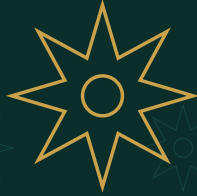


SURAH AS A STORY



Surah Luqman

Luqman

The complete journey — a father's advice, preserved forever —
told the way a loving elder shares it with a child



Surah No. 31 • 34 Ayahs • Meccan

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The Surah at a Glance

*Wa laqad aataynaa Luqmaan-hikmata
anish-kur lillaah*

12. And We had certainly given Luqman wisdom: be grateful to Allah.

*Yaa bunayya laa tushrik billaah; innash-shirka
lazulmun 'azeem*

13. O my son, do not associate anything with Allah.
Indeed, shirk is a great injustice.

*Wa wassaynal-insaana biwaalidayhi hamalat-hu
ummuhoo wahnann 'alaa wahn*

14. And We enjoined upon man care for his parents —
his mother carried him in weakness upon weakness.

*Yaa bunayya innahaaa in taku misqaala
habbatim-min khardal*

16. O my son, if it should be the weight of a mustard
seed...

Waqsid fee mashyika waghdud min sawtik

19. And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice.

*Wa lawa annamaa fil-ardi min shajaratin
aqlaamunw-wal-bahru yamudduhoo*



27. And if whatever trees on earth were pens and the sea were ink...

Listen to the Arabic recitation of this Surah, ayah by ayah, with the Qari — free on nooraniilm.com (Read & Recite section).

Wisdom, and Its First Fruit

Beta, this surah is named after a man who was not a prophet and not a king — a man whom the reports describe as a servant, dark-skinned, with cracked feet from work. And Allah placed his advice in the Quran, to be recited until the end of time.

'WA LAQAD ATAYNA LUQMANAL-HIKMATA — and We certainly gave LUQMAN WISDOM — ANISH-KUR LILLAH — (saying): BE GRATEFUL TO ALLAH.'

Beta, look at what immediately follows the gift of wisdom: the instruction to be grateful. As though the first proof that a person has real wisdom is that he says thank you.



'WA MAN YASHKUR FA-INNAMA YASHKURU
LI-NAFSIH — and whoever is grateful is grateful for HIS
OWN BENEFIT — WA MAN KAFARA FA-INNALLAHA
GHANIYYUN HAMEED — and whoever denies —
indeed, Allah is Free of need, Praiseworthy.'

Beta, gratitude does not add to Allah, and ingratitude
does not diminish Him. It changes only YOU: the
grateful heart is a contented one, and the ungrateful
heart is restless no matter how much it receives.

And now, beta, the advice begins — a father speaking to
his son. Read it as though it is being said to you, because
that is exactly why Allah preserved it.

O My Son, Do Not Associate With Allah

'WA IZ QALA LUQMANU LI-BNIHI WA HUWA
YA'IZUHU — and when Luqman said to his son while he
was INSTRUCTING him — YA BUNAYYA LA TUSHRIK
BILLAH — O MY DEAR SON, DO NOT ASSOCIATE
ANYTHING WITH ALLAH — INNASH-SHIRKA
LA-ZULMUN 'AZEEM — INDEED, SHIRK IS A GREAT



INJUSTICE.'

Beta, notice the address: 'ya bunayya' — my little son, my dear son. Every single piece of advice in this surah begins with tenderness. He never once says 'you must' or 'how many times have I told you'. He says 'my dear son'.

And notice the FIRST thing he taught: tawheed. Not manners, not career, not marriage. The very first lesson a parent owes a child is: who is your Lord.

And look at how he describes shirk — as 'zulm', injustice. Why? Beta, because zulm in Arabic means putting something in the wrong place. To direct worship — which belongs to the Creator — toward something created is to put a thing in completely the wrong place. It is an injustice against the truth, and against your own soul.

And there is a beautiful incident about this word. When the ayah 'those who believed and did not mix their belief with zulm' was revealed, the companions were



distressed and said: which of us has not wronged himself? And the Prophet ﷺ said: it is not as you think. Did you not hear the words of the righteous servant — 'inna-sh-shirka la-zulmun 'azeem'? The zulm meant there is SHIRK.

Beta, that is how the Sunnah explains the Quran — with the Quran itself.

The Mother's Weakness Upon Weakness

And now, beta, Allah interrupts Luqman's advice with His own — and the placement is deliberate:

'WA WASSAYNAL-INSANA BI-WALIDAYH — and We have ENJOINED upon man (care) for his PARENTS — HAMALAT-HU UMMUHU WAHNAN 'ALA WAHN — HIS MOTHER CARRIED HIM, IN WEAKNESS UPON WEAKNESS — WA FISALUHU FEE 'AMAYN — and his WEANING is in TWO YEARS — ANISH-KUR LEE WA LI-WALIDAYK — BE GRATEFUL TO ME AND TO YOUR PARENTS — ILAYYAL-MASEER — TO ME IS THE FINAL DESTINATION.'



Beta, 'wahnān 'alā wahn' — weakness upon weakness, feebleness increasing upon feebleness. Month after month she grew weaker as he grew stronger, drawing his strength out of her body.

And then look at the astonishing pairing: 'be grateful to ME and to YOUR PARENTS' — gratitude to Allah and gratitude to parents mentioned in one breath.

But then, beta, comes the limit — and it is stated with a perfect balance that only revelation could achieve:

'WA IN JAHADAKA 'ALĀ AN TUSHRIKA BEE MA LAYSA LAKA BIHI 'ILMUN FA-LA TUTI'HUMA — and if they STRIVE AGAINST YOU to associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, then DO NOT OBEY THEM — WA SAHIBHUMA FID-DUNYA MA'ROOFA — BUT ACCOMPANY THEM IN THIS WORLD WITH KINDNESS.'

Beta, read that twice. Do NOT obey them in disobedience to Allah — and yet CONTINUE to treat them beautifully. Refuse the instruction; never withdraw the kindness.



That is a balance most people cannot hold. We tend to think that disagreeing with someone permits us to be cold to them. Islam separates the two completely: obedience has a limit, but good treatment does not.

'WATTABI' SABEELA MAN ANABA ILAYY — and FOLLOW THE WAY OF THOSE WHO TURN BACK TO ME.' Beta, notice: when the parents' guidance fails, you are told to find other guidance — the company of those who turn to Allah. Never be without righteous company.

The Weight of a Mustard Seed

And now Luqman resumes, beta — and the next thing he plants in his son is the awareness that nothing is unseen:

'YA BUNAYYA INNAHA IN TAKU MITHQALA HABBATIN MIN KHARDALIN — O MY DEAR SON, INDEED, IF IT SHOULD BE THE WEIGHT OF A MUSTARD SEED — FA-TAKUN FEE SAKHRATIN AW FIS-SAMAWATI AW FIL-ARDI — AND SHOULD BE WITHIN A ROCK, OR IN THE HEAVENS, OR IN THE



EARTH — YA'TI BIHALLAH — ALLAH WILL BRING IT FORTH — INNALLAHA LATEEFUN KHABEER — indeed, Allah is SUBTLE and ACQUAINTED.'

Beta, look at the three hiding places he names. Inside a rock — the most solid, sealed place you could imagine. In the heavens — the highest and most distant. In the earth — the deepest and most buried. And the thing hidden is a MUSTARD SEED, one of the smallest things a person could hold.

Smallest object, most impossible hiding place — and Allah brings it out.

And beta, notice the Name used: 'AL-LATEEF'. It means the One whose knowledge reaches into the finest, most subtle details — so fine that nothing escapes — and it also carries the meaning of gentleness and kindness in how He arranges things.

So the same Name that tells you nothing you do is hidden also tells you He is gentle with you. Beta, that is the balance a child should grow up with: He sees



everything, and He is kind.

Four Things for a Life

And now, beta, Luqman gives his son a complete programme for living — four instructions in two ayahs:

'YA BUNAYYA AQIMIS-SALAH — O my dear son, ESTABLISH PRAYER.' First, your connection upward. Everything else in a life rests on this.

'WA'MUR BIL-MA'ROOFI WANHA 'ANIL-MUNKAR — and ENJOIN what is RIGHT and FORBID what is WRONG.' Second, your responsibility outward. Beta, a believer does not merely save himself — he cares what happens around him.

'WASBIR 'ALA MA ASABAK — AND BE PATIENT OVER WHAT BEFALLS YOU.' Third — and notice WHY this comes immediately after the second. Because the moment you start calling people to good and away from harm, you will be resented, mocked, and opposed. Luqman does not hide this from his son: he tells him to



expect trouble and to endure it.

'INNA ZALIKA MIN 'AZMIL-UMoor — indeed, that is of the matters requiring DETERMINATION.'

And then, beta, come two instructions about how to CARRY yourself — and they are among the most practical ayahs in the Quran:

'WA LA TUSA'IR KHADDAKA LIN-NASI — and do NOT TURN YOUR CHEEK away from people in scorn.'

Beta, what an exact image. 'Tus'ir khaddak' — to turn your face aside, to give someone your cheek instead of your eyes. It is the gesture of a person who thinks himself above the one speaking to him. Every one of us has been on the receiving end of that face — from a clerk, an official, a relative who has done well. And Allah legislated against it.

'WA LA TAMSHI FIL-ARDI MARAHA — and do not WALK THROUGH THE EARTH EXULTANTLY, with arrogance — INNALLAHA LA YUHIBBU KULLA



MUKHTALIN FAKHOOR — indeed, Allah does not like the SELF-DELUDED and BOASTFUL.'

Beta, notice: your WALK is being legislated. Because a person's pride shows in his gait before it shows in his words.

'WAQSID FEE MASHYIKA — and BE MODERATE IN YOUR PACE — WAGHDUD MIN SAWTIK — and LOWER YOUR VOICE — INNA ANKARAL-ASWATI LA-SAWTUL-HAMEER — indeed, the most DISAGREEABLE of sounds is the VOICE OF DONKEYS.'

Beta, that comparison is deliberately embarrassing, and it is meant to stay in a young person's mind. The braying donkey raises its voice for no reason at all — pure noise, no content. Allah is saying: when you shout to dominate a conversation, that is the sound you resemble.

And beta, look at the whole package Luqman has given his son: your relationship with Allah (tawheed and salah), with society (enjoining good, patience), with your parents (kindness even in disagreement), and with



your own body (your face, your walk, your voice).

That is a complete upbringing — and not one line of it is about wealth or status.

If All the Trees Were Pens

The surah then turns to the greatness of Allah, and gives one of the most breathtaking images in the Quran:

'WA LAW ANNAMA FIL-ARDI MIN SHAJARATIN AQLAMUN — and IF WHATEVER TREES ON EARTH WERE PENS — WAL-BAHRU YAMUDDUHU MIN BA'DIHI SAB'ATU ABHUR — AND THE SEA (WERE INK), REPLENISHED THEREAFTER BY SEVEN MORE SEAS — MA NAFIDAT KALIMATULLAH — THE WORDS OF ALLAH WOULD NOT BE EXHAUSTED — INNALLAHA 'AZEEZUN HAKEEM — indeed, Allah is Almighty, Wise.'

Beta, try to picture it. Every tree on the planet — every forest, every orchard — sharpened into pens. Every ocean turned to ink, and then seven more oceans poured



in after them. And you write, and write, and the pens wear out and the ink runs dry — and His words are not finished.

Because His knowledge and His speech have no end, beta. What you have been given of it — this Quran — is what a human being can carry, not what exists.

'MA KHALQUKUM WA LA BA'THUKUM ILLA KA-NAFSIN WAHIDAH — YOUR CREATION AND YOUR RESURRECTION ARE NOT BUT AS THAT OF A SINGLE SOUL.' Beta, raising all of humanity is no harder for Him than creating one person. Numbers mean nothing to a power that is not divided by quantity.

And the surah then shows Allah's mercy in an image of the sea: 'WA IZA GHASHIYAHUM MAWJUN KAZ-ZULALI DA'AWULLAHA MUKHLISEENA LAHUD-DEEN — and when waves cover them like CANOPIES, they call upon Allah, SINCERE TO HIM IN RELIGION — FA-LAMMA NAJJA HUMAN ILAL-BARRI FA-MINHUM MUQTASID — but when He delivers them



to the land, some of them are moderate (in faith).'

Beta, the storm makes everyone sincere. The test of a believer is what he is on dry land.

Five Things Nobody Knows

And the surah closes, beta, with an ayah listing five matters of the unseen that belong to Allah alone:

'INNALLAHA 'INDAHU 'ILMUS-SA'AH — indeed,
ALLAH — with Him is knowledge of THE HOUR — WA
YUNAZZILUL-GHAYTH — and He sends down the RAIN
— WA YA'LAMU MA FIL-ARHAM — and knows what is
in the WOMBS — WA MA TADREE NAFSUN MAZA
TAKSIBU GHADA — AND NO SOUL KNOWS WHAT IT
WILL EARN TOMORROW — WA MA TADREE NAFSUN
BI-AYYI ARDIN TAMOOT — AND NO SOUL KNOWS IN
WHAT LAND IT WILL DIE — INNALLAHA 'ALEEMUN
KHABEER — indeed, Allah is Knowing, Acquainted.'

Beta, the Prophet ﷺ referred to these as the keys of the unseen which none knows but Allah.



And note the careful understanding here: a doctor may see a scan and a meteorologist may forecast rain — that is observation of what already exists or estimation of what is likely. The ayah is about complete and certain knowledge of these matters, which belongs to Allah alone. He knows the child's soul, lifespan, character and destiny; He knows every drop of that rain and where each will fall.

But beta, look at the last two. They are not about the universe at all — they are about YOU:

'No soul knows what it will EARN TOMORROW.' Not your income only — your DEEDS. You do not know whether tomorrow you will pray with a heart full of light or fall into something you never expected. Which is why a believer never becomes complacent about his own state, and never despairs of another's.

'And no soul knows in WHAT LAND IT WILL DIE.' Beta, you may be certain you will die in the city you were born in. You do not know that. A person leaves for a



short journey and does not return. Another travels the world and dies in his own bed.

And this is why the surah ends here, beta — after all of Luqman's advice about how to live. Because the whole point of that advice is that you do not know how much time it has to be applied in.

So begin with what Luqman began with: know your Lord, honour your parents, pray, care about what happens around you, be patient, and carry yourself gently — starting today, because tomorrow is not part of what you have been given.

What This Surah Teaches Us

1. The first proof of wisdom is gratitude — and gratitude changes only you, never Allah.
2. Teach your children tawheed FIRST, and teach it with tenderness: 'ya bunayya' before every instruction.



- 3.** Shirk is 'zulm' because it puts something in completely the wrong place.
 - 4.** Obedience to parents has a limit, but kindness to them does not — refuse the instruction, never withdraw the good treatment.
 - 5.** A mustard seed inside a rock will be brought out — and the same Name that says so, Al-Lateef, also means He is gentle with you.
 - 6.** Expect opposition when you call to good — that is why 'be patient' comes straight after it.
 - 7.** Your face, your walk and your voice are part of your deen — and nobody knows what he will earn tomorrow or where he will die.
- Ya Allah, grant us the wisdom of gratitude, gentleness in our manner, and let us not delay what should be done today. Ameen.

— This is a simplified, faithful retelling for understanding, based on the Quran's translation and established tafseer (Ibn Kathir and others). For deeper study, always read with a qualified teacher. —



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