

## Chapter 41

Allāh, Most High, says,

“They recognise the blessings of Allāh and then reject them! Most of them are ingrates.”<sup>1</sup>

Mujāhid said (quoting the meaning of his words), ‘It is the saying of a person, “This is my wealth, I inherited it from my fathers.”’<sup>2</sup>

ʿAwn ibn ʿAbdullāh said, ‘They say, “Were it not for so-and-so, this would not have happened.”’<sup>3</sup>

Ibn Qutaybah said, ‘They say, “This happened by the intercession of our gods.”’<sup>4</sup>

After quoting the previously mentioned ḥadīth of Zayd ibn Khālid, “Allāh, Most High, says, ‘My servant awoke either as a believer or a disbeliever...’”, Abū'l-ʿAbbās said, ‘There are many examples of this in the Book and Sunnah wherein Allāh, Glorious is He, censures those who attribute His blessings to others and commit *shirk* with Him. One of the Salaf said, “It is like their saying, ‘The wind was favourable and the sailor was adept,’ and similar statements that are current on the tongues of many.”’<sup>5</sup>

### Issues:

1. Exegesis of recognising and rejecting blessings.
2. Knowing that this is current on the tongues of many.
3. Referring to these words as ‘rejecting blessings.’
4. (The possibility of) two opposites coming together in the heart.

### Commentary:

The author, may Allāh have mercy on him, quotes the following verse,<sup>6</sup>

---

Allāh, Most High, says,

“They recognise the blessings of Allāh and then reject them! Most of them are ingrates.”

---

The author, may Allāh have mercy on him, mentions the statements of some scholars in explanation to this verse. Ibn Jarīr [al-Ṭabarī] said (summarised),

The exegetes differ concerning what *blessings* refers to here. Sufyān narrates that Suddī commented thus, ‘Muḥammad ﷺ.’ Alternatively, others said, ‘They recognise the blessings that Allāh has listed in this chapter as being from Him, that He is the bestower, but then they reject this and claim that they inherited them from their fathers!’ About the verse, “***They recognise the blessings of Allāh and then reject them!***” Mujāhid said, ‘The blessings are the places of dwelling, the cattle, the provision they acquire from them, coats of armour, and clothes. The Quraysh recognised these and then rejected them by claiming, “These belonged to our fathers and they bequeathed them to us.”’ Others said, ‘When the disbelievers were asked, “Who provides for you?” They accepted that Allāh did, but then they rejected them by saying, “We were provided this through the intercession of our gods.”’

The author mentions a similar comment from Ibn Qutaybah. He is Abū Muḥammad ʿAbdullāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah al-Dīnūrī, the judge of Egypt, philologist, and grammarian. He is the author

of some excellent and beneficial works encompassing a variety of different sciences. He studied in Baghdād and took ḥadīth from Ishāq ibn Rāhawayh and those of his level. He passed away in the year 276H.<sup>7</sup>

Others explained the verse as mentioned by the author,

---

‘Awn ibn ‘Abdullāh said, ‘They say, “Were it not for so-and-so, this would not have happened.”’

---

He said, ‘They reject them by saying, “Were it not for so-and-so, this and that would not have happened,” or “were it not for so-and-so, I would not have been afflicted in this way.”’<sup>8</sup>

---

Mujāhid said (quoting the meaning of his words), ‘It is the saying of a person, “This is my wealth, I inherited it from my fathers.”’

---

Mujāhid is the Shaykh of Qur’ānic exegesis, the Imām, pious and sagacious, Mujāhid ibn Jabr al-Makkī, the freed-slave of Banū Makhzūm. Faḍl ibn Maymūn said, ‘I heard Mujāhid saying, “I read the Qur’ānic text to ibn ‘Abbās numerous times, stopping at every verse and asking him about the circumstances of its revelation: concerning whom it was revealed, how it was revealed, and what its meaning was.”’ He passed away in the year 102H at the age of 83, may Allāh have mercy on him.<sup>9</sup>

Ibn Jarīr preferred the first opinion but others preferred the opinion that the verse is general and subsumes all that is mentioned by the scholars in their respective commentaries. This latter view is the correct one and Allāh knows best.<sup>10</sup>

---

After quoting the previously mentioned ḥadīth of Zayd ibn Khālid, “Allāh, Most High, says, ‘My servant awoke either as a believer or a disbeliever...’”, Abū’l-‘Abbās said, ‘There are many examples of this in the Book and Sunnah wherein Allāh, Glorious is He, censures those who attribute His blessings to others and commit *shirk* with Him. One of the Salaf said, “It is like their saying, ‘The wind was favourable and the sailor was adept,’ and similar statements that are current on the tongues of many.”’

---

Abū’l-‘Abbās is Shaykhu’l-Islām Aḥmad ibn ‘Abdu’l-Ḥalīm ibn ‘Abdu’l-Salām ibn Taymiyyah, the noble Imām, may Allāh have mercy on him.

“After quoting the previously mentioned ḥadīth of Zayd ibn Khālid,” in the chapter of *Istisqā’* and *Anwā’*

“There are many examples of this in the Book and Sunnah wherein Allāh, Glorious is He, censures those who attribute His blessings to others and commit *shirk* with Him. One of the Salaf said, “It is like their saying, ‘The wind was favourable and the sailor was adept,’ and similar statements that are current on the tongues of many.” The words of Shaykhu’l-Islām show that the ruling of this verse is general to anyone who attributes blessings to another besides Allāh, or attaches the means of their procurement to others.<sup>11</sup> This has already been mentioned in the previously quoted words of the exegetes.

Our Shaykh, may Allāh have mercy on him, said, “This shows (the possibility of) two opposites coming together in the heart and referring to these words as ‘rejecting blessings’.”

---

<sup>1</sup> *al-Naḥl* (16): 83

The verses before read, “*Allāh brought you out of your mothers’ wombs knowing nothing at all, and gave you hearing, sight, and hearts so that perhaps you would show thanks. Do they not see the birds suspended in mid-air up in the sky? Nothing holds them there except Allāh. There are certainly Signs in that for people who have faith. Allāh has made your houses places of rest for you and made houses for you out of cattle hides which are light for you to carry both when you are travelling and when you are staying in one place. And from their wool and fur and hair you obtain clothing and carpets and household utensils for a time. Allāh has made shaded places for you in what He has created and He has made shelters for you in the mountains and He has made shirts for you to protect you from the heat and shirts to protect you from each other’s violence. In that way He perfects His blessings on you so that hopefully you will become Muslims.*”

Earlier in the same chapter, Allāh, Most High, says, “*Any blessing you have is from Allāh. Then when harm touches you it is to Him you cry for help. But when He removes the harm from you, a group of you associate others with their Lord, ungrateful for what We have given them. Enjoy yourselves. You will soon know!*” [*al-Naḥl* (16): 53-55]

<sup>2</sup> Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, references it to Ṭabarī, ibn Abī Shaybah, ibn al-Mundhir, and ibn Abī Ḥātim. The isnād is ṣaḥīḥ.

<sup>3</sup> Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr*, references it to Ṭabarī, Sa’īd ibn Manṣūr, ibn al-Mundhir, and ibn Abī Ḥātim.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn al-Qayyim, *Shifā’ al-`Alīl*, pg. 37

<sup>5</sup> Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū` Fatāwā*, vol. 14, pg. 370

<sup>6</sup> Shaykh Sulaymān, *Taysīr al-`Azīz*, said, “This chapter was penned to emphasise the need of displaying due propriety vis-à-vis Allāh’s Lordship through avoiding wordings that indicate *shirk*, albeit subtly, such as attributing blessings to others besides Allāh. This is a type of hidden *shirk*, the opposite of which, (i.e. attributing blessings to Allāh), is a form of gratitude. Ibn Ḥibbān records on the authority of Jābir that the Prophet ﷺ said, “Whoever has been granted blessings and finds no way of repaying it except by praising the person, he has shown gratitude, and whoever refrains from doing so has been an ingrate.”<sup>1</sup> Another narration which is jayyid, recorded by Abū Dāwūd has, “Whoever is blessed and makes mention of it has shown gratitude and whoever conceals it has been an ingrate.”<sup>2</sup>

‘If making mention of the good which Allāh has decreed to occur through the medium of a person is to show him gratitude, mentioning the good bestowed by the Lord of the worlds, His blessings, and His grace, and, furthermore, attributing it to Him, is more so a display of gratitude.’

1. Abū Dāwūd #4813, Tirmidhī #2024 and ibn Ḥibbān #3415. It is ṣaḥīḥ

2. Abū Dāwūd #4814 and it is ṣaḥīḥ

He also said, ‘It is not befitting for the recipient of blessings, from whom gratitude is required, to attribute the blessings to others, forgetting the One in whose hands lies all good, the One who is omnipotent. Rather he should mention them, attributing them to their granter, who is the absolute granter. Allāh, Most High, says, “*Any blessing you have is from Allāh.*”<sup>1</sup> He is the One who grants all blessings in this world and the Hereafter, Him and Him alone without any partners. To do so is to show gratitude, and the opposite is to be ungrateful. This is not incompatible with supplicating for, and doing good to, the person who was the medium, or one of the media, of its procurement.’

1. *al-Naḥl* (16): 53

Shaykh Sa’dī, *al-Qawl al-Sadīd*, said, ‘It is obligatory for the creation to attribute blessings to Allāh in speech and belief as has already been discussed. It is through this that *Tawḥīd* is perfected. Whoever rejects the blessings of Allāh in his heart and on his tongue is actually a disbeliever, divested of religion in its totality. Whoever accepts that all blessings are from Allāh Alone in his heart, but sometimes attributes them to Allāh and other times to himself, his deeds, or the efforts of others, as is frequently done by people, then such a person must repent, and attribute these blessings to the One who grants them. He must strive against his self in achieving this for faith can only be perfected through attributing blessings to Allāh in speech and belief.

---

‘Gratitude, the pinnacle of faith, is erected on three pillars: the heart’s acknowledgement of Allāh’s blessings bestowed to him and to others, mentioning these blessings and praising Allāh for them, and employing them to obey the Blessor and worship Him. Allah knows best.’

<sup>7</sup> Shaykh Sulaymān, *Taysīr al-`Azīz*, said in commentary to the words of ibn Qutaybah, ‘Ibn al-Qayyim said, “Not only does this statement attribute blessings to another besides the One who grants them, it is a statement of *shirk*. The gods that are worshipped besides Allāh are too unworthy and too lowly to intercede with Allāh, instead they will share in the humiliation and punishment meted out to those who worshipped them. The closest of creation to Him, the most beloved to Him cannot intercede with Him except by His permission, and then only for those He allows. Therefore He is the One who grants the blessing of intercession, He is the One who grants the blessing of accepting it, and He is the One who grants the blessings of allowing someone to be interceded for since not everyone is deserving of intercession. So who then is the granter of blessings in reality if not Him? Allāh, Most High, says, ‘*Any blessing you have is from Allāh.*’<sup>1</sup> Not even for a blink of the eye does the servant ever exist outside the blessings of Allāh, His grace, and beneficence; not in this world or the Hereafter, and it is for this reason that He, Glorious is He, censures those who say, ‘*I have only been given it because of knowledge I have,*’<sup>2</sup> in response to His blessings.”<sup>3</sup>

1. *al-Nahl* (16): 53

2. *al-Qaṣaṣ* (28): 78

3. Ibn al-Qayyim, *Shifā’ al-`Alīl*, pg. 37

<sup>8</sup> Shaykh Sulaymān, *Taysīr al-`Azīz*, said, ‘Ibn al-Qayyim said (summarised), “This excludes the attribution of blessings to someone who has no ability to repress harm from himself or procure benefit, let alone for anyone else! The role of this person, at the most, was that he was part of the means towards the acquirement of that blessing. Allāh caused the blessing to reach him through the hands of that person. A means cannot independently grant benefit, and the fact that the person was made a means is, in reality, a blessing from Allāh. Allāh is the granter of the favour and that includes the actual grant of favour as well as the means towards its procurement. Now, Allāh, Most High, could well grant the favour through use of that means or without it, it having no effect whatsoever. He could also divest the means from its role as a means altogether, or He could appoint an obstacle that effectively cancels it out, or He could cause the opposite of what is expected from that means to occur. Therefore, He Alone is the granter.”’

Shaykh Hāmid ibn Muḥammad, *Fathu’llāh al-Ḥamīd al-Majīd*, said, ‘Allāh is the cause of causes, He is the One who decrees all, He is the One who grants, the One who prevents, the One who effectuates benefit, and the One who effects harm. There is none who can contend with His command and there is none who can countermand His rule. He does what He wills and chooses. In His hands is the sovereignty of all things and there is none worthy of worship save Him. How then can one attribute His blessings to another?!’

<sup>9</sup> Shaykh Sulaymān, *Taysīr al-`Azīz*, said, ‘Ibn al-Qayyim said, “Because they attributed the blessings to another besides Allāh, they effectively rejected it. Anyone who says such a thing is denying the blessings of Allāh bestowed him and not acknowledging them. He is like the leper and bald man who were reminded of Allāh’s blessings by the angel yet they rejected them saying, “We inherited this property, elder son from elder son.” Indeed, that they were inherited from their fathers further aggrandises Allāh’s blessing since He blessed both their fathers and themselves with it and both benefited from it.”’

\* Ibn al-Qayyim, *Shifā’ al-`Alīl*, pp. 36-37

<sup>10</sup> Shaykh `Uthmān al-Tamīmī, *Fathu’l-Ḥamīd*, ‘The [title] verse proves that *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah* is a necessary outcome of *Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah*. The various opinions mentioned concerning the exegesis of the verse are not mutually incompatible; rather they are all subsumed by the meaning of the noble verse. Allāh, Most High, is the One who grants accord.’

<sup>11</sup> Allāh, Most High, says, “*Your Lord is He who propels the ships in the sea for you so that you may seek His bounty. He is indeed Most Merciful to you.*”<sup>1</sup>, and, “*Among His Signs are the tall ships sailing like mountains through the sea. If He wills He makes the wind stop blowing and then they lie motionless on its back. There are certainly Signs in that for everyone who is steadfast and thankful. Or He wrecks them for what they have earned though He pardons much.*”<sup>2</sup>

1. *al-Isrā’* (17): 66

2. *al-Shūrā* (42): 32-34

---

There are numerous verses in the Qur’ān that illustrate the words of Ibn Taymiyyah. Shaykh `Uthmān al-Tamīmī, *Fathu’l-Ḥamīd*, mentioned some:

“When We grant blessings to a man, he turns away and draws aside but when any evil touches him, he is full of endless prayers!” [*al-Fuṣṣilat* (41): 50]

“When We let a man taste mercy from Us he exults in it. But if something bad strikes him for what he has done, he is ungrateful.” [*al-Shūrā* (42): 48]

“Truly, man is openly ungrateful.” [*al-Zukhruf* (43): 15]

About Qārūn and his wealth, Allāh says,

“He said, ‘I have only been given it because of knowledge I have.’ Did he not know that before him Allāh had destroyed generations with far greater strength than his and far more possessions?” [*al-Qaṣaṣ* (28): 78]