

Story #507 (Tape #16, 1974)

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Location: Belekçe Han
Kavağı köyü,
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Ömer

Omar,¹ Ali,² and the Questioning Angels³

Omar and Ali once entered the mosque together. After they had gotten inside, Ali started his prayer service first, and Omar started later. Omar took Ali's shoes and placed them on the shelf. When Ali had finished his prayers, he discovered that his shoes were missing. Omar raised his hands to his face and prayed. Then, finished, he took Ali's shoes from where he had hidden them and gave them to him.

The next time they went to the mosque, Omar entered first for the prayer service. After he had gone inside, Ali lifted up a pillar of the mosque and placed Omar's shoes beneath it. When Omar had finished his prayers, his shoes were nowhere to be found. Ali then grasped and

¹ Omar was the second caliph, ruling from 634 to 644.

² Ali was the fourth caliph, ruling from 650 to 661, at which time he was assassinated. Those Moslems who felt that Ali should have been the first caliph, and thus the immediate successor of Mohammed, split away from the main body of Islam to form the Shia or Shiite sect. In this tale, some of the competition between Ali and the first three caliphs is evident.

³ After a person has been placed in his grave or tomb and the sounds of his friends' footsteps departing have died away, two angels, Munkar and Nakir, come to the dead one to question him in catechetical manner about his faith. If he answers correctly, he is shown the place in hell he would have had if he had not so answered and then the place in Paradise he is actually to have. If he answers incorrectly, he is beaten with iron rods or an iron mace. The sounds of his wailing can then be heard by men and jinns throughout the earth.

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book of suggestions for the questioning, as you know. (There
 cation is made through the mother's name. One is not addressed
 ather's name. Only its mother and God know the child with
 y. No one except God and the mother know where the mother
 hat child, whether she got it from her husband or from someone
 se.)

At the time that Ali took the book of suggestions and proceeded
 the grave, one of the questioning angels had arrived to question
 Omar. He asked, "Who is your God and what is your religion?"

Omar replied, "What are you saying? Come closer! My ears do not
 hear. Come closer!" When the angel had moved closer, Omar asked
 again, "What are you saying?"

"Who is your God, and what is your religion?"--Ali was lying on
 the grave listening.

Omar then said to the angel, "From a distance of how many years
 have you come?"

"I have come from a distance of five thousand years," the angel
 answered.--Ali was still listening atop the grave.

Omar responded, "You did not forget your God though you traveled

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for five thousand years. How could I forget Him by coming from there to here?" He then grabbed the angel by the collar and said, "Swear to me that you will never again come so rudely to a follower of God's Prophet."

When Omar had made the angel swear to this, Ali spoke from above: "O Omar, you are right, you are right. You are truly the lion of the world beneath the earth."

This is how this ^{all} happened. The iron mace⁴ does exist. There are indeed seven levels beneath the ground⁵ for those who do not obey God's orders

⁴The mace referred to here is the medieval war club with spiked metal head used to penetrate armor.

⁵Just as there were seven heavens, there were, in some beliefs, seven levels of hell. Dante envisioned nine levels in his Inferno.