

Story 1073 1980 Tape 1)

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Solomon Punished in This World

Instead of in the Next

There was a time in the past when nobody was Moslem. During this time God gave the control of the world to Sultan Solomon.¹ This Sultan Solomon was a very brave man to whom God entrusted a seal.^{2ALL} God said to Solomon, "Mark with this seal the places which you conquer.

One day Sultan Solomon began to march about with troops, looking for further conquest. After marching some time, he encountered a tribe unknown to him. He gaged this tribe in battle and soon defeated it, for his army was much the larger. He then took the daughter of the ağa³ to his palace, where he had her sit on his throne and

¹Peasant narrators of folktales frequently confuse Biblical Solomon and the 16th-century Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. They do this despite the fact that the two rulers were more than 2,000 years apart in history. In some tales Biblical Solomon is a good Moslem who goes to the mosque for prayer services!

²Although referred to simply as a seal (sometimes in the form of a signet ring), it is clearly more than just that. It gives its bearer power beyond that possessed by most mortals. Because it was given by God, it endows its owner with the strength and authority of God.

³This word illustrates the historical confusion cited in Note 1 above. An ağa is a Turkish rural landowner, often rich, sometimes powerful. He is not the head of an ancient tribe, as he is pictured here.

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rule during his absence. Then he went on the march again.

There was an ^{Monster? 12-4} ogre in that area who envied the power and position of Sultan Solomon. This ogre thought to itself, "How can I capture Sultan Solomon? How can I put in a cage? How can I sit upon his throne?" This ogre knew that as long as Solomon had his seal with him, he could be defeated, and so he decided to capture the seal first, for then the defeat of Solomon would be easy

One day when Sultan Solomon went out to walk, the ogre somehow learned that he had not taken his seal along with him. The ogre therefore dressed like Solomon and made himself look like the sultan. Going to the palace he knocked on the door, "Tak, tak, tak." When a female servant of Solomon's named Emine came to the door, the ogre, pretending to be Solomon, said, "I forgot to take my seal with me, and so I have come back for it. Go and get it for me." Once he had the seal and all the power it contained, he entered the palace and sat upon the throne.

After he had walked for some time, Sultan Solomon returned to the palace and knocked on the door. The doorkeeper refused to open the door, saying, "Who are you?"

"I am Sultan Solomon."

"No, you are not," answered the doorkeeper. "Sultan Solomon is here in the palace sitting upon his throne."

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As a result, Sultan Solomon could not enter his own palace. This was a punishment given to him by God for having done something wrong. Shortly before that time, some of the female servants at the palace had come to him and said, "O Sultan, that daughter of the ağa that you brought here is an idolater

"How do you know that?" asked Sultan Solomon. "It seems impossible to me.

"Believe it or not, that is true. You can observe her secretly, if you wish, and see her idolatry yourself."

Solomon took the opportunity to observe the daughter of the ağa secretly and discovered that she was indeed an idolater. He immediately pulled out his sword and cut through her neck. Her head fell to one side, and her body fell to the other. But our religion, Islam, says, "If someone not of our faith is entrusted to you, you should try to convert that person to Islam." Sultan Solomon had failed to do that. He had cut off her head instead. He was, therefore, guilty of evil, and God punished him for that reason.

When the doorkeeper refused to allow him to enter the palace, Sultan Solomon had a very difficult time. Very sadly, he went away from the palace. Inside, the ogre sat upon his throne.

Sultan Solomon walked and walked until he finally reached

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seashore. There he saw an old fisherman who said to him, "O human being, what are you doing here? Come and be my helper! If you do that, I shall give you a fish every day for your labor." Thus God caused Solomon to become virtually a slave to this fisherman in order to get fish a day for his food. Five days passed; a month passed; several months passed.

In the meantime the ogre who was sitting on the throne began to worry about what would happen to him if Solomon returned

found him there. As time passed, he grew more and more worried about this. He thought, "If Solomon returns and finds me here, he will cut off my head. I had better leave and go somewhere where no one can find me!" Accordingly, the ogre left the palace and started walking. When he reached the seashore, he said to himself, "What good will this seal be to me now? It will be of no use at all. He then dropped the seal into the waves

A fish swallowed the seal, and after several days that same fish was caught by the old fisherman. At the end of the day the old fisherman gave that fish to Solomon for his labor. As Solomon was cleaning the fish, he slit open its belly, and there he found his seal. He was so happy about the return of his seal that he left the old fisherman's home immediately and went back to the palace. When he arrived there, he went at once and sat upon the throne. It was unoccupied when he

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got there, for the ogre had already fled.

There was once a book in which was written "There is only one God, and Mohammed is his creature and his prophet."⁴ That saying is true, and it was made clear to Solomon by the punishment which he had received. If he hadn't cut off the head of a human being without trying to convert that person, God would not have punished him. But if he had not been punished in this world, his sin would have cost him more in the next world. When he was questioned about his past life on Doomsday, he would have had no answer to give for his offense. He would still have been guilty of it, and Sultan Solomon would have been the last of all people to enter into heaven

⁴Actually, this is part of a Moslem prayer. The original in the text is Lailahe illallah Muhammeden Resulullah.