

Story 1479 (1989 Tape 10)

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Building of the Kaaba¹

When the Prophet Solomon had the Kaaba built, there were no human beings living in that immediate area. He therefore ordered jinns² and birds³ to do the necessary work for the construction of that building. But while the jinns and birds were at work, Solomon himself departed from this world to the next world.⁴ Just before he died, however, Prophet Solomon propped himself up with a stick. As a result of this arrangement, the workers did not know of his death. They thought that he continued standing there to observe their work, and so continued with the construction until the Kaaba was completed.

¹The small square shrine that houses the Black Stone at Mecca. That Black Stone is considered by Moslems to be the most sacred object in Islam.

²The word jinn suggests two very different kinds of supernatural creatures. The first is the huge supernatural being who comes forth from a bottle or appears in response to some signal, such as the rubbing of a magic lamp or ring. This creature then proceeds to give the caller supernatural or magic aid to achieve what he wishes. The other kind of jinn is never seen. It is a spiritual force referred to in some Sufi beliefs and in other mystical systems.

³Solomon reputedly understood the languages of both birds and animals. His reputed conversations with birds appear in several Turkish folktales.

⁴Here, as in his other tales, the narrator does not say

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It took the jinns and birds more than 100 years to build the Kaaba. Just as soon as the building was finally completed, the stick which had been supporting the body of Prophet Solomon collapsed, and the prophet then fell to the ground. The jinns and birds then realized that he had changed worlds many years earlier

literally that the deceased "departed from this world for the next." He says simply that "he changed worlds."