

(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 23 – September 13

### Chapter 36

- 33 And a sign to them is the dead earth: We give life to it and bring forth from it grain so they eat of it.<sup>1</sup>
- 34 And We make in it gardens of date-palms and grapes and We make springs to flow forth in it,
- 35 that they may eat of the fruit thereof, and their hands did not make it. Will they not then give thanks?<sup>2</sup>
- 36 Glory be to Him Who created pairs of all things, of what the earth grows, and of their own kind and of what they do not know!<sup>3</sup>
- 37 And a sign to them is the night: We draw forth from it the day, then lo! they are in darkness;<sup>4</sup>
- 38 and the sun moves on to its destination. That is the ordinance of the Mighty, the Knower.
- 39 And the moon, We have ordained for it stages till it becomes again as an old dry palm-branch.<sup>5</sup>
- 40 Neither is it for the sun to overtake the moon, nor can the night outstrip the day. And all float on in an orbit.<sup>6</sup>
- 41 And a sign to them is that We carry their offspring in the laden ship,
- 42 and We have created for them (other things) the like of it, on which they ride.<sup>7</sup>
- 43 And if We please, We may drown them, then there is no help for them, nor can they be rescued<sup>8</sup> —
- 44 but by mercy from Us and for enjoyment till a time.
- 45 And when it is said to them: Guard against that which is before you and that which is behind you, that mercy may be shown to you.<sup>9</sup>
- 46 And no message comes to them of the messages of their Lord but they turn away from it.

47 And when it is said to them: Spend (on good works) out of what Allah has given you, those who disbelieve say to those who believe: Shall we feed him whom, if Allah please, He could feed? You are in nothing but clear error.<sup>10</sup>

*Notes:*

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1 (v. 33) How dead the earth, and particularly Arabia, was at the advent of the Holy Prophet, it is impossible to describe in brief. As the physical world showed the working of the Divine law that life is restored to the earth after its death, the same law would work in the spiritual world.

2 (v. 35) Even in modern times, man cannot create vegetation or fruit.

3 (v. 36) This verse establishes a great scientific truth, that pairs exist in all creation, even in the vegetable kingdom and in things which had not yet come to the knowledge of man (for example, magnetism, electricity, atoms).

4 (v. 37) The night of ignorance must now pass away; for as in the physical world night follows day and day follows night, so in the spiritual world light is followed by the darkness of ignorance and the latter again gives place to light.

5 (v. 39) Even such is the case of truth, which seems at first to be insignificant, but soon shines forth like a full moon.

6 (v. 40) Even truth and falsehood have their courses. As night must disappear with the rise of the day, so falsehood must vanish before the light of Truth. The flotation of the heavenly bodies in their orbits is a statement beyond the ken of an Arabian of the 7th century C.E. The Quran is a book for the spiritual guidance of man, but it discloses a large number of scientific truths which were not known to man at the revelation of the Book.

It is also indicated here that the sun and the moon follow fixed laws of motion, and thus their motion can be pre-determined by means of knowledge. Therefore the appearance of the new moon can be pre-determined by calculation.

7 (v. 42) The ships that bear man on the seas are spoken of in v. 41. These were known to man at the time of the revelation of the Quran. But this verse speaks of other ships, *like them*. These are the aircraft of today. They are spoken of as being created by God, because it is through the knowledge and means that God has given man that he is able to acquire mastery of the air and make these ships.

8 (v. 43) This is a warning of the impending punishment. Drowning in the sea signifies their destruction, wherever it may take place. The word chosen to describe the punishment is one which shows the utter helplessness of the sufferers.

9 (v. 45) *That which is before you* signifies the punishment which must overtake them in this life, and *that which is behind you* means the consequences of evil, which they would witness in the Hereafter.

10 (v. 47) So they turned neither to submission to Allah, nor to sympathy for their fellow-beings. The words "Shall we feed him whom, if Allah please, He could feed?" show that if some people are in a state of distress and deprivation, we must take action, as far as we can, to bring them relief. We cannot shirk from our duty by claiming that if God had wanted to, He could have provided for them Himself.