

Section 9: Guidance from the Bounties of Allah for Man

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 66

وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً نُسْقِيكُمْ مِمَّا فِي بُطُونِهِ مِنْ بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَدَمٍ لَبَنًا خَالِصًا سَائِغًا لِلشَّارِبِينَ

66. “And verily there is a lesson laid out for you in the cattle; We give you to drink of what is in their bellies from between the digested food and the blood, pure milk, palatable for the drinkers.”

The Almighty does not only let down water from the clouds which is the source of life, but He also extracts milk which is the source of life out of the insides of the animals as well. The Arabic term /far/ means digested food within the stomach, and the term /ibrat/ refers to that which enables one to pass through the stage of ignorance towards cognition.

Although the Arabic term /ʿAnʿam/ is plural, yet the pronoun in the word /butṭānihi/ is singular. For, the purpose is every single one of the four-footed animals and not all of them.

Milk is a complete food serving which functions both as water and food while having all nutritional values, thus meeting all bodily needs.

In quotations, we read that milk enhances one's wisdom, purifies one's mind, enlightens one's eyes, reinforces one's heart, strengthens one's back and diminishes one's oblivion.

The four-footed animals are not only the sources of provision for our needs, but also they can serve us as a means for our spiritual development and the growth in our faith.

Can the Lord not bring out and reassemble man out of the earth in the resurrection day, He Who extracts milk out of grass? The Almighty, Who provides us with pure milk from between the digested food and blood of animals, will He not be able to differentiate good deeds from evil ones?

The conversion of grass into milk requires a purification system, disinfecting process, the elimination of detrimental substances, some sweetening processing units, heating systems, lubricating materials, coloration techniques, and installing of piping systems within the bodies of animals.

How then is it feasible that an oil engineer is required for the refining of oil while refining of milk does not require a creator?

The verse says:

“And verily there is a lesson laid out for you in the cattle...”

Refined and purified human beings are the ones who go through different ups and downs of the stages of life, political issues and ideologies as well as various friends and yet are not affected by them or by their motives.

The verse continues saying:

“...We give you to drink of what is in their bellies from between the digested food and the blood...”

The prime condition for a drink to be agreeable to the taste, is its purification. It is certainly the case with drinkable waters.

The verse says:

“...pure milk, palatable for the drinkers.”

Being agreeable to the taste must be confirmed by all consumers, and not only human beings. Therefore, we note that the verse has not mentioned ‘palatable for you’, but it has remarked:

“palatable for the drinkers.”

In our civilized contemporary world, it is said and heard that some civilized countries dispatch all those materials, the expiry date of which has been passed, to be consumed by displaced people i.e. the refugees etc.

Consumption of milk by man reveals the fact that He Who has created the animal and has provided milk within its bodily built-up, is the One Who has created us and Who has been aware of our needs.

Hadrat-i-Ali (as), addressing the collector of the religious dues, ‘Zakat’, in the 25th letter of Nahj-ul-

Balaqah, declares:

When you are being sent for the collection of ‘Zakat’, you must observe certain principles, among which is leaving part of the milk of the animal in its breast so as its offspring might not be left without a proper amount of nourishment.

Do not separate the animal from its offspring; let the tired animals relax for a while along side the way, and finally, do not stop them from grazing and drinking water on the whole.

Beating animals, milking cattle with long nails, exploitation and requiring over-working by animals, and every other kind of oppression towards animals is forbidden.

We understand from the Qur’an that Hadrat-i-Sulayman was compassionate towards animals in spite of all his glory and despite the fact that he had dominated all mankind and the ‘Jinns’ (fairies), he used to touch their neck and feet with his blessed hands.

It says:

“...so he began to slash their legs and necks.”¹

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 67

وَمِنْ ثَمَرَاتِ النَّخِيلِ وَالْأَعْنَابِ تَتَّخِذُونَ مِنْهُ سَكَرًا وَرِزْقًا حَسَنًا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً
لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

67. “And of the fruits of the palm and the vines, you get out therefrom (drinks of) intoxication and (also) goodly sustenance. Verily there is a sign in that for a people who understand.”

The Arabic term /sukr/ signifies ‘losing one’s mind’ and the word /sakar/ refers to its origin.

In the past two verses, the issues in question were water and milk both of which are natural and direct drinks. This verse deals with those drinks which are obtained by extraction.

Once Allah Himself is in action, there is always grace and blessings involved, namely, rainwater and pure milk. But, once man is involved, one finds that at times, provisions are good and at times the issue involved is intoxicating drinks which are the source of devastation and corruption.

Therefore, following the discussion of the animals and their milk, this noble verse refers to a part of the merits of plants, implying that Allah provided you with a kind of blessed nutrition for you out of the fruits of palm-trees and vines which you sometimes turn into detrimental forms and use it in the form of

intoxicating substances and liquids, and sometimes use it in their tidy and clean forms. There is an evident clue in it for those who ponder.

The verse says:

“And of the fruits of the palm and the vines, you get out therefrom (drinks of) intoxication and (also) goodly sustenance. Verily there is a sign in that for a people who understand.”

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 68

وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنِ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ

68. “And your Lord revealed to the Bee (an instinctive revelation) to build cells in the mountains and in the trees and in what they (men) build.”

The Arabic term /wahy/ signifies allusion and rapid and secret transfer that besides the Divine revelation to the prophets, includes both instincts, like this verse, and the divine inspiration, like Surah Al-Qasas, No. 28, verse 7 which says:

“And We revealed to Moses’ mother...”

It also includes satanical temptations, as in the verse which says:

“...and verily the Satans inspire unto their friends...”²

The Qur’anic tune alters amazingly in this verse. While continuing previous discussions regarding the various Divine blessings and the statement of the secrets of creation, the Qur’an switches the discussion to ‘bees’ and later to the issue of ‘honey’ in the final analysis. However, it is named as /wahy/ (revelation) which implies a form of Divine mission and a form of ‘mysterious revelation’.

At first, it says:

“And your Lord revealed to the Bee (an instinctive revelation) to build cells in the mountains and in the trees and in what they (men) build.”

The Qur’anic term /wahy/ here denotes that same instinctive command and motives and that unconscious revelation which Allah has created in different animals and living objects.

The first mission of the bees, in this verse, is concerned with building hives. The reason for this is probably the fact that having a proper residence is the first condition for living, following which other activities are being made possible.

Incidentally, according to Tafsir-i-'Atyab-ul-Bayan, there are explicit allusions in the Qur'an as to the fact that all beings, including the inanimate objects, plants and animals have got a certain understanding of His Divinity, the prophetic mission of the Prophet (S) and the mastership 'Wilayat' of the immaculate and infallible Imams such as:

"The seven heavens and the earth and every being therein celebrate His glory..."³

and like the verse which says:

"...O mountains sing praises with him, and the birds..."⁴

and so on and so forth. We have it in certain Islamic narrations that 'Wilayat' of the Imams has been offered to the mountains, waters, trees, and animals.

There is sequential news as to the fact that numerous animals have petitioned their grievances with them. Therefore, it is not astounding that the 'bees' receive revelations and be commissioned for completing certain missions.

Moreover, it is astonishing that the houses of the bees, that is: 'beehives', are built in hexagonal form on top of each other without having any angels, which case has astonished all architectural engineers despite being set upon lofty mountainous regions and high-altitude trees, high places and roofs.

Certainly, this struggle by bees and the movement of animals for the selection of the houses, especially of bees, is based on their instinct embedded in their nature by Allah.

Incidentally, the best kind of honey is the one that is made by bees in the mountains that they feed on flowers therein and not those which are fed by artificial sugary substances.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 69

ثُمَّ كُلِّي مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلًّا ۚ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ
مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

69. "Then eat out of all the fruits, and pave the ways of your Lord sincerely. There comes forth out of their bellies a drink of varying colours, wherein is healing for men. Verily in that is a sign for a people who reflect."

There are two allusions made by Allah in this verse and in the previous verses to the two sources of vital drinks which are provided by animals: one is milk and the other one is honey. We have seen in the last two holy verses that man makes intoxicating substances or liquids out of fruits, while bees make honey

from plants which is healing substance.

In the targeted significant and philosophical Divine system, negligence and idleness is a shunned extremely.

Therefore, wherever in the Qur'an, there is reference made to eating, there is also stated a responsibility alongside that, among which are the following:

“...eat of the good things and do righteousness.”⁵

“...eat of them and feed the distressed one, the needy.”⁶

“...eat of the good things We have provided you with, and be grateful to Allah...”⁷

“...eat of its fruit ... and do not act extravagantly...”⁸

In this verse, Allah commands the bees to eat, but that kind of eating which is coupled with a goal and a responsibility. Men of Allah are like bees. They shun low lands and select lofty high lands. They follow the Divine path in a humble manner by the help of Divine knowledge. Such people utter what is based on wisdom and spiritual flavors.

The verse says:

“Then eat out of all the fruits, and pave the ways of your Lord sincerely. There comes forth out of their bellies a drink of varying colours, wherein is healing for men. Verily in that is a sign for a people who reflect.”

Explanations

Animal behavior is all predetermined according to the Divine command, which is instinctively performed by them.

Honey consists of the juice of all fruits.

“Then eat out of all fruits...”

Not only the selection of residence and the food of animals are guided by the Divine Will, but also all their acts are something pre-determined by Him.

“...and pave the ways of your Lord...”

The movement of animals and their direction is done alongside the path which Allah has set for them and it is a humble one.

The miracle of creation: There is a honey-producing factory within the belly of such a small animal, the

bee.

“...there comes forth out of their bellies, a drink of varying colours...”

Natural honey is in different colours. (The colours white, yellow, red. Perhaps such differences in colours are based on the differences of colours in flowers.)

There are various healing effects in honey by which many diseases may be cured.

“...wherein is healing for men...”

It goes without saying that honey is not a cure for all diseases. However, it has been mentioned in the form of indeterminate noun, /šifa'un/.

House-building, mummification, and honey-producing alongside toxic-producing functions are being all done by such a small animal, like the bee. This reveals the sign of Allah's Might and Power.

All instructive lessons are only aimed and targeted for those who meditate,

“... Verily in that is a sign for a people who reflect.”

Otherwise, there are the bulk of individuals who utilize honey throughout their lifetime but are not predisposed to allocate even several minutes to thinking about it.

Surah An-Nahl – Verse 70

وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَكُمْ ثُمَّ يَتَوَفَّاكُمْ وَمِنْكُمْ مَنْ يُرَدُّ إِلَى أَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لَكُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُ بَعْدَ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا
إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ قَدِيرٌ

70. “And Allah has created you, then He will cause you to die, and some of you will be kept back unto lowest state of the age, so that after knowing somewhat, they may know nothing. Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Powerful.”

The Arabic term /'arḡal/ is derived from the word /raḡl/ which means, ‘mean’ and without any value. The meanest part of one's life is often that period during which weakness and forgetfulness will reach its peak.

The oblivion of the period of senility belongs to the ordinary people, otherwise, men of Allah, such as Hadrat-i-Noah (as) and Hadrat-i-Mahdi (as), who live long for carrying out their missions, will never be entangled with problems of weakness or negligence.

Therefore, by all means, the verse follows the line for proving the existence of the sole Allah, which is done by introducing changes in blessings, matters which are beyond the limits of man's power, and which exhibit the fact that they are determined from another origin.

At first, it says:

“And Allah has created you, then He will cause you to die...”

Both issues are determined by Him: Life and death, so that you may know that it is not you who determine your own life and death. Nor is your life span decided by you. Some die while they are still young, while others die when reaching old age. However, some of you reach the worst and the utmost years of your life which is the extreme senility period.

The end-result of such a long-lasting life is that, after acquiring the full command of all learning, they would know nothing and all their knowledge would be lost in oblivion.

The verse says:

“...and some of you will be kept back unto lowest state of the age, so that after knowing somewhat, they may know nothing...”

It is just like the beginning of the life and the onset of childhood during which they knew nothing and they were unaware and oblivious. Certainly, Allah is aware and has all potentialities.

The verse continues saying:

“... Verily, Allah is All-Knowing, All-Powerful.”

All power is His and He will bestow that power whenever He feels appropriate and He will take back whenever He feels fit.

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1. Surah Sad, No. 38, verse 33
 2. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 12
 3. Surah 'Isra', No. 17, verse 44
 4. Surah Saba, No. 34, verse 10
 5. Surah Al-Mu'mineen, No. 23, verse 51
 6. Surah Al-Hajj, No. 22, verse 28
 7. Surah Al-Baqarah, No. 2, verse 172
 8. Surah Al-'An'am, No. 6, verse 141
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<https://www.al-islam.org/enlightening-commentary-light-holy-quran-vol-8/section-9-guidance-bounties-allah-man>