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which he did not participate (which are known as serye³ According to history there were nineteen garzes and forty-one seryes. In all of these battles Ali fought hard and gave little thought to his own safety.

The Blessed Peygamber once said, "There is no other hero comparable to Ali, and there is no other sword equal to Zülfikar."⁴ He also said, "Ali is the gate to the city I have built. If you do not believe in Ali, then you should not believe in me." Peygamber took Ali with him when he went to the Kaaba⁵ and broke the idols that had been placed there. This is just one indication of the respect Peygamber had for the Blessed Ali.

When Allah created Adam and took him to heaven, Adam saw there a flame which seemed very attractive to him. Written on the crown of that flame was the name Mohammed; written on its belt was the name Ali; written elsewhere on the flame was the name Fadime.⁶ Adam asked, "O Allah,

³Meaning unknown to translator.

⁴A huge, double-tipped sword with which Ali won all of the battles in which he was engaged. Like Arthur's Excalibur, Zülfikar is one of the named and personalized weapons of legendry.

⁵The small square building which houses the Black Stone, the most sacred of Islamic relics. It is within the walls of the Great Mosque at Mecca.

⁶Same as Fatima, which is sometimes shortened to Fatma.

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my God, what names are these?"

"Mohammed will someday be my Prophet. He will be the seal and the last of the prophets.⁷ Fadime will be his daughter, and she will be the intercessor for all women. She will be married to the caliph Ali."

Mohammed once said to the muacirs and ansaris,⁸ "Be brothers and sisters to each other so that after I have died you will not be misled into fighting each other."

The ansaris then said, "O Prophet of Allah, with whom will Ali be a brother?"

The Blessed Mohammed replied, "In both this world and the next, Ali and I shall be brothers."

Because it is relevant to our subject, let us say something about the last celebration of Mohammed's Hegira.⁹ On the tenth anniversary of the Hegira¹⁰ he had reached the place called Kadirhum¹¹ when the angel Gabriel brought

⁷The term used by the narrator here was Hatemül Embiya.

⁸Terms not understood by translator.

⁹The Hegira was the flight of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina when forces opposed to the establishment of Islam threatened his life.

¹⁰The Hegira occurred in 622; Mohammed died in 632.

¹¹Apparently too small to be listed in atlases of the area.

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him this verse from the Koran; "O Prophet of Allah, perform your last duty at this time."

A pulpit was built immediately, and after he had mounted this pulpit, Mohammed called Ali to his side. When Ali had reached his side, Mohammed addressed the people gathered there, saying, "Am I not a better judge than you concerning what is good for you?"

"Yes, you are, Prophet of Allah!" they answered.

"Very well. Now know this. Ali is related to Allah in the same way that I am related. Ali's soul is the same as my soul. Ali's flesh and blood are the same as my flesh and blood. Ali's spirit is the same as my spirit. He who loves Allah and loves me will also love Ali. Neither Allah nor I will love any person who does not love Ali. Be an enemy to anyone who is Ali's enemy. With Allah as witness, I say that justice lies with Ali."

Once Hasan and Hüseyin¹² became ill. In praying for

¹²The sons of Ali and Fatima. After their father, Ali, had been deposed from the caliphate, both of his sons in turn tried to recapture the caliphate. Hasan ruled briefly but was also deposed, after which he died mysteriously, allegedly of poisoning. The younger Hüseyin led a small group of fanatical supporters in an attack on the forces of the reigning dynasty of Umayyad caliphs. Facing greatly superior military strength, the forces of Hüseyin were slaughtered at Karbala. Hasan and Hüseyin became highly venerated Shi'ite martyrs.

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their recovery, Ali and Fadime vowed to fast for three days. As soon as Hasan and Hüseyin were well, the fast began. At the time of iftar¹³ on the first day, they gave their food to a poor family; at the time of iftar on the second day they gave their food to an orphan; and at the time of iftar on the third day they gave their food to a slave. Even though by that time of the day they themselves needed the food badly, they fed others with it in acts of charity. For reasons of this kind, the name of Ali is always associated with gratitude, faithfulness, and generosity.

¹³At the end of a day in Ramazan, the fasting is broken by a meal served just after sunset. This meal, which has ritualistic significance, is called iftar. Any meal that breaks at the prescribed time a religious fast may be called iftar.