

Surah 38. Sad

Asad: [And finally We told him:] "Now take in thy hand a small bunch of grass, and strike therewith, and thou wilt not break shine oath!"⁴¹ - for, verily, We found him full of patience in adversity: how excellent a servant [of Ours], who, behold, would always turn unto us

Malik: Then, to fulfill his oath of giving his wife one hundred strikes which he made during his sickness, We said: "Take a bunch of twigs and strike with it and do not break your oath." Certainly We found him full of patience. He was an excellent devotee, who turned to Us over and over again.

Mustafa Khattab:

?And We said to him,? "Take in your hand a bundle of grass, and strike ?your wife? with it, and do not break your oath."¹

We truly found him patient. What an excellent servant ?he was?! Indeed, he ?constantly? turned ?to Allah?.

Pickthall: And (it was said unto him): Take in thine hand a branch and smite therewith, and break not twine oath. Lo! We found him steadfast, how excellent a slave! Lo! he was ever turning in repentance (to his Lord).

Yusuf Ali: "And take in thy hand a little grass and strike therewith: and break not (thy oath)." Truly We found him full of patience and constancy: how excellent in Our service! Ever did he turn (to Us)!^{4202 4203}

Author Comments

41 - In the words of the Bible (The Book of Job ii, 9), at the time of his seemingly hopeless suffering Job's wife reproached her husband for persevering in his faith: "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die." According to the classical Qur'an-commentators, Job swore that, if God would restore him to health, he would punish her blasphemy with a hundred stripes. But when he did recover, he bitterly regretted his hasty oath, for he realized that his wife's "blasphemy" had been an outcome of her love and pity for him; and thereupon he was told in a revelation that he could fulfil his vow in a symbolic manner by striking her once with "a bunch of grass containing a hundred blades or more". (Cf. [5:89](#) - 'God will not take you to task for oaths which you may have uttered without thought.')

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Job was afflicted with losing his children, community, and with a long illness. Only his wife stayed with him. He once became angry with his wife and vowed to give her one hundred lashes if he recovered. When Job's affliction was lifted, he became remorseful at what he had said. To help Job fulfil his vow without harming his wife, Allah ordered him to strike her with a bundle of one hundred blades of grass.

4202 - In his worst distress Job was patient and constant in faith, but apparently his wife was not. According to the Book of Job (ii. 9-10), "Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips." He must have said in his haste to the woman that he would beat her: he is asked now to correct her with only a wisp of grass, to show that he was gentle and humble as well as patient and constant.

4203 - Cf. xxxviii. 30 above, where similar words are spoken of Solomon. Patience and constancy are also a form of service, if our attitude is due to an active faith in Allah, and not mere passivity. So Milton in his Sonnet: "They also serve who only stand and wait. "

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