

Part III

Qur'an on Biology and Medicine

Chapter ٦

Living Creatures

٦/١ The Animal World

The studies of zoology have verified what is mentioned in the Holy Qur'an, that animal communities follow certain rules and patterns of life, just as human communities do. Zoology divides the animal kingdom into orders, the orders into families, the families into genera, and the genera into species. Science continues to discover more of these communities in the sky, under the water, and on the land.

This is in accordance with the following Qur'anic verse:

(وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَائِرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَمٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
تُمْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ)

Meaning: There is not a moving (living) creature on earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you. We have neglected nothing in the Book, then unto their Lord they (all) shall be gathered. (Surah Al-An'am – Verse No. ٣٨)

On the other hand, the Holy Qur'an refers to the fact that besides the previously known creatures that walked on four legs, two legs, or crept on their bellies, there were other kinds of animals whose anatomy would be discovered later, like insects that walk on six legs such as flies, ants, bees, and mosquitoes, or those that walk on eight legs such as spiders and many other smaller creatures. These features have only been discovered through the use of modern optical and electronic microscopes.

Consider the following Qur'anic verse:

(وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَابَّةٍ مِنْ مَاءٍ فَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى بَطْنِهِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى رَجْلَيْنِ وَمِنْهُمْ مَنْ يَمْشِي عَلَى أَرْبَعٍ يَخْلُقُ اللَّهُ مَا يَشَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ)

Meaning: Allah has created every moving (living) creature from water. Of them there are some that creep on their bellies, some that walk on two legs, and some that walk on four. Allah creates what He wills. Verily! Allah is Able to do all things. (Surah An-Nur – Verse No. ٤٥)

When one contemplates the behavior of the animals, birds, fish, and insects, he realizes that Allah inspires them to coexist and interact with other creatures, and to adapt to the environment so that they can survive and reproduce. Also, he realizes how Allah inspires such creatures to communicate with each other by producing sound or other waves, some of which could be recorded using equipment that could detect such signals, and whose significance and meanings have been partly solved and interpreted.

In the Holy Qur'an:

(قَالَ رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى)

Meaning: [Musa (Moses)] said: "Our Lord is He Who gave to each thing its form and nature, then guided it. (Surah Taha – Verse No. ٥٠)

(سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى * الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى * وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى)

Meaning: Extol The Name of your Lord, The Most Exalted, Who created; so He molded; and Who determined; so He guided. (Surah Al-A`la – Verses Nos. ٢ - ٣)

Allah's guidance for His creatures and the inimitability of the Qur'anic scientific references – before modern science - become clear when one contemplates the worlds of the ants and bees.

٦/٢ Ants

Zoologists have discovered many similarities between the behavior of ants and that of human beings, e.g. cooperation in building dwellings and digging tunnels, storage of food in summer for consumption in winter, the biting of the edges of corn so that it does not grow again and become spoiled if it is exposed to the rain, and having a communication language, as discovered by modern experimentation. In one of these experiments, a scientist observed a group of ants, one of which found a dead fly. The ant turned around and touched the fly and tried repeatedly to carry it. Then, it walked away and met another ant with whom it seemed to communicate. Finally, it returned accompanied by a large group of ants that cooperated with it to carry the dead fly to their dwelling.

In the Holy Qur'an:

(حَتَّىٰ إِذَا اتُّوْا عَلَىٰ وَادِ النَّمْلِ قَالَتْ نَمْلَةٌ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّمْلُ ادْخُلُوا مَسَاكِنَكُمْ لَا يَحْطِمَنَّكُمْ سُلَيْمَانُ وَجُنُودُهُ وَهُمْ لَا يَشْعُرُونَ * فَتَبَسَّمَ ضَاحِكًا مِّنْ قَوْلِهَا وَقَالَ رَبِّ أَوْزِعْنِي أَنْ أَشْكُرَ نِعْمَتَكَ الَّتِي أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيَّ وَعَلَىٰ وَالِدَيَّ وَأَنْ أَعْمَلَ صَالِحًا تَرْضَاهُ وَأَدْخِلْنِي بِرَحْمَتِكَ فِي عِبَادِكَ الصَّالِحِينَ)

Meaning: Till, when they came to the valley of the ants, one of the ants said: "O ants! Enter your dwellings, lest Sulayman (Solomon) and his hosts crush you, while they perceive not." So he [Sulayman (Solomon)] smiled, amused at her speech and said: "My Lord! Inspire and bestow upon me the power and ability that I may be grateful for Your Favors which You have bestowed on me and on my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds that will please You, and admit me by Your Mercy among Your righteous slaves." (Surah An-Naml – Verses Nos. ١٨ - ١٩)

This was prophet Sulayman whom Allah taught the language of many creatures:

(وَوَرَّثَ سُلَيْمَانَ دَاوُدَ وَقَالَ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ عَلَّمْنَا مَنْطِقَ الطَّيْرِ وَأَوْتَيْنَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ إِنْ هَذَا لَهُوَ الْفَضْلُ الْمُبِينُ)

Meaning: And Sulayman (Solomon) inherited (the knowledge of) Dawud (David). He said: "O mankind! We have been taught the language of birds, and on us have been bestowed all things. This, verily, is an evident grace (from Allah)." (Surah An-Naml – Verse No. ١٦)

٦/٣ Bees

The Holy Qur'an gives an account of their precise system, assiduous work, and feeding cycle on different plants to produce the numerous different types of honey. Additionally, the Holy Qur'an refers to the fact that Allah, the Exalted, inspired the bees to collect nectar from different flowers and fruits and transform it inside them into honey that differs in color and taste. The honey regurgitated from their bellies is palatable and has many benefits and healing properties for human beings. This has been discovered by man recently through precise studies, careful observation, and detailed research concerning the life of the bee and honey production (see ١٦٤: Honey). Furthermore, the Holy Qur'an refers to the diversity among the bee hives, which was proven by ancient fossils found in the mountains, the hollow trunks of trees that pre-existed man, and the apiaries made by human beings.

This is briefly mentioned in precise words in the following verse:

(وَأَوْحَىٰ رَبُّكَ إِلَى النَّحْلِ أَنْ اتَّخِذِي مِنَ الْجِبَالِ بُيُوتًا وَمِنَ الشَّجَرِ وَمِمَّا يَعْرِشُونَ * ثُمَّ كُلِي مِن كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ فَاسْلُكِي سُبُلَ رَبِّكِ ذُلُلًا يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بُطُونِهَا شَرَابٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ فِيهِ شِفَاءٌ لِلنَّاسِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ)

Meaning: And your Lord inspired the bees, (saying), "Take to yourselves, of the mountains, homes, and of the trees, and of whatever they trellis. Thereafter eat of all (kinds of) products, (and) so insert (yourselves) through the ways of your Lord, tractable (to you)." There comes out of their bellies a drink of different colors, wherein is a cure for mankind. Surely in that is indeed a sign for a people who meditate. (Surah An-Nahl – Verses Nos. ٦٨ - ٦٩)

The second verse refers to one of the miracles that Allah, the Exalted, bestows on the bees and which studies have clarified, that bees cover such long distances, going back and forth to search for sources of nectar, without getting lost. They recognize suitable sources by sight, smell, and taste, and then they exchange information concerning these sources through communication by making sounds or dancing, every movement of which carries a particular meaning and refers to the type, direction, and distance of the source.

١٦٤ The Sources of Milk:

Consider the precise anatomical and physiological description mentioned in the following Qur'anic verse concerning the source of milk in cattle such as cows and buffaloes. This description was verified by science many centuries after the revelation of the Wise Qur'an. The products of digestion in cattle are diverted into blood in the veins, milk in the udders, and the dung from the anus. This was mentioned in the Holy Qur'an many centuries before discovering the processes of food assimilation and the blood circulation:

(وَإِنَّ لَكُمْ فِي الْأَنْعَامِ لَعِبْرَةً لِّئْتَلِمُوهَا فِي بُطُونِهِمْ مِمَّا فِي بَيْنِ فَرْثٍ وَدَمٍ لَبَنًا خَالِصًا سَائِغًا لِلشَّارِبِينَ)

Meaning: And verily! In the cattle, there is a lesson for you. We give you to drink of that which is in their bellies, from between excretions and blood, pure milk; palatable to the drinkers. (Surah An-Nahl – Verse No. ٦٦)

The verse refers also to the merit of milk as food.

Consider also the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) praise for the merits of milk and its products as a great source of food, to the extent that it is considered as a complete food:

“Any one whom Allah supplies with milk should say: ‘O Allah! bless us in it and give us more of it, for no food or drink satisfies like milk.’ (Reported by Abu Dawud, Ibn Majah, At-Tirmidhi and Ahmad)

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also said:

“Stick to drinking the milk of cows, for it is a blessing.” (Reported by Ahmad)

٦/٥ All Living Creatures in Pairs:

Electronic microscopy have clarified that all living creatures, however minute, are in pairs. Moreover, even the micro-constituents down to the level of a cell or smaller are in pairs. The chromosomes in the cells, that carry the hereditary characteristics, are in pairs of strands on which



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amino acids are distributed. As for a zygote (two united gametes), it is a mixture of an ovum and a sperm. There are two kinds of sperms, the first kind carries the hereditary male characteristics, while the other carries the female. Every microbe, virus, and bacterium that cause diseases also has an antibody.

Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

(وَمِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَا زَوْجَيْنِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ)

Meaning: And of everything We have created pairs, that you may remember (the Grace of Allah). (Surah Adh-Dhariyat – Verse No. ٤٩)

It is not just the animal world that is in pairs, the plant world is too. The Arabs at the time of the revelation of the Holy Qur'an did not know that the plants were in pairs, apart from those of the palm tree. It was only after the discovery of microscopes that human beings knew that plants have male organs (stamens) and female organs (ovaries) and that the wind, together with other factors, carries the pollen from one type to the opposite one, so that reproduction can take place. This is mentioned in the previous verse and is stated in the following one:

(وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْهَارًا وَمِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ)

Meaning: And it is He (The One) Who extended the earth, and made therein anchorages (mountains) and rivers; and of all products He made therein two pairs (Surah Ar-Ra'd – Verse No. ٣)

Thus, the accuracy of the Holy Qur'an in affirming that all living creatures are in pairs is verified.