

## Surah 2. Al-Baqara

Asad: And when Saul set out with his forces, he said: "Behold, God will now try you by a river: he who shall drink of it will not belong to me, whereas he who shall refrain from tasting it - he, indeed, will belong to me; but forgiven shall be he<sup>241</sup> who shall scoop up but single handful." However, save for a few of them, they all drank [their fill] of it. And as soon as he and those who had kept faith with him had crossed the river, the others said: "No strength have we today [to stand up] against Goliath and his forces!" [Yet] those who knew with certainty that they were destined to meet God, replied: "How often has a small host overcome a great host by God's leave! For God is with those who are patient in adversity."

Malik: When Talut marched forth with his army, he announced: "Allah will test you at a certain river; anyone who will drink from its water shall cease to be my soldier, and those who will not drink to quench their thirst with its water except a sip or so from the hollow of their hands shall fight on my side." They all drank from it, in spite of this warning, except a few of them. When he and those who believed with him crossed the river, they said: "We have no power left this day against Jalut (Goliath) and his warriors." But the believers, who knew they would meet Allah, replied: "It has often happened that a small group, by the grace of Allah, has vanquished a mighty army. Allah is with those who endure with patience."

Pickthall: And when Saul set out with the army, he said: Lo! Allah will try you by (the ordeal of) a river. Whosoever therefore drinketh thereof he is not of me, and whosoever tasteth it not he is of me, save him who taketh (thereof) in the hollow of his hand. But they drank thereof, all save a few of them. And after he had crossed (the river), he and those who believed with him, they said: We have no power this day against Goliath and his hosts. But those who knew that they would meet their Lord exclaimed: How many a little company hath overcome a mighty host by Allah's leave! Allah is with the steadfast.

Yusuf Ali: When Talut set forth with the armies he said: "Allah will test you at the stream; if any drinks of its water he goes not with my army; only those who taste not of it go with me; a mere sip out of the hand is excused." But they all drank of it except a few. When they crossed the river he and the faithful ones with him they said: "This day we cannot cope with Goliath and his forces." But those who were convinced that they must meet Allah said: "How oft by Allah's will hath a small force vanquished a big one? Allah is with those who steadfastly persevere." <sup>284 285</sup>

Transliteration: Falamma faṣala talootu bialjunoodi qala inna Allaha mubtaleekum binaharin faman shariba minhu falaysa minnee waman lam yaAAamhu fainnahu minnee illa mani ightarafa ghurfatan biyadihi fashariboo minhu illa qaleelan minhum falamma jawazahu huwa waallatheena amanoo maAAahu qaloo la taqata lana alyawma bijaloota wajunoodihi qala allatheena yathunnoona annahum mulaqoo Allahi kam min fiatin qaleelatin ghalabat fiatan katheeratan biithni Allahi waAllahu maAAa alssabireena

Khatab:

When Saul marched forth with his army, he cautioned: "Allah will test you with a river. So whoever drinks his fill? from it is not with me, and whoever does not taste it—except a sip from the hollow of his hands—is definitely with me." They all drank their fill? except for a few! When he and the remaining? faithful with him crossed the river, they said, "Now we are no match for Goliath and his warriors." But those believers? who were certain they would meet Allah reasoned, "How many times has a small force vanquished a mighty army by the Will of Allah! And Allah is always? with the steadfast."

## Author Comments

241 - Lit., "excepting him". The symbolic implication is that faith - and, thus, belief in the justice of one's cause - has no value unless it is accompanied by heightened self-discipline and disregard of one's material interests.

284 - A Commander is hampered by a large force if it is not in perfect discipline and does not wholeheartedly believe in its Commander. He must get rid of all the doubtful ones, as did Gideon before Saul, and Henry V. in Shakespeare's story long afterwards. Saul used the same test as Gideon; he gave a certain order when crossing a stream; the greater part disobeyed, and were sent back. Gideon's story will be found in Judges, vii. 2-7.

285 - Even in the small band that remained faithful, there were some who were appalled by the number of the enemy when they met him face to face, and saw the size and strength of the enemy Commander, the giant Goliath (Jalut). But there was a very small band who were determined to face all odds because they had perfect confidence in God and in the cause for which they were fighting. They were for making a firm stand and seeking God's help. Of that number was David; see next note.

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