

CHAPTER 43, AZ-ZUKHRUF (GOLDEN ORNAMENTS)

Rating: 5.0

Description: A severe criticism of the Meccan disbelievers, who insist on associating others with God.

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Introduction

This eighty-nine verse chapter was named after the golden ornaments mentioned in verses thirty-five and fifty-three. It was revealed in Mecca and thus addresses the fundamentals of the faith.

God refutes some of the claims made by the disbelievers including the notion that a true prophet would be wealthy and that God had

taken some of the angels as His daughters. The Meccan disbelievers were steeped in superstitions, and God exposes and refutes them.



Verses 1 – 25 The errors of the disbelieving Meccans

The first verse consists of two disconnected Arabic letters. *Ha Mim*. God has not conveyed any particular meaning to these letters; however, they have been the subject of much scholarly debate. Usually after these letters we are taught something about the Quran. God swears by the glorious Book (the Quran) that makes things clear. He has made it an Arabic Quran for ease of understanding for those to whom it was first revealed.^[1] It is from the original book, The Preserved Tablet that is kept with God and in which all the revelations are written.

Should God turn this revelation away from the Meccan disbelievers because they are insolent? There have been many transgressors before them, each rejecting and mocking their prophets, and many were stronger and wealthier than the disbelievers of Mecca. God destroyed them.

It is God who made the world a habitable place, added rivers and highways, and sent down rain from the sky to revive barren lands. He created all things in pairs and gave humankind ships and livestock to enable them to move from place to place. All things were created for the use of humankind, yet they do not remember or are thankful; rather they attribute partners to Him.

The disbelieving Meccans believe that Allah took angels as His daughters, yet they are dismissive of their own daughters and pray only for sons. If one of them is told of the birth of a daughter, he becomes sad. They believe the angels are female, but they were not witnesses at their creation. They claim that if God had not wanted them to worship angels, they would not have done so. But God asks sardonically if perhaps they were given another book He does not know about. Following their ancestors is their excuse, and many before them have claimed the same thing. The prophets brought better guidance than what their people found their forefathers upon, but many disbelieved them. In the end those who disbelieved were punished.

Verses 26 – 45 There is only One God

Abraham renounced what his father and people worshipped. He worshipped God alone, and he bequeathed those words to his descendants so that they could always return to the truth. As time passed the people of Mecca forgot and then God sent Prophet Muhammad, may the mercy and blessings of God be upon him. They accused him of being a sorcerer and wondered aloud why the Quran was not sent to a greater, more distinguished man. God gives the honor of prophethood to whomever He wills.

Worldly riches and possessions have no significance in the sight of God; had there been no danger of people being inclined towards unbelief in pursuit of this world, He would have filled every disbeliever's house with riches. These things are nothing more than comforts of this worldly life. God reserves the bounties of the Hereafter for the righteous.

Those who turn away from the revelations are assigned a devil as a companion. They think they are guided to the right path, but on the Day of Judgment, they will wish the devilish companion had never come near them. Those companions cannot save them from punishment. And having companions in the punishment will not console them.

Prophet Muhammad is told that he cannot make the deaf hear or the blind see. If they choose not to listen to the message, he cannot force them to change their minds. They will be punished whether he lives to see the punishment or not. Just spread the message, he is told, because he is on the straight path, and he and the believers will be questioned.

Verses 45 – 78 Moses and Jesus

Moses was sent to Pharaoh, and his people were afflicted with scourge after scourge. They expected Moses to pray to God to lift the afflictions in return for their following the guidance, but they broke their promise time after time. Pharaoh claimed he was better than Moses and questioned why Moses did not wear gold ornaments or come with angels. The Egyptians were defiantly disobedient; God drowned them and made them an example for the nations that followed.

When Jesus, the son of Mary, was mentioned as an example of a person being worshipped with God, the disbelievers laughed between themselves as to who is better, the son of God or the daughters of God. They argued trying to provoke and challenge the believers. Jesus was a servant of God and an example of God's infinite power (by creating him without a father) for the Children of Israel. He is a sign of the coming of the Hour, so do not let Satan mislead you from the straight path. He brought wisdom to the Children of Israel saying God is my Lord and your Lord so worship Him alone, yet the factions among them disagreed, and they will suffer a grievous punishment.

The Day of Judgement will come all of a sudden without warning, and then even friends will become enemies. There will be no fear for God's righteous servants on that Day. They will be delighted to be entering Paradise and will be given everything their hearts desire and their eyes delight in. The evildoers however will remain in the punishment from which there will be no relief.

Verses 79 – 89 God devises a plan

The disbelievers devise a plan to ruin Prophet Muhammad, but God devises a plan too. He hears their private conversations so too do the angels who are recording their every word or action. God tells Muhammad to say that if the Lord of Mercy had offspring, he (Muhammad) would be the first to worship them but He does not. He is far above what they say. So they blunder along and play until they face the promised doom.

God is far above their false descriptions and Exalted is He who has control of the heavens and the earth and everything in between them. He knows the Hour when all will be returned to Him. Those deities invoked besides God have no power of intercession. And if you ask the disbelievers who created them, they will definitely say God. So how is it that they are so deluded when it comes to worshipping Him alone? God is aware of Prophet Muhammad cry that his people persist in disbelief, but God advises him to bear with them and respond with peace, because in the end they will come to know and understand.

Footnotes:

[1]

The final revelation, the Quran, was revealed in Arabic because Prophet Muhammad was an Arab and his first audience were Arabs. The miraculous nature of the Quran also has to do with Arabic. The Arabs had a keen appreciation for language and its structure and recognized upon hearing the Quran that it must be from the divine. The Quran's literary challenge still stands today.

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