

(*Note:* Wherever the word “you” or “your” is singular and refers to one human being, it is printed with an italic y, as in: you. Wherever such a word refers to God, the letter y is printed in capital, as in: You.)

For Fast 14 – September 4

Chapter 16

- 66 And surely there is a lesson for you in the cattle: We give you to drink of what is in their bellies — from between the faeces and the blood — pure milk, agreeable to the drinkers.
- 67 And of the fruits of the palms and the grapes, you obtain from them intoxicants and goodly provision. There is surely a sign in this for a people who ponder.¹
- 68 And your Lord revealed to the bee: Make hives in the mountains and in the trees and in what they build,
- 69 then eat of all the fruits and walk in the ways of your Lord submissively. There comes forth from their bellies a beverage of many colours, in which there is healing for humans. Surely in this there is a sign for a people who reflect.²
- 70 And Allah creates you, then He causes you to die; and among you is he who is brought back to the worst part of life, so that he knows nothing after having knowledge. Surely Allah is Knowing, Powerful.³

Notes:

- 1 Verses 66 and 67 compare the Divine laws as manifested in nature with the handiwork of man. Divine law in nature produces such a valuable and agreeable diet as pure milk, separating it from the other elements — blood and dung — to which food is reduced in the belly of an animal, which the hand of man is unable to do. On the other hand, the most agreeable provisions produced by nature in the form of fruits are turned into such a poisonous drug as alcohol by the hand of man.

The two illustrations thus point out that just as Divine laws working in the physical world produce the purest and most agreeable diets, separating them from obnoxious elements and useless excrements, so their working in the spiritual world produces the most sublime moral teachings, which afford to man the purest spiritual diet. But the best teachings given by Divine revelation are likely to be corrupted by the hands of man, as the best of fruits is turned into such an obnoxious thing as alcohol.

- 2 (v. 69) This is another illustration to show that Divine revelation brings about an object which cannot be effected by human exertions. The bee gathers the sweet juice of different flowers, making it into honey. What this small creature effects, working instinctively in obedience to Divine laws, cannot be effected by the combined exertions of the whole of humanity. This illustration shows a similar working of the Divine laws in the spiritual world, viz., that the Prophet, working, as it were, instinctively in obedience to the Divine laws prevailing in the spiritual world, collects by Divine revelation all that is best and noblest in any religion, and sums it up in the Holy Quran: a work which could not be effected by human exertion.

It should be noted that five kinds of the *wahy* (revelation) of Allah are mentioned in the Quran: a revelation to inanimate objects, as *the earth* (99:5) or *the heavens* (41:12); a revelation to living creatures other than man, as *the bee*; a revelation to the angels (8:12); a revelation to men and women other than prophets, as the apostles of Jesus (5:111) or the mother of Moses (28:7); and a revelation to prophets and messengers. All these kinds of *wahy* are not identical; in the case of the *bee*, it is its very *instinct* that is a revelation to it. The revelation to the prophets is the expression of Divine will for the guidance of people.

- 3 (v. 70) As in individuals, so in *nations*. Those who had been given knowledge of Divine revelation before the Holy Prophet had lost or corrupted it at the time of his advent; hence the necessity for a new Divine revelation.