



The Relations of Ssidi Kur –

10. The Man and his Wife

Folk-Lore And Legends: Oriental
Arabic

Intermediate
5 min read

When Ssidi had been captured as before, and was being carried away in the sack, he inquired, as he had always done, as to telling a tale; but the Son of the Chan shook his head without speaking a word. Whereupon Ssidi began the following relation:—

“Many, many years since, there lived in the kingdom of Olmilsong two brothers, and they were both married. Now the elder brother and his wife were stingy and envious, while the younger brother was quite a different disposition.

“Once upon a time the elder brother, who had contrived to gather together an abundance of riches, gave a great feast, and invited many people to partake of it. When this was known, the younger thought to himself, ‘Although my elder brother has hitherto not treated me very well, yet he will now, no doubt, since he has invited so many people to his feast, invite also me and my wife.’ This he certainly expected, but yet he was not invited. ‘Probably,’ thought he, ‘my brother will summon me to-morrow morning to the brandy-drinking.’ Because, however, he was not even invited unto that, he grieved very sore, and said unto himself, ‘This night, when my brother’s wife has drunk the brandy, I will go unto the house and steal somewhat.’

“When, however, he had glided into the treasure-chamber of his brother, there lay the wife of his brother near

her husband; but presently she rose and went into the kitchen, and cooked meat and sweet food, and went out of the door with it. The concealed one did not venture at this moment to steal anything, but said unto himself, 'Before I steal anything, I will just see what all this means.'

"So saying, he went forth, and followed the woman to a mountain where the dead were customarily laid. On the top, upon a green mound, lay a beautiful ornamental tomb over the body of a dead man. This man had formerly been the lover of the woman. Even when afar off, she called the dead man by name, and when she had come to him she threw her arms about his neck; and the younger brother was nigh unto her, and saw all that she did.

"The woman next handed the sweet food which she had prepared to the dead man, and because the teeth of the corpse did not open, she separated them with a pair of brazen pincers, and pushed the food into his mouth. Suddenly the pincers bounced back from the teeth of the dead man, and snapped off the tip of the woman's nose; while, at the same time, the teeth of the dead man closed together and bit off the end of the woman's tongue. Upon this the woman took up the dish with the food and went back to her home.

"The younger brother thereupon followed her home, and concealed himself in the treasure-chamber, and the wife laid herself down again by her husband. Presently the man began to move, when the wife immediately cried out, 'Woe is me! Woe is me! Was there ever such a man?'

And the man said, 'What is the matter now?'

The wife replied, 'The point of my tongue, and the tip of my nose, both these you have bitten off. What can a woman do without these two things? Tomorrow the Chan shall be made acquainted with this conduct.' Thus spake she, and the younger brother fled from the treasure-chamber without stealing anything.

"On the following morning the woman presented herself before the Chan, and addressed him, saying, 'My husband has this night treated me shamefully. Whatsoever punishment may be awarded to him, I myself will see it inflicted.'

"But the husband persisted in asserting, 'Of all this I know nothing!' Because the complaint of the wife seemed well-founded, and the man could not exculpate himself, the Chan said, 'Because of his evil deeds, let this man be burnt.'

"When the younger brother heard what had befallen the elder, he went to see him. And after the younger one

had related to him all the affair, he betook himself unto the Chan, saying, "That the evildoer may be really discovered, let both the woman and her husband be summoned before you; I will clear up the mystery.'

"When they were both present, the younger brother related the wife's visit to the dead man, and because the Chan would not give credence to his story, he said: 'In the mouth of the dead man you will find the end of the woman's tongue; and the blood-soiled tip of her nose you will find in the pincers of brass. Send thither, and see if it be not so.'

"Thus spake he, and people were sent to the place, and confirmed all that he had asserted. Upon this the Chan said, 'Since the matter stands thus, let the woman be placed upon the pile of sticks and consumed with fire.' And the woman was placed upon the pile of sticks and consumed with fire."

"That served her right!" said the Son of the Chan.

"Ruler of Destiny, thou hast spoken words! Ssarwala missdood jakzang!" Thus spake Ssidi, and burst from the sack through the air.

Thus Ssidi's tenth relation treats of the Man and his Wife.

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