

Story 1838 (1984 Tape 6)

Narrator: Ali Çiftçi, farmer; by this time, in late 60s or early 70s

Location: Çıkırıkçı village, Sarıkaya kaza, Yozgat Province

Date: March 1985

How a Prayer¹ Released Ibn-i Abid from Prison

At one point in his life Ibn-i Abid, one of the grandsons of the Caliph Ali,² was imprisoned. After remaining there for some time, he grew very dejected. He became very pale. He thought, “My Allah, I wish that You would either take me from this jail or take my life away.”

When he fell asleep that night he had a dream in which his grandfather, Caliph Ali, appeared to him. His grandfather spoke to him, saying, “I shall leave you a special prayer. If you will read this prayer aloud, the angel who has imprisoned you will set you free. This

¹ATON tales 1836-1838 are all concerned with a special prayer that the angel Gabriel carried from heaven to Mohammed. It had never been divulged to any earlier prophet. All three brief tales illustrate the great power of this prayer. Before Ahmet Uysal taped these three tales, he had apparently been told the words of the prayer by the narrator, but, ironically, the prayer appears nowhere in the recording.

²The fourth caliph, who, claiming that he should have been the first caliph, triggered the great schism in Islam between the orthodox Sunnites and his followers, the Shi'ites.

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prayer will be wrapped in a handkerchief and left at the head of your bed.”

Ibn-i Abid woke up immediately. After taking ritual ablutions, he performed several rekats³ of prayer service. He then took the special prayer from the handkerchief at the head of his bed. As he began to read that prayer, the very first words from it that he uttered rang clearly in the ears of the angel⁴ who had imprisoned him. She sat terrified in her palace. She said to her attendants, “There is some very important person imprisoned in our dungeon. Set him free at once, or I shall surely die.” Her attendants went at once and released Ibn-i Abid.

³A series of gestures, body movements, and liturgical statements that constitute a unit of the Moslem prayer service.

⁴Who was this angel? Why did she imprison Ibn-i Abid? Since angels act only to carry out the will of the Deity, why did she do such a thing?