning to heal. He was beginning to recover. The poison was beginning to leave his liver. There is a proverb which says, "The inside of your body must first be healed, then the outside of your body will recover."

¹⁴⁹Extremely ancient city in northwestern Syria, Aleppo was for many centuries an important caravan terminal and commercial center, especially during the Ottoman era.

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The forces of Nuşirvan had completely surrounded the fortress, and they stood all around it fourteen ranks deep. It was impossible to enter or leave the fortress.

Moslem defenders tried to protect the city by shooting thousands of arrows at the invaders and hurling rocks down upon them from the fortress walls. Ömer Ümmiye ran back and forth helping Moslem soldiers who were growing tired, and he himself was throwing very large rocks down upon Nuşirvan's troops. The Moslems fought courageously,

they were growing weak from hunger. The food supply of the defenders was getting lower and lower, and finally after forty days of the siege, there was nothing left within the fortress for them to eat. The situation of the Moslems was becoming desperate, for most of them had not eaten anything for several days.

As this was going on, Hamzai Sahip Kıran was recovering. His condition was improving every day. Ömer Ümmiye visited him every night, after the day's fighting had ended, and he kept giving the medicine to Hamzai regularly. Mehli Nigâr was fighting against her father's troops by casting stones down upon them. These soldiers recognized and shouted to her, "Come out and surrender! Your

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father will forgive you. He will not kill you.

Mehli Nigâr answered them, "I shall never surrender, even if I am cut into bits and pieces. I cannot be separated from Hamzai. If Hamzai should die, I shall die at the same time. I have vowed to fight at Hamzai's side until I am dead." In response to these remarks the enemy troops shot arrows at her. In the forty days of fighting Mehli Nigâr had been wounded by arrows in at least seven different places, and she was growing weaker and weaker

Despite the fact that the fortress was falling into a worse and worse situation, the health of Hamzai Sahip Kıran was improving. Finally one day he said, "Hey, Ömer, get my horse ready. I am now well enough to fight again.

Ömer went at once among the Moslem soldiers and gave them the good news: "Moslem soldiers, Hamzai Sahip Kıran is well again, and he is going to join the battle."

Nuşirvan's troops soon heard this news too, but they did not believe it. They said, "Oh-h-h, Ömer Ümmiye is again trying to deceive us, but this time he will fail in his attempt to fool us."

After his horse had been prepared by Ömer Ümmiye,

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Hamzai Sahip Kiran mounted and was ready to fight again. The fortress gate was opened, and he rode out against the large enemy forces. Placing his hands on his hips, he shouted out in his powerful voice, "Oh, you infidels, they call me Hamzai Sahip Kiran!" and he started to slash his sword in every direction against his enemies. When Nuşirvan's soldiers saw Hamzai's fighting skill, they were filled with fear, and many fled without looking back. They thought only of saving their lives.

Up until this time, Hamzai had not killed any of Nuşirvan's soldiers. He had wounded many, but he had not killed them because he kept in mind the fact that he had grown up eating the bread of Nuşirvan. But now that they had attempted to poison him, he felt neither respect nor pity for Nuşirvan any longer. He closed his heart to Nuşirvan. The fighting continued only until noon, and then Nuşirvan's soldiers fled, leaving everything behind them. The Moslem soldiers prayed to thank God for saving them, and they prayed to thank God that they were no longer hungry.

Nuşirvan's troops ran in every direction because they were terrified by Hamzai Sahip Kiran's sword. The Moslems

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captured many of Nuşirvan's soldiers, but they did not kill them. They took their supplies and then set them free. It is a sin for Moslems to kill prisoners of war. Hamzai Sahip Kıran ordered, "Set them free, for we are Moslems. We neither kill nor harm prisoners of war." A week after the time that Hamzai had been able to reenter the battlefield, there were none of Nuşirvan's soldiers left in the area around Aleppo.

Hamzai Sahip Kıran's health improved and improved, and he felt as if he had been born a second time. He kissed Ömer Ümmiye on both cheeks and said to him, "Oh, Ömer, you saved my life. If you had not been there, I would not be here now. I would be dead." They left the fortress of Aleppo and moved to Medina. There Hamzai Sahip Kıran ordered a forty-day period of mourning for the forty wrestlers who had been poisoned by Nuşirvan's men. During that time everyone wore black clothing, and all of the flags were flown at a lower level.

Now let us see what the Prophet Mohammed was doing at this time. He was greatly pleased that the forces of Islam were gaining strength every day. They had been forced to move from Mecca to Medina, but now Mohammed announced that they would soon recapture Mecca.

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While the Moslem soldiers were preparing for their attack against Mecca, our Prophet had a dream. On the following morning he told those around him about that dream. He said, "I had a dream last night. I saw a ram being sacrificed even as I held it in my hands. I cried aloud, and the sound of my own crying awakened me. The meaning of that dream is that one of my beloved followers will die in the battle for the city of Mecca. Who will that be? Whoever it is, he will go directly to heaven and remain there forever with me."

Hamzai Sahip Kiran immediately stood up and said, "O light of my life, I pray that I may be that ram. I pray that I may be the one to die for you and then go to heaven and remain there with you throughout all eternity." When our Prophet heard these words, he gazed sadly at the face of Hamzai Sahip Kiran

The forces of Islam began their attack against the city of Mecca. At the head of the Moslem army were Hamzai and his remaining wrestlers. Among the Meccans killed early in the battle was a soldier named Ebe-Celil. When Ebe-Celil's mother, Hindi, heard of his death, she vowed to take vengeance against Hamzai Sahip Kiran for the

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death of her son.

Whenever Hamzai Sahip Kiran was fighting, he never looked behind him; he always kept looking forward at the battle before him. Hindi knew this, and so she watched and waited for an opportunity to sneak up behind Hamzai and kill him. No one paid any attention to this woman during the fierce battle, and so she was able to come upon Hamzai from behind and fulfill her vow. In this way Hamzai Sahip Kiran was killed in the battle to recapture Mecca.

Everyone was struck with grief, even though the Moslem forces took Mecca and all of the members of the Kureys tribe were converted to Islam.

When our Prophet heard the news of Hamzai's death in the battle for Mecca, three teardrops fell from his eyes. At that moment the angel Gabriel appeared before him and asked, "O Mohammed, why are you crying? You knew in advance that he would die during the battle to regain Mecca. You received the message in a dream, and you understood the meaning of that dream. You also know that he is in heaven at this very moment.

Prophet Mohammed answered, "Thanks be to you, O God!"

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He was happy that God had indeed accepted Hamzai into heaven immediately

Hamzai Sahip Kiran's funeral was prepared. During the funeral ceremony thousands of Moslems followed Hamzai to the place where he was buried

Gentlemen, Hamzai Sahip Kiran's life was ended there, and the story of Hamzai Sahip Kiran's life has ended here.

--May God grant you all of your wishes.