

Story 1712 (1981 Tape 1)

Narrator: Ali Çiftçi, mid-
to late 60s;
farmer

Location: Çıkırıkçı village,
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The Nightingale and 1,001 Names of Allah¹

When Prophet Abraham was about to be thrown into the fire,² the nightingale said, "I shall leap into the fire too!"

Allah gave orders to Gabriel, "Go and stop that bird from leaping into the fire!"

Gabriel went to the nightingale and asked, "What are you up to?"

¹This tale appears on the last page of ATON No. 699, "Solomon's Knowledge of Bird Language." This second incident concerning Solomon and the birds is quite different from the first and longer incident in the tale. To prevent losing track of this brief incident, we have here set it up as a separate narrative.

²The biblical account of Abraham makes no reference to his being thrown into the fire. This is from the Koran, Chapter XXI, verses 68-69. The Lord (Allah) made the heat coolness, and so Abraham was unharmed.

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The nightingale responded, "Well, Allah has 1,001 names.³ I have memorized 999 of them. If Solomon teaches me the other two, all will be well. But if he refuses, then I shall throw myself into the flames!

The nightingale's wish was granted, and as a result, it is the only creature that can sing all the 1,001 names of Allah.

³Allah is usually said to have 99 or 100 names. What are called "names" are actually epithets: The Compassionate, the All-Powerful, the Forgiving, etc. The 99 "names" do not all appear in one place in the Koran but appear, one by one, at places in the Koran where Allah is mentioned. The list of 99 "names" can be found in handbooks and commentaries on the Koran. Some faithful Moslems memorize many if not all of these 99 "names."