

Story 695 (1981 Tape 4)

Narrator: Ali Çiftçi, farmer

Location: Çıkırıkçı village,  
kaza of Sarıkaya,  
Province of Yozgat

Date: June 11, 1981

The <sup>Questioning</sup> Angels at the Grave

After a person is buried, before the questioning punishing angels, Münkir and Nekir<sup>1</sup>, arrive, there is a third angel, She has a metal hook which

"Get up, friend," she says, write down all the deeds of your life from the time of your birth to the time of your death."

If the body should say, "I can neither read nor write. How, then, can I do as you command?" she will say, tearing a small piece of cloth from the shroud, "Here, write on this, using your finger as a pen and your mouth as an ink pot." Although the person may not actually be able to write, he dips his finger into his mouth and starts writing on the piece of shroud. The life of a person for one year would fill 1,340 books in the celestial records.

[Ahmet Uysal: Who is actually doing the writing there?

Ali Çiftçi: The angel.

Ahmet Uysal: Oh, then it is really the Recording Angel who does the writing.

<sup>1</sup>Münkir and Nekir are well-known angels in Moslem mythology. One standard reference work in the West that describes them is Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable.

Story 695

She knows what the record of a man's life has been it has all already been recorded during every day of the person's life. There are two angels who follow you by day making note of your every action, and they are replaced at the end of the day by two other angels for the night--and so this goes on every day right around the clock. The following day two different angels take over this duty, and they are replaced at night by still another pair. And this goes on until Doomsday--there are so many angels available. Every single part of your life in a given day is recorded--even your breathing. How long have you lived so far? Let us say sixty years. If you multiply that sixty by 1,340 volumes for each year, how many books will your records add up to? Well, a very great many, anyway. Well, all of those many, many records--all your evil deeds and all your charitable acts--will now be noted on that piece of cloth no bigger than the palm of your hand. Then the angel will have the person sign his name below it. She will then hang this piece of cloth around the neck of the corpse and disappear.

Then come Munkir and Nekir. One will ask, "*Rabbüke*,<sup>2</sup> meaning who is your God?" And the other will then ask,

<sup>2</sup>The words in italics are supposedly the Arabic form of the questions. Whether or not these italicized words are actually accurate Arabic for the questions, they are phonetic representations of the Arabic words as perceived by the narrator.

## Story 695

"Dinike, nebiyke, meaning What is your religion, and who is prophet?" If the corpse has been a pious person in life, he will answer at once, "My God is Allah. My religion is Islam, my prophet is Mohammed, and my book is the Koran."

On the Day of Judgment everyone will begin rising from ground like mushrooms. Suppose that there is a grave in which Ali Çiftçi has been buried. Well, 1,000 Alis may rise from that grave, for this world has been filled with people and emptied many times. Then on Judgment Day everyone will be standing by his own grave, and they will appear there suddenly like earth-splitting mushrooms.

Then the third sur<sup>3</sup> trumpet will be blown. That trumpet is made up of twelve coils and seven keys.<sup>4</sup> Caliph Ali was the only man capable of lifting it. Since the day of its creation, this trumpet has waited, with mouth and eye turned toward the sky, waited for the final order. It has never been blown yet. If it should be blown, it would make a noise so terrifying that women who were six months pregnant would their children, even though there were supposed to be three months left before that was supposed to happen. All

<sup>3</sup>Sur means trumpet, but when that word is used for the instrument (instead of, say, boru), it is often meant to suggest heavenly trumpet or Doomsday trumpet.

<sup>4</sup>The narrator said, literally, seven knots.

Story 695

human beings will be stunned by its noise.

[Ahmet Uysal: How many times will it be blown?

It will be blown three times. At the first blast, earth will be flattened. At the second blast, the dead will spring up like mushrooms and stand by their graves, but there will not yet be any souls in their bodies. At the third blast, the souls will return to the bodies. The souls will buzz like bees as they search for their owners. Those who have done great good here on earth will then fly to next world like jet planes.<sup>5</sup> Those who have done slightly less good will fly like other planes. Others will go with the speed of taxicabs. Some will go with the speed of buses. People inferior in virtue to any of those I have mentioned will travel there only with the speed of a kağrı.<sup>6</sup> Some will go with the speed of horses or donkeys. Still less worthy people will go on foot. The still less virtuous will travel very slowly on their hands and knees. And the very slowest will just barely crawl. When they arrive in the next world, they will be divided into twelve classes. Liars will have

<sup>5</sup>The anachronisms here should be obvious. When the myth was created, there were no jets, airplanes, or taxicabs.

<sup>6</sup>The kağrı is a two-wheeled ox-cart. The wheels do not turn on the axle, but, instead, turn with the axle. This crude cart moves very slowly, and as the axle turns against its mounts on the bottom of the cart, it makes a loud, squealing noise.

Story 695

their tongues stretched along the road, and people passing along the road will trample on them. Those who revolted against their parents will not be admitted into Paradise until they are forgiven by their parents, because Allah said, "Those who revolt against their parents are also revolting against me."

Satan, as you know, revolted against his parents before he revolted against Allah. Satan's father was Iblis, who often appeared in the form of a lion, and Tebbis, who often was seen in the form of a monster, was his mother. Both Iblis and Tebbis had been created of fire.

Before the creation of Adam, there was the tribe of Jann.

[Ahmet Uysal: What were they like?

Ali Çiftçi: They were the people who were on earth before the time of Adam. The book does not describe them very much, but they were the Jinns.]

When Satan was wandering about the earth with the tribe of Jann, they one day came to a place where Adam's <sup>92-94</sup> mold lay stretched on the ground. They also saw a tall object standing there. Satan tapped this body, and it made a hollow sound like an empty barrel. "It is empty," Satan said. "I am not afraid of it."

Ahmet Uysal: Who made that?

Ali Çiftçi: God. It was Adam.

Story 695

Ahmet Uysal: How was he made? ]

He first sent Gabriel<sup>93-96</sup> down to get some soil with which to make Adam, but Earth begged, "If you love the one who sent you here, do not take any of my soil." And, as a result, Gabriel was not able to take any soil. He then sent Michael, but Michael could not take soil either after Earth had spoken to him in this way. He sent Israfael who had the same experience. Finally he sent Azrail, who immediately stuck his paw into the soil. According to one version of this account, he kept it there for forty days, according to another version for forty years, because Earth had said to him too "If you love the one who sent you here, do not take any of my soil."

This occurred at Mecca, or what is presently Mecca, at the place there called Arafat. The soil used in the making of Adam came from there. Ultimately, then, the soil which went into the making of the heart of Mohammed came from there. It was taken at Arafay, from all four directions of that place, and mixed with the soil of Adam. Mohammed later descended from Adam. In this way was mud of Adam preserved. The Black Stone in the Kaaba<sup>7</sup> was what was left over from

<sup>7</sup>The Kaaba is the small square structure housing the Black Stone, the most sacred object in Islam.

## Story 695

the mud which was used to mold Adam. It was once made of ruby material and was red, but since then sinners smearing it with their hands and faces have made it black

There used to be seven Paradises and seven Hells. The eighth Paradise was the one built by Nimrod and Şaddat.<sup>8</sup> Allah said to Gabriel, "Go and see if their Paradise is like mine."

Gabriel went and examined that eighth Paradise of theirs and returned and reported to Allah. He said to Allah "Their Paradise is just like yours, except that theirs has columns in it."

"Well, let it, " said Allah. "You go and bring those two up here to Heaven." So there were then eight Paradises, but before Nimrod and Şaddat could see their own Paradise completed, Allah destroyed them.

On the Day of Judgment,<sup>94\*,96</sup> after the third trumpet blast has sounded, the people will be sitting around, like wedding guests, in groups of three or four here and three or four there Allah will send a message to Hell,<sup>94,95</sup> ordering it to move closer to the sinners. Hell appears like an ox with 70,000 rings around it, with 70,000 imps<sup>9</sup> reaching out from these rings.

<sup>8</sup>In Islamic mythology, there is considerably more lore about Nimrod than can be found in the Bible or than is known elsewhere.

<sup>9</sup>The word used by the narrator was zebani.

Story 695

Fire and smoke pour from its mouth, as they do from a locomotive<sup>10</sup> --poof, poof, poof. The people may protest, saying to Adam, "We are your heirs! Save us from Hell!"

But Adam will say, "I cannot, for I am a sinner myself."

They may go to Jesus then, and to all of the other 124,000 prophets, but all of them will say, "Go to the very last prophet Mohammed<sup>95-96</sup>. Only he can save you." At that time there will be 1,000 feet pressing on the spot meant for one foot [it will be so crowded]. A very hot sun will shine down on them from a distance of only the length of two lances. Everyone will be sweating, and the depth of the sweat on the ground beneath one will be according to the extent of one's sins. Some will stand in sweat up to their knees, and some will stand in it up to their navels.

Then Mohammed will go over to Hell and grab it by the collar. At this, Hell will speak to him, saying, "O Holiness, your brilliance is greater than the heat of my furnaces."

Mohammed will say then, "Release them! I shall these people."

A command will then come to Hell from Allah: "Let Hell

<sup>10</sup>Although he only compares the fire and smoke of Hell to those of a locomotive, it is anachronistic to have the word in this context.



listen to him who [Mohammed is beloved by me. Do whatever he directs you to do."

Then Gabriel (greetings to him! will bring a bottle of water to the place of (Doomsday). When the water is sprinkled on Hell, its fire will be turned to ice.

Mohammed will then ask, "O my Gabriel, what kind of water was this that you brought?"

"It was all made up of the tears of poets<sup>11</sup> who have wept day and night. I have been collecting them drop by drop for many years, and I have saved them until now, when we need them

Now everyone will go to read his own books among the celestial records. Armenians will read theirs in Armenian; Russians will read theirs in Russian; Turks will read theirs in Turkish. Everyone will read his own record in his own language. Allah may look at someone's book and say, "Its contents are all trivial, for it includes no charity."

The person may then say, "This book must belong to someone else. It is not mine, for my signature is not at the end

"So you do not accept it? You have not signed it, you

<sup>11</sup>The narrator uses the word âşık. Although âşık is often translated as lover poet, he is one who views earthly love as a first step toward heavenly love, and so he may eventually become a saintly person. The hak âşık is thought of as a divinely endowed poet and singer.

Story 695

say. But if I should produce another such record with your signature on it, would you accept that?"

"My Allah, if my signature is at the end of the statement, of course I will accept it."

Then they remove from around his neck the piece of shroud cloth which has recorded upon it all of his activities of the past sixty years. When he hears this read, then he will bow his head and stare at the ground. But of what use is that now? It is too late. If he had given charity while on earth, he would have been saved, but now he must suffer for it