

Story 923 (1981 Tape 8)

Narrator: Ali Çiftçi, farmer

Location: Çıkırıkçı village,
Sarıkaya kaza, Yozgat
Province

Date: June 1981

The Ring of King Solomon¹ Sought

There was once a man named Ukap who, with the aid of a friend of his, began searching for the ring of King Solomon. They had heard that King Solomon was buried on an island somewhere in the midst of the seven seas.

island,

They had been

them which plant it was.

They decided to discover the name of this plant through Şahmeran,² King of Snakes, to whom not only all the animals *Language plant* talked but the plants as well. They built a trunk and filled

¹There is a great amount of folklore about King Solomon of the Bible. Legend has it that he could converse with all animals and birds; that he had captured jinns and other evil spirits and sealed them in brass jars, which he had then thrown into the sea; and that his magic ring was the source of his power and wisdom. Much of this is apparently a spin-off from Biblical references to his unusual wisdom.

²Mentioned in both Persian and Turkish folktales, he is a mythical creature. See other tales in ATON in which he appears.

Story 923

it with bottles of wine, and then they took it to Şahmeran's house and left it there. When Şahmeran found the trunk, he *opened, alone* opened it and began drinking the wine. After drinking several bottles of the wine, Şahmeran passed out

When Ukap and his friends observed this, they put Şahmeran in the trunk, placed the lid on it, and hoisted it to their backs. As they walked along bearing Şahmeran, all of the plants and trees began speaking to the King of Snakes. Each plant described its ^{curative} powers and the other uses to which it could be put. Some plants said, "If you drink my sap, you will be cured of this illness." Others said, "If you drink my sap, you will be cured of that illness." Some said, "If you drink my sap, you will live forever." But Ukap and his friend were not interested in any of these things. They were listening only for a plant whose sap would enable them to walk upon the water. After walking some distance, they heard a plant make such a claim. Rubbing the sap of that plant on their feet, they found that they could indeed walk upon the water.

They began their long journey, walking over the seven seas in search of the island where Solomon was buried. They thought that if they could get Solomon's ring from his grave, they would be able to rule the whole world. When they finally reached this island and located King Solomon's grave, Ukap

Story 923

said to his friend, "While I am inside the tomb reciting the İsmi Azâm³ prayer, you must keep throwing hazel nuts into the mouths of the fire-breathing dragons which guard this grave."

Once he had entered the tomb, Ukap heard a terribly loud shriek coming from one corner of the tomb. He was so confused by this that he forgot to recite the prayer, and, as a result, his friend was consumed by the fire breathed out by the dragons. Ukap himself fled from the tomb and was spared, but he was now unable to get the ring for which he had come

³İsmi Azâm means "the grandest name (or names)" referred to in Sura (Chapter) VII, verse 179, of the Koran: "To God belong the most beautiful names; pray to him using these names."

In Volume I of the Encyclopaedia of Islam is a long scholarly entry under Asma Husna (Arabic for "The most beautiful names.") The so-called "names" of God are really not names but attributes--Benevolent, Forgiving, Compassionate, etc. Moslems are greatly enamored of the idea of the names of Allah. There are 99 names of Allah. These are NOT given in the Koran but in a Hadith or Commentary on the Koran transmitted by Abu Hurraya.

Moslem prayer beads contain 99 beads, one for each name of God. The İsma Azâm prayer is the repetition of the verse from Chapter VII, given above, plus repeating of the 99 names. No one can know which name is the most beautiful to the Deity on a given day, and so to be certain to name that name, one must repeat all 99.