

## Surah 4. An-Nisaa

Asad: In His stead, they invoke only lifeless symbols<sup>140</sup> - thus invoking none but a rebellious Satan

Malik: The pagans call upon female deities beside Him; by doing so they call nothing but the rebellious Shaitan

Pickthall: They invoke in His stead only females; they pray to none else than Satan, a rebel--

Yusuf Ali: (The pagans) leaving Him call but upon female deities: they call but upon Satan the persistent rebel! <sup>627</sup>

Transliteration: In yadAAoona min doonihi illa inathan wain yadAAoona illa shaytanana mareedan

Khatab:

Instead of Allah, they only invoke female gods<sup>1</sup> and they ?actually? invoke none but a rebellious Satan—

### Author Comments

140 - The term inath (which is the plural of untha, "a female being") seems to have been applied by the pre-Islamic Arabs to their idols, probably because most of them were considered to be female. Hence, according to some philologists, the plural form inath signifies "inanimate things" (cf. Lane I, 112). Ibn 'Abbas, Qatadah and Al-Hasan al Basri explain it as denoting anything that is passive and lifeless (Tabari); this definition has been adopted by Raghib as well. On the other hand, Tabari mentions a Tradition, on the authority of 'Urwah, according to which a copy of the Qur'an in the possession of 'A'ishah contained the word awthan ("idols") instead of inath (cf. also Zamakhshari and Ibn Kathir). The rendering "lifeless symbols" is most appropriate in this context inasmuch as it adequately combines the concept of "idols" with that of "inanimate things".

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The pagans of Arabia used to shape their idols as females and give them feminine names such as Al-Lât, Al-'Uzza, and Manât.

627 - The unity, power, and goodness of Allah are so manifest in nature and in the human mind when it is in accord with the universal spirit, that only the most abject perversion can account for the sin of religious treason. That sin arises from perverted ideas of sex or perverted ideas of self. The perversion of sex is to suppose that sex rules in religious matters. From it arise such horrible creations of the imagination as Kali, the blood-thirsty goddess of India, or Hecate, the goddess of revenge and hate in Greek mythology. Even in beautiful forms like Saraswati (the goddess of learning) or Minerva (the virgin goddess of sport and arts), to say nothing of Venus (the goddess of carnal pleasures), the emphasis laid on sex destroys a right view of religious nature. Perverted ideas of self are typified in the story of Satan, who was so puffed up with arrogance that he disobeyed Allah, and Allah cursed him. Both these perversions, if allowed lodgment, completely ruin our religious nature and deface Allah's handiwork. Hence it is not merely an outer sin but one that corrupts us through and through.

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