

Fast 15: God's extensive favours to all human beings (3)

- God is ever Merciful to man, but man is ungrateful:

“Your Lord is He Who speeds the ships for you in the sea that you may seek of His grace. Surely He is **ever Merciful** to you. And when distress afflicts you in the sea, away go those whom you call on except He; but when He brings you safe to the land, you turn away. And man is **ever ungrateful.**” (17:66–67)

رَبُّكُمْ الَّذِي يُزْجِي نَكْمُ الْفُلْكَ فِي الْبَحْرِ
لِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّهُ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا
وَإِذَا مَسَّكُمُ الضُّرُّ فِي الْبَحْرِ ضَلَّ مَنْ
تَدْعُونَ إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ فَلَمَّا نَجَّكُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ
أَعْرَضْتُمْ وَكَانَ الْإِنْسَانُ كَفُورًا ﴿٦٦﴾

It is through God's mercy that man's technology works in the world. When he encounters distress, and finds no helpers, he instinctively calls on God for help. There are many examples of this in events in world history. In December 1941, the German army invading the Soviet Union reached close to Moscow and it appeared inevitable that they would capture it. The Soviet Union was officially atheist and opposed to any religion, but it is reported that its leader Stalin ordered prayers to be said in a cathedral in Moscow for the protection of the city. The prayers appear to have worked as the German army was repelled and the city was saved. The prayers may have invoked the names of Mary and Jesus, but essentially they were prayers to God.

Anyhow, after God brings man to safety, he forget about God and is ungrateful.

- The same is stated in other places in the Quran in different ways. For example:

“Do you not see that Allah has made subservient to you all that is in the earth, and the ships gliding in the sea by His command? And He withholds the heaven from falling on the earth except with His permission. **Surely Allah is Compassionate, Merciful to mankind.** And He it is Who brings you to life, then He causes you to die, then He will bring you to life. Surely **man is ungrateful.**” (22:65–66)

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَ
الْفُلْكَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَ يُمَسِّكُ
السَّمَاءَ أَنْ تَقَعَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ بِالنَّاسِ لَرَءُوفٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَهُوَ الَّذِي
أَحْيَاكُمْ ثُمَّ يُمِيتُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ
إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَكَفُورٌ ﴿٦٦﴾

This is more general, stating that “all that is in the earth” is to serve mankind. While ships are mentioned, the reference to “all that” means that things invented and

developed subsequent to the time of the Quran, till the present day and in the future, are included. The meaning of Allah withholding the heaven from falling on the earth is that, despite man's misdeeds, Allah by His mercy does not destroy him. It is only in exceptional circumstances that God sends punishment on earth.

In recent years, space experts have been tracking "near earth objects". These are bodies such as asteroids, comets and the like, which while travelling through the solar system pass close to the earth now and then. There are thousands of "near earth objects". Any one of these can bring destruction if it should fall upon the earth, but only a few have ever done so in history. Scientists and engineers are devising ways of diverting such an object, if it should be on course to hit the earth. Perhaps the words "He withholds the heaven from falling on the earth except with His permission" are in reference also to this physical phenomenon.

- The favours of Allah bestowed upon man are also described as follows:

“Do you not see that Allah has made subservient to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, **and granted to you His favours complete outwardly and inwardly?** And some people dispute about Allah without knowledge or guidance or a Book giving light.” (31:20)

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ
وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَ أَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَهُ
ظَاهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يُجَادِلُ
فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ
مُنِيرٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

This goes further and says that everything in the heavens and the earth is available to man for his service and use. God has granted man His favours **complete** both outwardly (*zahir*) and inwardly (*batin*). The outward favours are those which benefit man physically and materially. The inward favours can also be physical, if we consider these to be, for example, medical treatments and diagnostic techniques which relate to the inside of the human body, or the miniaturisation of various devices. However, primarily, the granting of complete favours inwardly refers to the teachings and the guidance which benefit man spiritually and lead to the reform of his character and behaviour.

Despite all these favours of God, “granted complete outwardly and inwardly”, there are people who doubt His existence or consider others as sharing in His power and attributes. But they will not be able to find any knowledge, any system of guidance, or any revealed book, which supports their assertions.