



## 19. Words of Counsel Given by Luqmaan, an individual known for his profound wisdom

Delivered by His Eminence  
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All praise is due to Allaah. He sent down the Qur’aan and Sunnah as revelation, and He confers abundant favour and mercy. Our Lord, You deserve praise that wipes away all darkness and removes all sorrows. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allaah alone, without any partner, and I bear witness that our Prophet Muhammad is Allaah’s worshipping servant and Messenger. By the teachings with which he was sent, Allaah perfected our religion for us, completed His favour to us, and made us the most virtuous collective of people. May Allaah grant commendation to His Messenger, as well as to all of the Messenger’s family, Companions, and followers, until the end of this world.

Dear Muslims, observe taqwaa of Allaah (i.e. fulfil His commands and avoid His prohibitions), take advantage of your lives before they conclude, and do not let yourselves be deceived by this world and the attractive things it contains. There are many whom this world has enticed and deceived, then harmed and eventually rid itself of. Death will indeed come to seize every person, and the hereafter certainly contains a number of stages. Remain apprehensive about the good you have done being accepted, feel shame before Allaah for the wrong you have done, and hasten to traverse the course to your Lord before the end of your time in this world arrives.

Dear Muslims, the wise words of counsel in the Qur’aan contain admonition for all people of sound understanding. They are light that Allaah provides in order to guide whom He wills among His servants. Those words of counsel in the Qur’aan contain innumerable wondrous teachings, and this is nothing strange since the Qur’aan is the speech of Allaah, the Most Wise and the Completely Knowledgeable. He told His Messenger (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection),

﴿وَأَنَّكَ لَتَلْقَىٰ أَقْرَبًا مِّنْ لَّدُنْ حَكِيمٍ عَلِيمٍ﴾

“You undoubtedly receive this Qur’aan from One who is Most Wise, All-Knowing.”<sup>1</sup>

The best words of counsel are those which emanate from the light of revelation, and are adorned with care and mercy. These qualities are unmistakably apparent in the words of counsel given by the righteous worshipping servant of Allaah named Luqmaan. Allaah allowed springs of wisdom to emanate from Luqmaan’s heart and, as a result, they smoothly flowed throughout his speech and He became an exemplar for wise words. Allaah, who is perfect in every way, said about the favour He granted Luqmaan,

﴿وَلَقَدْ ءَاتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِلَّهِ وَمَن يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ

﴿وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ﴾

“We indeed granted Luqmaan profound wisdom. We told him, ‘Be grateful to Allaah for all the blessings He bestowed upon you. When people are grateful to Allaah, the benefit of that returns to the people themselves. However, if people deny Allaah’s favours, Allaah does not need

<sup>1</sup> Soorah an-Naml (27):6.



anything from them and He is always Most Praiseworthy.”<sup>2</sup> After that, Allaah mentioned ten words of counsel that Luqmaan imparted to his son. They are invaluable words that encompass all goodness and virtue. Allaah, the Most Majestic, said,

﴿ وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴾

“Messenger of Allaah, remember and inform the people about when Luqmaan told his son while advising him, ‘My beloved young son, do not worship anything besides Allaah. Directing worship to other than Allaah is indeed the greatest injustice’.”<sup>3</sup>

The first thing Luqmaan mentioned was the right that people must fulfil towards Allaah, which is the most important of rights and the one that must be given utmost priority. That right of Allaah is tawheed: sincerely devoting all worship to Him alone, and none besides Him. No servant of Allaah can do without fulfilling this right. A similitude mentioned in the Qur’aan that applies to someone who fails to fulfil this right is that of someone “snatched apart by the birds, or cast off by strong gusts of wind to a distant desolate place.”<sup>4</sup> In addition, Luqmaan stressed the gravity of shirk (worshipping others besides Allaah) and he described it as “the greatest injustice.” This is because shirk entails putting created things on the same level as their Creator. Shirk entails making those who have no true control of anything equal with the only One who has absolute control of everything. How could justice ever entail one created being directing absolute submission to another created being who has no control over harms, benefits, death, life, or resurrection?

Dear people who submit to Allaah in Islaam, with the preceding in mind, you must humble yourselves towards the One who elevated you above worshipping His servants, emancipated you from the bondage of ascribing partners to Him, and protected you from having to bow down to any sort of idol. He decreed that He would complete for you the favour that He Himself bestowed. Therefore, direct your complete love to Him alone, place your full trust in Him alone, and give pleasing Him priority over everything else. Make the continuous focus of your heart pleasing Allaah and attaining His love.

Servants of Allaah, after the right a person must fulfil towards Allaah, there is no right greater than the one a person must fulfil towards both of his parents. This is why that second right – comprising treating parents well, being grateful for the good they have done, and extending kindness to them – is mentioned in conjunction with sincerely devoting all worship to Allaah alone. Allaah, the Most Exalted, said,

﴿ وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَىٰ وَهْنٍ وَفِصْلَهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ ﴾

﴿ أَنْ أَشْكُرَ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَىٰ الْمَصِيرِ ﴾

“And We have instructed each person to treat both of his parents well. His mother carried him in one state of weakness and fatigue upon another state of weakness and fatigue. Additionally, his weaning as an infant is completed over the duration of two years. We instructed each person: You must be grateful to Me – Allaah – and to your two parents. To Me alone will be your final return.”<sup>5</sup> There are so very many times when a person’s two parents extend their hands to nurture their child, look over him with eyes of protection, harbour care for him within their hearts, and have their souls ready to help him. A person’s two parents are manifestations of selflessness, nobility,

<sup>2</sup> Soorah Luqmaan (31):12.

<sup>3</sup> Soorah Luqmaan (31):13.

<sup>4</sup> See Soorah al-Hajj (22):31.

<sup>5</sup> Soorah Luqmaan (31):14.



care, and virtue. Furthermore, mothers are the ones who go through one state of difficulty and fatigue to another, yet do not increase in anything besides care for their children. Mothers are the vessels of humanity. In fact, they are what adorn life in this world. They are a cornerstone of beauty, affection, fragility, and caring affection.

There is Arabic poetry whose meaning is to the following effect: Your mother has major rights you must fulfil towards her, if you would only realize that. The much that you may do still remains miniscule in comparison to what she has done. There were many nights when she moaned and sighed due to feeling the fatigue caused by bearing you; and if you only knew the difficulty that came with delivery, your heart would shudder from being aware of that pain. How many times did she wash impurities away from you using her very own hands? She made her lap a seat to cradle you, cared for you regardless of her own suffering, and gave you her chest from which you could find smoothly flowing drink. When you were little, there were many times she herself went hungry and gave her provisions to you because of her care and affection. Therefore, you should desire to do what leads her to pray for you, because you are in need of every good thing she asks Allaah to grant you.

However, dear Muslims, if matters go as far as a person's two parents calling him to worship others besides Allaah, the person is still to fulfil his parents' rights regarding treating them kindly and maintaining their company. However, they are not to be obeyed regarding anything that amounts to disobeying Allaah or devoting worship to others besides Him. This is the greatest and most caring way in which their rights are to be fulfilled. Allaah, the Almighty, said,

﴿ وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَىٰ أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبُهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ۗ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴾

**“If your two parents struggle to make you worship anything other than Me, and you have no knowledge about anything that deserves worship except Me, then you are not to obey them in that regard. However, you must continue to accompany them kindly in this world so long as that does not entail disobeying Me, and you must follow the path of those who sincerely repent and devote themselves to Me. In the end, all of you will finally return to Me alone and I will tell all of you about everything that you had continued to do during your lives in this world.”<sup>6</sup>**

After that, Luqmaan continued imparting his caring and compassionate advice by saying,

﴿ يَبْنَىٰ إِنَّمَا إِنْ تَكُ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِّنْ خَرْدَلٍ فَتَكُنْ فِي صَحْرَةٍ أَوْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ أَوْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَأْتِ بِهَا اللَّهُ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴾

**“My dear young son, regarding any sin or righteous deed, even if it is as tiny as the weight of a single mustard seed, and even if it is then within a boulder or anywhere throughout the expanses of the heavens or expanses of the Earth, Allaah will still certainly bring it forth on the Day of Resurrection. Allaah is indeed completely acquainted with all things, even the most minute of details.”<sup>7</sup>** Here, Luqmaan was telling his son to always be mindful of Allaah whether secluded or in view of other people, and to beware of ever being involved in anything that Allaah detests and does not love. Allaah is always witness to everything, and nothing is concealed from Him whatsoever.

<sup>6</sup> Soorah Luqmaan (31):15.

<sup>7</sup> Soorah Luqmaan (31):16.





I swear by Allaah that these words of counsel undoubtedly made the desired impact. Luqmaan began counselling his son by mentioning the most important of objectives, that being tawheed (sincerely devoting all worship to Allaah alone). Afterwards, he moved on to actions of the heart, which are the most virtuous of deeds to Allaah. This is because Allaah does not merely look at people's forms and appearances; rather, what He looks at is their hearts and deeds.<sup>8</sup>

Dear Muslims, Luqmaan – may Allaah have mercy upon him – continued explaining to his son the merits of sound morals, conduct, and values. After mentioning what purifies beliefs and worship, he mentioned the most virtuous of deeds – those of the heart – including always being mindful that Allaah sees everything, as well as the hope in Allaah and reverential fear of Him which result from that.

Following those, he made reference to actions of the limbs, and he specifically mentioned the most important of them: establishing obligatory prayers. He said,

﴿يَبْنِي أَقْرِبَ الصَّلَاةِ﴾

“My beloved young son, you must establish obligatory prayers.”<sup>9</sup>

Servants, of Allaah, obligatory prayers are the defining feature of people who have eemaan, a source of happiness for Allaah's worshipping servants, and a source of comfort to those who remain devoted to Him. The form of prayer that our Creator has prescribed according to the teachings we have in Islaam is the one that is best and most complete. It includes praising and glorifying Allaah, proclaiming His perfection and greatness, bearing witness to the truth, standing before Allaah as humble servants who are under His control, seeking nearness to Him by reciting His words, bowing to Him with humility and submission, and then standing after bowing in order to prepare for submission even greater than the preceding: that of prostrating after standing. While prostrating, a person puts his face – the most dignified part of him – upon the ground out of humility and submission to his Lord's might and magnificence. The servant utterly humbles himself to his Lord, and asks of his Lord's bounty. Following that, the person praying then returns to the posture of standing humbly and submissively before his Lord, and he repeats that process until he reaches the end of his prayer. At that time, he sits while praising Allaah, invoking Allaah to grant protection to His Messenger as well as to all of Allaah's worshipping servants in general, invoking Allaah to grant commendation to His Messenger, and then imploring Allaah for His blessings, kindness, and favour.

What other form of worship is better than the aforementioned, what else is more complete than it, and what servitude to Allaah is greater than it?

After Luqmaan counselled his son about prayer – which serves to complete the individual himself – he then proceeded to counsel him about completing others around him. This is since the most virtuous of individuals are those who complete themselves and also complete others. Luqmaan told his son,

﴿وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَأَنْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ﴾

“Instruct others to do right, and forbid them from doing wrong.”<sup>10</sup> Doing “right” here refers to the things that people know to be good, and “wrong” here refers to what they know to be bad. These words of counsel entail encouraging others to embody all good traits, and discouraging them from all bad ones. For that reason, these features are key characteristics of the people who follow the Prophet Muhammad (may Allaah grant him commendation and protection). Allaah stated,

<sup>8</sup> See Saheeh Muslim (2564).

<sup>9</sup> Soorah Luqmaan (31):17.

<sup>10</sup> Soorah Luqmaan (31):17.



﴿ كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ ﴾

“You are the best of people brought forth for mankind. You instruct others to do right, you forbid them from wrong, and you have eemaan in Allaah.”<sup>11</sup>

Luqmaan subsequently added,

﴿ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَىٰ مَا أَصَابَكَ ۖ إِنَّ ذَٰلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴾

“Patiently persevere through whatever you encounter. The preceding are certainly decisive commands that Allaah has given and they should be complied with.”<sup>12</sup> These are crucial words of counsel for every individual who strives to obey Allaah, the Most Exalted. Establishing prayers in the prescribed manner inwardly and outwardly requires perseverance and constant struggle; and establishing them is difficult for people except those who remain humble to Allaah. Additionally, instructing others to do right and forbidding them from wrong require perseverance as well as patience in bearing harms, since those are not tasks in which a person has anything to gain for himself.

I implore Allaah to enable all of us to benefit from the scripture He sent down containing guidance and unmistakably clear evidences, and to also benefit from the Sunnah of the best individual among all of creation. I ask Allaah, the Most Magnificent, to forgive myself and all of you for every sin. Thus, you should also seek His forgiveness, as He is indeed always abundantly forgiving.



Allaah deserves continuous praise, and I implore Him to grant commendation to His worshipping servant and Messenger – the one to whom Allaah sent down the best of scriptures – and also grant commendation to the Messenger’s family, Companions, and followers until the Day of Recompense.

Dear Muslims, at the conclusion of Luqmaan’s enlightening counsel came words that alert an individual to the conduct he is to embody with himself and with others. These words came after the preceding ones regarding the individual’s conduct towards his Lord, in both beliefs and deeds.

Regarding one’s conduct with others, Luqmaan said,

﴿ وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرَحًا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴾

“Do not turn your face away from people out of pride or scorn, and do not walk upon the earth arrogantly. Indeed, Allaah does not love anyone who is arrogantly conceited in the way he speaks or carries himself.”<sup>13</sup> Here, Luqmaan forbade his son from turning away from people in the manner described, and also from walking in the manner described. Thus, his counsel contained encouragement to remain humble and gentle. These are among the best of traits, and the ones most effective in attaining the love of Allaah, as well as the love of Allaah’s creatures. Some of the scholars commented about certain arrogant individuals by saying that “when one of them memorizes merely two issues about Islaam, has two students sit in front of him, or attains a minor position of leadership, he struts about arrogantly and wishes to attain the highest of prominence among people. Individuals like that read over the foregoing passage of the Qur’aan but they ignore what it tells them. What good is there in a person reading the Qur’aan, or having it read to him, while his heart is far away from comprehending what it says?”

<sup>11</sup> Soorah Aali ‘Imraan (3):110.

<sup>12</sup> Soorah Luqmaan (31):17.

<sup>13</sup> Soorah Luqmaan (31):18.



Next, regarding one's conduct with oneself, Luqmaan said,

﴿وَأَقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَأَعْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ﴾

“Walk moderately and do not be unnecessarily loud when speaking. Indeed, the most repulsive of voices is the braying of donkeys.”<sup>14</sup> The dignified traits mentioned here are indeed priceless. Walking moderately entails being neither sluggish nor excessively fast, and this further alludes to remaining moderate in general as it relates to all matters. Avoiding unnecessary loudness is something to be done because raising one's voice without a need to do so is blameworthy. Its blameworthiness can be sufficiently established by the fact that it is likened to the sound of braying.

I say to all caring guardians and educators: the preceding words of counsel are shining jewels and brilliant admonitions. Hold onto them firmly and let them be your guide for refining souls and setting things right. When you do that, you will successfully achieve your aims.

We should also bear in mind that one of the greatest blessings a person can be granted is wisdom which enables him recognize right and urges him towards it, and which enables him to recognize wrong and urges him away from it. When a person has those qualities, he would proceed along his course in this world with clear insight, safe from confusion, protected from falling, firm in his steps, and aware of what he is doing before embarking in any direction. He would not be diverted or distracted by the things that he encounters as he proceeds. Allaah, who is perfect in every way, stated,

﴿يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلَّا أُولُو الْأَلْبَابِ﴾

“Allaah grants wisdom to whomever He wills. If a person is granted that wisdom, He has surely been granted an immense blessing. However, none take heed of this and truly benefit from Allaah's evidences besides people of sound understanding.”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Soorah Luqmaan (31):19.

<sup>15</sup> Soorah al-Baqarah (2):269.