

Surah 43. Az-Zukhruf

Asad: and say, "Which is better - our deities or he?"⁴⁵ [But] it is only in the spirit of dispute that they put this comparison before thee: yea, they are contentious folk!⁴⁶

Malik: and say: "Are Our gods better or is he?" They cite this to you merely to provoke you. They are but a quarrelsome people.

Pickthall: And say: Are our gods better, or is he? They raise not the objection save for argument. Nay! but they are a contentious folk.

Yusuf Ali: And they say " Are Our gods best or He?" This they set forth to thee only by way of disputation: yea they are a contentious people.

Transliteration: Waqaloo aalihatuṅṅa khayrun am huwa maḍḍaraboohu laka illaḍḍa jadalān bal hum qaḍḍawmun khaḍḍaḍḍimoonā

Khattab:

They exclaimed, "Which is better: our gods or Jesus?" They cite him only to argue. In fact, they are a people prone to dispute.

Author Comments

45 - Objecting to the Qur'anic condemnation of their idolatrous worship of angels - whom they describe here as "our deities" - the pagan Quraysh pointed to the parallel Christian worship of Jesus as "the son of God", and even as "God incarnate", and argued more or less thus: "The Qur'an states that Jesus was purely human - and yet the Christians, whom the same Qur'an describes as 'followers of earlier revelation' (ahl al-kitab), consider him divine. Hence, are we not rather justified in our worshipping angels, who are certainly superior to a mere human being?" The fallacy inherent in this "argument" is disposed of in the sequence.

46 - Since the Qur'an condemns explicitly, and in many places, the deification of Jesus by the Christians, this unwarranted deification cannot be used as an argument in favour of the pagan worship of angels and, thus, against the Qur'an: in the words of Zamakhshari, such an argument amounts to "applying a false analogy to a false proposition" (qiyas basil bi-batil).

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