

Fast 14: God's extensive favours to all human beings (2)

- In appealing to man to accept the message of the oneness of God revealed through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, the Quran gives examples of the favours God has bestowed on human beings:

“And the cattle, He has created them for you. You have in them warm clothing and (other) advantages, and of them you eat....

وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ وَمَنَافِعُ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٥﴾

And they carry your heavy loads to regions which you could not reach but with distress to yourselves.

وَتَحْمِلُ أَوْثِقَاتِكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ لَّمْ تَكُونُوا

بَلِغِيهِ إِلَّا بِشِقِّ الْأَنْفُسِ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ

Surely your Lord is Compassionate, Merciful. And (He made) horses and mules and asses that you might ride upon them and as an ornament. **And He creates what you do not know.**” (16:5, 7–8)

لَرءُوفٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٦﴾ وَالْحَيْلَ وَالْبِغَالَ وَالْحَمِيرَ لِتَرْكَبُوهَا وَزِينَةً وَيَخْلُقُ مَا لَا

تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٧﴾

God has shown compassion and mercy to human beings by creating for them various means that they can use for their needs, comforts and advantages. The last words, “And He creates what you do not know”, clearly show that, in addition to the animals mentioned here, other means will also be created, then unknown to man, for transporting him and his loads. That has been fulfilled in the past two centuries.

- The conclusion drawn from the creation of these provisions is then presented:

“And upon Allah it rests to show the right way, and there are some deviating (ways). And if He please, He would guide all of you aright.” (16:9)

وَعَلَى اللَّهِ قَصْدُ السَّبِيلِ وَمِنْهَا جَايِزٌ وَ

لَوْ شَاءَ لَهَدَاكُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٩﴾

Just like His creations for the physical welfare of man, God has also created the means of man's spiritual welfare by showing him the right way, making it distinct from ways of error. And it is His will to bring all mankind to guidance.

- The same chapter continues with a list of other creations that benefit human beings:
 - water from the clouds which people drink, and which makes trees grow, on which people feed (16:10).

- vegetation and olives, dates, grapes and all other fruit. In these “there is a sign **for a people who reflect**” (16:11).
- night and day, sun and moon, and stars to serve people. In these “there are signs **for a people who understand**” (16:12).
- things in the earth of different colours and shades. In these “there is a sign **for a people who are mindful**” (16:13).
- the sea to serve people, from which they obtain sea food to eat and ornaments to wear, and in which ships run “so that you seek of His bounty and that you may give thanks” (16:14).
- mountains, rivers, roads, and landmarks and stars, to find the right way (16:15–16).

As stated in these verses, people should **think over, and ponder on, and consider** these phenomena. In other words, they should carry out scientific research and investigations to understand how they work, and as a result they will benefit by acquiring knowledge as well as by making practical use of that knowledge.

- The conclusions from this are expressed in the verses which follow:

“Is He then Who creates like him who does not create? Are you not then mindful?” (16:17)

أَفَمَنْ يَخْلُقُ كَمَنْ لَا يَخْلُقُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

“And if you would count Allah’s favours, you would not be able to number them. Surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.” (16:18)

وَإِنْ تَعَدُّوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ لَا تُحْصَوْهَا إِنَّ اللَّهَ

لَعَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٨﴾

“And those whom they call on besides Allah created nothing, while they are themselves created. Dead (are they), not living. ...” (16:20, 21)

وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ لَا يَخْلُقُونَ

شَيْئًا وَهُمْ يُخْلَقُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ أَمْوَاتٌ غَيْرُ

أَحْيَاءٍ ﴿٢١﴾

Why should then people worship things other than God which do not create anything? Allah’s favours are innumerable and infinite, and are never exhausted. This tells us that man will discover no end to what he can get from nature for his benefit. The things and beings which people worship are themselves only creations, which created nothing. Their comparison with Allah is as comparing zero with infinity, or comparing the dead with the living.