Luqman-The Wise Sage

Admonition To The Young Son

Luqman was not a messenger. He was a Hakim (the wise one). Almighty God had gifted him much intelligence and a high moral character. It is said that he was the son of Prophet Ayyub's sister or aunt and lived during the time of Ayyub (a.s).

The Holy Prophet has said that though Luqman Hakim was not a messenger, he was a very wise and farsighted man who worshipped only One God.

Once a man asked him "Are you the same person who used to graze sheep?" Luqman replied, "You are right. I am the same person. But why are you asking this question?" That man continued to ask, "From where did you obtain all this wisdom and intelligence?" Luqman replied, "This is a gift from God, which is granted by telling the truth and by refraining from useless things and by behaving honestly." Once Luqman went to see Prophet Dawood and found that he (Dawood) was molding iron like clay and making something with it. At first, Luqman (a.s) thought of asking what Prophet Dawood was preparing. But he remained silent thinking it was better to wait and see what was being manufactured. He saw that Prophet Dawood made armor from molded iron; wore it and then turning to Luqman said, "How nice is this garment for the battlefield?" Luqman learnt everything without questioning and told himself, "Verily, silence is the best wisdom. But few people realize this." Prophet Dawood said to him, "God has given you wisdom and you are the wise one."

Luqman was previously in employ of a rich man. Once his master told him, "Slaughter a sheep and bring to me the best part of its body." Luqman brought the animal's tongue and heart. The next day the employer asked Luqman, "Bring to me the worst organ of the animal." Luqman again brought its tongue and heart. The employer asked Luqman with astonishment the reason of bringing the same parts on both occasions. Luqman replied, "If the heart and the tongue are used in a good way they are the best organs granted to everyone by Almighty God but if they are used unwisely and in a wrong manner no part of a body can be worse than them."

Luqman was repeatedly giving admonitions and advices to his young son. As they are extremely useful for our day-to-day life I am quoting them from Islamic books wherein they have been narrated from the Holy Prophet (s.a.w.s.) as well as the Holy Imams (a.s).

Luqman Hakim told his teenager son, "O my son! This world is like a deep sea. Many people have drowned in it. Therefore you should make a ship for yourself made up of Faith in God, Shariat, and obedience to divine commandments, trust in One God and righteousness and piety to sail through and for being successful in the next permanent life in the Hereafter. God's help

and guidance will be with you and you will attain salvation. If you drown, it will be only as a result of your sins.

O my son! Walk with your companions in a journey. Cooperate with them in good works but never in sinful acts, which defy God's commands. If they walk on foot you should also walk with them and also help them in their needs. Listen to those who are older than you. If they ask you to do something never say 'No' but always say 'Yes' because a negative response in itself is an evil thing.

O my son! If you miss your road during a journey, never continue to proceed further. If you find there that only one person is loitering over there, do not ask for guidance from him nor rely on him because no lonely person is trustworthy in a wilderness. He may be a thief."

Imam Sadiq (a.s) says that Almighty Allah granted wisdom to Luqman not because he was born in a noble family or was wealthy or healthy and handsome but only because he was religious minded, God fearing and God worshipping righteous man. He was living a life of contentment and patience. His thoughts were high and sight far reaching. No one ever found foul odor emanating from his body. He never slept during the day. He never sought others' support in any meeting. He never indulged in a reckless or meaningless act. He was very modest. Nobody ever saw him at the time of taking a bath or answering calls of nature. He never laughed at anything nor frowned over anything, which could harm anyone or would result in any kind of loss. He never mocked anyone. Wealth never made him over joyful and poverty never made him sad. Whenever he heard a good word he would ask for its explanation and inquire about its source.

How much valuable was Luqman in the sight of God can be measured by the fact that an entire chapter in the Holy Quran has been named after him. In this chapter Luqman is mentioned advising his youthful son. These are admonitions, which deserve deep thought. The Holy Quran has repeated his golden words for the guidance of the entire youthful race of human beings in a comprehensive manner.

It must be kept in mind that these are the meaningful words, which issued from the mouth of an affectionate father to his son who was dearer than his life. It is noteworthy that while repeating Luqman's words the holy Quran has adopted a very effective style so as to attract maximum attention of the reader of the divine scripture. Quran says "Luqman was giving admonitions to his son."

The meaning would have been fully conveyed if it were said, "Luqman told his son". But it would not have carried the same importance (This is Quranic eloquence which is unparalleled indeed). The words indicate that the tone of Luqman was not harsh, dictatorial, bitter, neither

insulting nor flattering. Rather it had heart-catching aspects of an affectionate father who preserves and protects the self-respect of his dear son while giving him the best kind of training.

Through this Almighty Allah, the Most Merciful desires that every father should admonish his children in the fine manner adopted by Luqman Hakim for adorning them with the best morals, which may appeal to their hearts and which may result in good luck and prosperity.

Luqman says to his son: My dear son! Never consider anyone a partner with Allah because polytheism is an unpardonable offence and an unforgivable sin, the greatest evil. My son! Even if one's deed is as minute as a grain of mustard hidden in the earth or in the sky or on a mountain, Allah will invariably bring it forth because He is Omniscient and the Knower of each and everything that you indulge in. O my son! Establish prayer and inspire others to do good deeds and make them intent on obstructing evil and when surrounded by troubles, seek shelter in patience, as this is the most pleasant deed in the sight of God. O my son! Do not turn your face proudly like egoists and do not walk on earth with self-centeredness, as God does not like any proud one walking with pride on His earth. Adopt the middle path while walking and do not raise your voice while talking because the worst of all voices is the loud braying of an ass.

In the words of the Holy Quran:

And certainly We gave wisdom to Luqman, saying: Be grateful to Allah. And whoever is grateful, he is only grateful for his own soul; and whoever is ungrateful, then surely Allah is Self-sufficient, Praised.

And when Luqman said to his son while he admonished him: O my son! Do not associate aught with Allah; most surely polytheism is a grievous iniquity-

And We have enjoined man in respect of his parents- his mother bears him with faintings upon faintings and his weaning takes two years- saying: Be grateful to Me and to both your parents; to Me is the eventual coming.

And if they contend with you that you should associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, do not obey them, and keep company with them in this world kindly, and follow the way of him who turns to Me, then to Me is your return, then will I inform you of what you did-

O my son! Surely if it is the very weight of the grain of a mustard-seed, even though it is in (the heart of) rock, or (high above) in the heaven or (deep down) in the earth, Allah will bring it (to light); surely Allah is Knower of subtleties, Aware;

O my son! Keep up prayer and enjoin the good and forbid the evil, and bear patiently that which befalls you; surely these acts require courage;

And do not turn your face away from people in contempt, nor go about in the land exulting

overmuch; surely Allah does not love any self-conceited boaster;
And pursue the right course in your going about and lower your voice; surely the most hateful of voices is braying of the asses.[1]

Reference

[1] Surah Luqman 31:12-19 Commentary from MajmaulBayan of Tabarsi