

Sura 43 - Gilding

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THE CHAPTER OF GILDING

(XLIII. Mecca.)

IN the name of the merciful and compassionate God. HA MIM. By the perspicuous Book, verily, we have made it an Arabic Koran; haply ye will have some sense. And it is in the Mother of the Book with us,-high and wise. Shall we then push aside from you the Reminder, because ye are a people who are extravagant? How many prophets have we sent amongst those of yore? and there never came to them a prophet but they did mock at him; then we destroyed them-more valiant than these; and the example of those of yore passed away.

And if thou shouldst ask them who created the heavens and the earth, they will surely say, 'The mighty, the knowing One created them, 'who made for you the earth a couch and placed for you therein roads, haply ye may be guided: and who sent down from the heaven water in due measure; and we raised up thereby a dead country; thus shall ye too be brought forth; and who has created all species; and has made for you the ships and the cattle whereon to ride that ye may settle yourselves on their backs; then remember the favour of your Lord when ye settled thereon, and say, 'Celebrated be the praises of Him who hath subjected this to us! We could not have got this ourselves; and, verily, unto our Lord shall we return!'

Yet they make for Him of His servants offspring; verily, man is surely obviously ungrateful.

Has He taken of what He creates daughters, and chosen sons for you? Yet when the tidings are given any one of that which he strikes out as a similitude for the Merciful One, his face grows black and he is choked. What! one brought up amongst ornaments, and who is always in contention without obvious cause? And have they made the angels, who are the servants of the Merciful One, females? Were they witnesses of their creation? their witness shall be written down, and they shall be questioned; and they say, 'Had the Merciful pleased we should never have worshipped them.' They have no knowledge of that, they only conjecture. Have we given them a book before it to which they might hold? Nay; they say, 'We found our fathers (agreed) upon a religion, and, verily, we are guided by their traces.'

Thus, too, did we never send before thee to a city any warner, but the affluent ones thereof said, 'Verily, we found our fathers (agreed) upon a religion, and, verily, we are led by their traces.' Say, 'What! if I come to you with what is a better guide than what ye found your fathers agreed upon?' and they will say, 'Verily, we in what ye are sent with disbelieve!'

Then we took vengeance on them, and see how was the end of those who called the (apostles) liars.

When Abraham said to his father and his people, 'Verily, I am clear of all that ye serve, except Him who created me; for, verily, He will guide me:' and he made it a word remaining among his posterity, that haply they might return. Nay; but I let these (Meccans) and their fathers have enjoyment until the truth

came to them, and an apostle. And when the truth came to them they said, 'This is magic, and we therein do disbelieve!' And they say, 'Unless this Koran were sent down to a man great in the two cities....'

Is it they who distribute the mercy of thy Lord? We distribute amongst them their livelihood in the life of this world, and we exalt some of them above others in degrees, that some may take others into subjection; but the mercy of thy Lord is better than that which they amass.

And but that men would then have been one nation, we would have made for those who misbelieve in the Merciful One roofs of silver for their houses, and steps up thereto which they might mount; and to their houses doors, and bedsteads on which they might recline; and gilding,-for, verily, all that is a provision of the life of this world, but the hereafter is better with thy Lord for those who fear! And whosoever turns from the reminder of the Merciful One, we will chain to him a devil, who shall be his mate; and, verily, these shall turn them from the path while they reckon that they are guided until when he comes to us he shall say, 'O, would that between me and thee there were the distance of the two orients, for an evil mate (art thou)!' But it shall not avail you on that day, since ye were unjust; verily, in the torment shall ye share! What! canst thou make the deaf to hear, or guide the blind, or him who is in obvious error? Whether then we take thee off we will surely take vengeance on them; or whether we show thee that which we have promised them; for, verily, we have power over them.

Say, 'Dost thou hold to what is inspired thee verily, thou art in the right way, and, verily, it is a reminder to thee and to thy people, but in the end they shall be asked.

And ask those whom we have sent before thee amongst the prophets, 'Did we make gods beside the Merciful One for them to serve?' We did send Moses with our signs to Pharaoh and his chiefs, and he said, 'Verily, I am the apostle of the Lord of the worlds; but when he came to them with our signs, lo, they laughed at them!' And we did not show them a sign, but it was greater than its fellow; and we seized them with the torment, haply they might turn. And they said, 'O thou magician! pray for us to thy Lord, as He has engaged with thee: verily, we are guided.' And when we removed from them the torment, behold they broke their word.

And Pharaoh proclaimed amongst his people; said he, 'O my people! is not the kingdom of Egypt mine? and these rivers that flow beneath me? What! can ye then not see? Am I better than this fellow, who is contemptible, who can hardly explain himself? Unless then bracelets of gold be cast upon him, or there come with him angels as his mates...!' And he taught his people levity; and they obeyed him: verily, they were an abominable people.

And when they had annoyed us we took vengeance on them, and we drowned them all together, and we made them a precedent and an example to those after them.

And when the son of Mary was set forth as a parable, behold thy people turned away from him and said, 'Are our gods better, or is he?' They did not set it forth to thee save for wrangling. Nay, but they are a contentious people.

He is but a servant whom we have been gracious to, and we have made him an example for the children of Israel. And if we please we can make of you angels

in the earth to succeed you. And, verily, he is a sign of the Hour. Doubt not then concerning it, but follow this right way; and let not the devil turn you away; verily, he is to you an open foe!

And when Jesus came with manifest signs he said, 'I am come to you with wisdom, and I will explain to you something of that whereon ye did dispute, then fear God, obey me; verily, God, He is Lord and your Lord, serve Him then, this is the right way.' But the confederates disputed amongst themselves; and woe to those who are unjust from the torment of a grievous day! Do they expect aught but that the Hour will come upon them suddenly while they do not perceive? Friends on that day shall be foes to each other, save those who fear.

O my servants! there is no fear for you on that day; nor shall ye be grieved who believe in our signs and who are resigned. Enter ye into Paradise, ye and your wives, happy!

Dishes of gold and pitchers shall be sent round to them; therein is what souls desire, and eyes shall be delighted, and ye therein shall dwell for aye; for that is Paradise which ye are given as an inheritance for that which ye have done. Therein shall ye have much fruit whereof to eat.

Verily, the sinners are in the torment of hell to dwell for aye. It shall not be intermitted for them, and they therein shall be confused. We have not wronged them, but it was themselves they wronged.

And they shall cry out, 'O Malik! let thy lord make an end of us;' he shall say, 'Verily, ye are to tarry here.'

We have brought you the truth, but most of you are averse from the truth. Have they arranged the affair? then will we arrange it too! Or do they reckon that we did not hear their secrets and their whispering? Nay, but our messengers are with them writing down. Say, 'If the Merciful One has a son then am I the first to worship him. Celebrated be the praise of the Lord of the heavens and the earth! the Lord of the throne, above all they attribute to Him! But leave them to ponder and to play until they meet that day of theirs which they are promised.

He it is who is in the heaven a God and in the earth a God! and He is the wise, the knowing. And blessed be he whose is the kingdom of the heavens and the earth, and what is between both, and His is the knowledge of the Hour, and unto Him shall ye be brought back!

And those they call on beside Him shall not possess intercession except those only who bear witness for the truth and who do know. And if thou shouldst ask them who created them they will surely say, 'God!' How then can they lie?

And what he says, 'O Lord, verily, these are a people who do not believe; shun them then and say, "Peace!" for they at length shall know!'