

Section 2: The Ethics Preached Through Luqman

Surah Luqman – Verse 12

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِلَّهِ وَمَنْ يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ
فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ

12. “And indeed 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, (he does no harm to Him) for verily Allah is self sufficient, Praised.’”

The preparation of wisdom is obtainable but wisdom itself is not obtainable and it is bestowed by Allah.

Proportionate to the former discussions about Monotheism and polytheism, the importance of the Qur'an, the greatness of the Qur'an, and the wisdom used in this heavenly Book, in this verse as well as in a few verses after it, the words are about Luqman, the wise, and a part of the important admonitions of this godly wise man concerning Monotheism, struggle against polytheism, and some important moral issues.

These matters have also been introduced and pointed out in Luqman's admonitions to his son.

These ten admonitions, which have been stated in an interesting way through six noble verses, contain both some ideological matters, and the principles of religious duties and ethical subjects.

In later discussions, we will say who Luqman was and what qualities he had. But here we only mention that indications show that he was not a prophet, but he was a pious man free from vice who had overcome his sensual desires and Allah (s.w.t.) also let some springs of knowledge and wisdom flow in

his heart.

It is sufficient for the greatness of his rank that Allah has set his admonitions in a row with His Own words and He has mentioned them inside the verses of the Qur'an.

Yes, when man's heart is enlightened by the light of wisdom resulted from purity and piety, the divine words will be uttered by his tongue and he will say the same thing that Allah pleases and he thinks in the same way that Allah approves.

Next to this short explanation, we return to the commentary of the verse. Allah says:

“And indeed 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, (he does no harm to Him) for verily Allah is self sufficient, Praised.’”

Upon the proper definition of the Qur'anic word */hikmat/ (wisdom)* we must say that there have been mentioned many meanings for it, such as:

“Recognition of the secrets of the world of existence”, “being aware of the facts of the Qur'an”, “reaching to the Truth from the point of speech and deed”, and “gnosis of Allah and knowing Him”.

All these meanings can be gathered with together and for the commentary on the word 'wisdom' it may be said as this:

“The wisdom that the Qur'an speaks about and Allah has given to Luqman has been ‘a collection of gnosis, knowledge, pure morals and piety, light, and guidance’.”

Imam Musabn-i-Ja'far, the seventh Imam, (as) in a tradition upon the commentary of this holy verse once said to Hisham-ibn-Hakam:

“The purpose of /hikmat/ is understanding and intellect.”

In another tradition, upon the commentary of this verse, Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“Luqman knew the Divine Leader of his time.”

It is clear that each of these concepts is counted as one of the branches of the vast concept of wisdom and they are not in contrast with each other.

However, because of having this wisdom, Luqman thanked his Lord. He knew the aim of the Divine bounties and their usage. He used to apply them just in the same way that they had been created for, and this very thing is the meaning of wisdom that: 'every thing is used in its own place'. Thus, both 'gratitude' and 'wisdom' end to one point.

The result of gratitude and ungratefulness for the bounties has been stated in the verse saying that being grateful is useful for the self of man and being ungrateful is against him, too, because Allah is self-sufficient. If all creatures thank Him, there will not be added anything to His greatness, and if the entire world of existence becomes ungrateful nothing will be decreased from Him.

The Arabic sign 'L' in the word *lillah* is for allocation and this sign in the word *linafsihi* is for 'benefit'. Therefore, the benefit of 'being grateful', which is the permanence of bounty, its increase, and the reward in Hereafter, will come to man himself; and, similarly, he who is ungrateful will have the result of his own deed.

The Qur'anic phrase: '**Self-Sufficient, Praised**' points to this fact that an ordinary grateful person usually either gives something to the giver of bounty, or if he does not give him anything, by praising him he elevates his rank among people. But Allah has not either of these two.

He is free from want in front of all beings and He is worthy of being praised by all. The angels praise Him and all particles of the whole beings are busy glorifying Him. If a person utters ingratitude by verbal language there will affect him naught, and at the same time, the particles of his own body are busy praising him by none verbal language.

It is noteworthy that the Arabic word *lyaškuri* (**he thanks**) is said in simple present tense which in Arabic shows the continuation of the action, while the word *lkafara* is stated in past tense in Arabic that denotes to the occurrence of the action even for one time.

This denotes that ingratitude, even for one time, may have some painful sequels; but thankfulness must be done always and continuously so that one paves the path of his development.

Luqman, the Wise, and His Feature

There is an explanation about Luqman in Al-Mizan a part of which is as follows:

The holy Prophet of Allah (S) once said:

"Luqman was not a Divine prophet, but he was a servant of Allah who contemplated very much, and he truly believed in Allah. Luqman loved Allah, the Almighty and He loved him, too, and gave him Wisdom."

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

"Luqman had not received wisdom for the sake of wealth, beauty, and lineage, but he was a pious, kin, modest and sympathetic man. If two persons quarrelled and had hostility with each other he would settle reconciliation between them."

Luqman used to associate with many learned men. He used to struggle against his carnal soul.

Luqman lived a long life and he was contemporary with David, the Divine prophet (as). Luqman was one of the close relatives of Hadrat 'Ayyub (Job) (as). He was suggested to be either a governor or a sage and he elected to be a sage, a wise man.

Once Luqman was asked how he gained that rank, and he answered that he obtained it as the result of trustworthiness, his own truthfulness, and his silence in what was not related to him.”

Imam Sadiq (as) said about him:

“Luqman acknowledged the Divine Leader of his time. Although Allah did not give him a heavenly Book, He gave him something equivalent of it, i.e. wisdom.

One day the Luqman’s master wanted him to fetch him the best limb of a lamb and Luqman brought the tongue of the lamb to him. Another day he told Luqman to fetch him the worst limb of a lamb, and Luqman brought him again the tongue of the lamb. When his master asked him about the reason of that action, he answered:

“If tongue moves and speaks in the path of the Truth, it is the best limb of the body, otherwise it will be the worst limb.”

This fact is enough for the greatness of Luqman that Allah, His Messenger (S) and Immaculate Imams (as) have narrated his admonitions for others.

Some Parts of Luqman’s Admonitions

- 1– If you learn to be polite during your childhood, you will enjoy it when you grow up.
- 2– Do avoid laziness, and set a part of your lifetime for learning. Do not dispute with obstinate persons.
- 3– Do not dispute with jurist–consults. Do not make friend with mischief–mongers. Do not take a mischief–monger as your brother; and do not associate with accused persons.
- 4– Be in awe of Allah only and be hopeful of Him. Fear and hope unto Allah should be in the same level in your heart.
- 5– Do not rely on the world, and consider it as a bridge to pass through it.
- 6– Beware that in the Hereafter you will be asked of four things: of your youth that in what way you spent it; of your lifetime that how you ended it; of your wealth that how you earned it; and in what way you spent it.
- 7– Do not long for what people have, and treat with all people pleasantly.
- 8– Consult with your fellow–travellers very much, and do divide your travelling provision among them.

9- If they consult with you always announce your sympathy sincerely to them. If they ask you any help or loan assist them; and hearken to the words of the one who is elder than you.

10- Establish your prayers on time. Perform the prayer in congregation even at the most difficult conditions.

11- If you are in keeping up prayer, do protect your heart.

12- If you are busy eating, protect your throat.

13- If you are among people, protect your tongue.

14- Do never forget Allah and death, but forget the favour you do to people or the vice that others have done against you.

Wisdom, Knowledge, and Worship

Wisdom is an insight which comes into being under the light of the knowledge of Allah (s.w.t.) and it can be obtained by means of full contemplation upon the whole existence and reaching to the truth, light, and piety.

Imam Baqir (as) said:

“Wisdom is concept, knowledge, and deep recognition, a cognition that makes man serve Allah and the heavenly leader and it separates him from committing great sins.”

Imam Sadiq (as) said:

“The peak of wisdom is worship of Allah.”

Concerning the meaning of this word, Raqib in Mufradat says:

“Wisdom is reaching the truth by means of knowledge and intellect.”

The holy Prophet (S) said:

“I am the house of wisdom and Ali is its door. Whoever is the seeker of wisdom must enter by this door.”

Numerous Islamic traditions have introduced Ahlul Bayt (as) as the gate and the key to wisdom.

The Value of Wisdom

One of the duties of the Divine prophets is to teach the Book and wisdom:

“...and to teach them the Book and the Wisdom.”

Wisdom is the match of the heavenly Book. Whoever is bestowed wisdom on, has been given abundant good.

The Qur'an says:

"...and Whoever has been granted wisdom, indeed has been given abundant good..."

As some Islamic narrations indicate, wisdom is like a light which settles in man's soul and its effects are seen in his speech and manner.

Wisdom is an insight that if it is in a poor person makes him more beloved than a rich one in the society, and if it is in a very young person, elevates him above the elder ones.

"Wisdom is a lost article of the believer..."

Learning wisdom has been so recommended that there has been said:

"In the same manner that you take a precious piece of pearl from among rubbish, you must learn wisdom even from the enemy."

A sage person does not stop on superficial and temporary matters; he looks for the end and sequel of the affairs. He neither conflicts with those superior to him nor despise those inferior to him. He does not say anything without knowledge, and there is not any contradiction in his speech and his manner.

A sage does not spoil the bounties of Allah and never goes to vanities. He loves people as he likes himself, and whatever he wishes for him he desires for them, too. He never deceives others.

How Can Wisdom Be Obtained?

Wisdom is a gift that Allah (s.w.t.) endows on the sincere servants.

We read in several narrations:

"Whoever is sincere (in his deed) for Allah during forty days and nights, He may makes the springs of wisdom appear from his heart to his tongue."

Another tradition indicates:

"Whoever is pious in the world, and dazzling glares do not deceive him, Allah will settle wisdom in his spirit."

Protecting the tongue, controlling the belly and lusts, trustworthiness, courtesy, and abandoning the useless things are the fields of the appearance of wisdom.

Some Examples of Wisdom

In Surah Al-’Isra’, No. 17, verses 22 to 38 Allah has given some commandments and, at the end, the Qur’an says:

“That (commandment) is of the wisdom (that) your Lord has revealed to you...”

Some of these commandments are as follows:

Monotheism and also avoiding of polytheism; showing kindness to the parents specially at the age of their senility, and speaking to them with gracious words accompanied with humility and affection, furnished with good invocation to them are recommended.

He commands us to give to the near of kin his due, and to pay the Allah’s right to the needy, and the way farer and that we do not squander wastefully. We must avoid killing offspring, fornication, and approaching the property of the orphan.

We must pay the people’s right to them and give them full measure. We should not follow that of which we have not knowledge and do not walk around exultantly on the earth.

Then Allah implicitly says that these commandments are some examples of the Divine wisdom.

Surah Luqman – Verse 13

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

13. “And (remember) when Luqman said to his son admonishing him: ‘O my son! Do not associate aught with Allah for verily polytheism is a grievous iniquity.’”

Admonition is one of the means of inviting to the Truth and no one is needless of it. One of the names of the Qur’an is admonition.

Surah Yunus, No. 10, verse 57 says:

“O mankind! There has come to you an admonition from your Lord...”

And, in the books of tradition, there is an independent chapter particular to admonitions.

Some of the verses of the Qur’an announce that sometimes the Prophet (S) told Gabriel to admonish him. Ali (as) also sometimes told some of his companions that they might admonish him, because there is such an effect in hearing that it does not exist in knowing.

Next to introducing Luqman and the rank of his knowledge and wisdom, in this noble verse, the Qur'an points to the first admonition of Luqman.

It is the most important recommendation to his son, and says:

“And (remember) when Luqman said to his son admonishing him: ‘O my son! Do not associate aught with Allah for verily polytheism is a grievous iniquity’.”

Luqman's wisdom requires that, before anything else, he refers to the most basic ideological subject, the subject of Monotheism, and Monotheism in all its aspects and dimensions. Every destructive movement which is against Allah originates from polytheism.

Mammonism, worshipping one's station, sensuality, and the like of them are counted the branches of polytheism. On the contrary, the source of all correct and constructive movements is Monotheism. It is to rely on Him, to obey His command, to separate from other than Him, and to break all idols in the threshold of His sovereignty.

It is worthy noting that Luqman mentions the reason of the negation of polytheism that 'polytheism is a grievous iniquity' and his statement contains of several points of view.

What an injustice is greater than this that not only it has been done about Allah, that they have considered a worthless being equivalent with Him, but also about the servants of Allah that they lead them astray and, by their criminal deeds, cause them cruelty, and also about themselves that they have fallen from the peak of honour of servitude of Allah down to the depth of disgrace of worshipping other than Him.

A Few Points

1. The Meaning of Polytheism

Polytheism has a vast meaning the most clear of which is polytheism in the sense of idolatry. This kind of polytheism, as jurists have given decree, causes man to go out of the realm of religion and to become apostate. It has also another meaning which is absolute obedience from other than Allah, or following the carnal desire.

The Qur'an says:

“And verily We have appointed a messenger in every nation (to say): ‘Serve Allah and shun false gods.’...” In another place, it says: “Have you then considered him who takes his low desire for his gods...?”

More than one hundred times the Arabic phrase */dunallah/* or */dunihil/* has occurred in the Qur'an which means: 'obedience and worshipping other than Allah, the Exalted, is polytheism'.

Those believers who, in some instances, act upon the command and criterions other than that of Allah, the Almighty, go out of the orbit of Monotheism, as the Holy Qur'an says:

“And most of them do not believe in Allah except that they associate others (with Him).”

This statement means that the majority of the believers are polytheists too, and they have some refuges other than Allah.

An Islamic narration indicates that this kind of polytheism is more concealed than the movement of an ant on a black stone at night.¹ Thus, polytheism is not only idolatry, but depending on any power, rank, wealth, certificate, tribe, and anything that is not on the path of Allah, is polytheism.

2. The Effects of Polytheism

A- Deeds will fail:

Polytheism destroys the good deeds of man in the same manner that fire destroys the green trees of a forest.

The Qur'an, addressing the Prophet of Allah (S), says:

“...If you were to join (gods with Allah) truly fruitless will be your work...”

B- Agitation and anxiety:

The aim of a Monotheism and worshipper of Allah is to please Allah, the One, Who will be content very soon; but he who, instead of Allah, thinks of making others content is always in anxiety, because people are many and each of them has various desires and expectations.

Hadrat Yusuf told his polytheistic companions in prison:

“...Are (many) diverse lords better, or Allah, the One, the All-Dominant?”

The Qur'an gives the parable of the one who separates from Allah as follows:

“...and whoever associates with Allah (anything), it is as though he has fallen from heaven and birds snatch him away, or the wind carries him off to a far distant place.”

Yes, Monotheism and sincere servitude of Allah is a strong fortress which protects man from becoming useless, relying on any one, turning around any person, having hope in anyone, praising anyone and being afraid of any person. A tradition announces that the word of Unity is a strong fortress that whoever enters into it will be secure from the punishment of Allah.

3- Diversity

In a true Monotheistic society, the axis of everything is Allah. The Divine leader assigns the law and the path of Allah, and all turn around the same axis. But in a polytheistic society, instead of the One God, there are false gods, and there exist different tastes and ways so that people are involved in diversity, discord and disunion.

The Qur'an says:

***"...and be not of the idolaters,"
"Of those who split up their religion..."***

4- Disgrace in Hereafter

the Qur'an says:

"...and do not associate with Allah any other god for you will be thrown into Hell blamed cast away."

The Signs of Polytheism

One of the signs of polytheism is to seek a pretext against the Divine law.

The Holy Qur'an, pointing to some of them, says:

"...Is it that whomsoever (thereafter) there came to you a messenger, with what your selves desire not, you became arrogant?..."

in another place it says:

"...but when fighting was prescribed for them,...they said: 'Our Lord! Why have You ordained fighting for us?..."

And when a group of the Children of Israel received food, they said:

"O' Moses! Never can we (always) endure one (sort of) food...' And whenever Allah set forth a parable, they said: '...What does Allah mean by this parable?..."

Another sign of polytheism is to give superiority to family, wealth, position and so on rather than the commandment of Allah (s.w.t.).

Surah Al-Taubah, No. 9, verse 24 says:

"...If your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your wives, your clan, your possessions that you have gained, commerce you fear may slacken, dwellings you are fond of, are dearer to you than

Allah and His messenger and striving in His way, then wait till Allah brings about His command...”

Polytheism is so dangerous that although doing kindness to the parents has been recommended four times in the Qur’an beside monotheism, yet if parents invite their child to worship other than Allah, the Qur’an says:

“...do not obey them...”

The Motives of Polytheism

People go to a person because of his power, while the Qur’an says:

“Verily, those whom you call upon besides Allah can never create (even) a fly, though they should all gather for it...”

Or they go to this and that for the sake of a piece of bread, that the Qur’an says about them:

“...do not own for you any sustenance...”

Or it is for gaining honour and glory that they go to a person, that the Qur’an in Surah An-Nisa’, No. 4, verse 139 says:

“...Then, verily, all glory belongs to Allah”.

Or for the sake of being saved from difficulties they gather around a person, that the Qur’an says:

“...so they shall neither have the ability of removing the affliction from you, nor to change (it).”

Somewhere else the Qur’an implies that why do you leave the best Creator and go to others?

It says:

“Verily those whom you call upon other than Allah are creatures like your own selves...”

Struggle Against Polytheism

The first message and the aim of all Divine prophets has been struggle against polytheism and invitation to the sincere servitude unto Allah.

The Qur’an says:

“And verily We have appointed a messenger in every nation (to say): ‘Serve Allah and shun false gods’...”

All sins may be forgiven except polytheism.

The Qur'an says:

“Verily Allah does not forgive that anything should be associated with Him, and forgives what is besides that to whom He pleases...”

Associating anything with Allah is not accepted, even if its percent is little.

If ninety nine percent of an action is done for the sake of Allah but only one percent of it is done for other than Him, the entire action fails.

The Qur'an says:

“And worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him...”

Not only idols and false gods, but also prophets and the friends of Allah should not be taken as a partner of Allah.

Allah questions Jesus:

“...did you say to the people: ‘Take me and my mother for two gods besides Allah?...’

Taking a partner for Allah is a calumny and a great sin.

The Qur'an says:

“...and whoever associates (aught) with Allah, has indeed devised a great sin.”

Polytheism is so shunned that Allah says:

“It is not (fit) for the Prophet and those who believe to seek forgiveness for the polytheists...”

Islam, logically and reasonably, always struggles against polytheism.

It says:

“Show me what it is they have created in the (wide) earth...”

In whose authority is your death and life? In whose authority is your glory and disgrace?

Yes, leaving Allah, Who has infinite Power and Knowledge, is the greatest injustice to humanity. It is not reasonable that we be captives of some things and individuals or rely only on industry and seek help from an impotent one. One of the aims of narrating the history of the old nations or telling stories in the Qur'an is to eradicate the roots of polytheism.

The Personality of Luqman

1- Luqman's name has been mentioned in two verses of this very Surah of the Qur'an.

There is no evidence in the Qur'an that he was a prophet or only a sage, but the tune of the Qur'an about Luqman shows that he was not a prophet, because, concerning prophets, the Qur'an usually speaks about their prophethood, invitation to Monotheism, struggle against polytheism and the deviations of the environment, the lack of demand for recompense, and also glad tiding and warning for nations.

But concerning Luqman none of these affairs are mentioned and only his admonitions to his son have been privately stated, though their content is general. This shows that he had been only a sage man.

A tradition narrated from the Prophet of Islam (S) indicates that he (S) said:

"I say in truth that Luqman was not a prophet, but he was a servant who thought very much, his certainty was excellent; he loved Allah and Allah loved him, too, and He gave Him wisdom."

2- A Part of Luqman's Wisdom:

Due to the admonitions of Luqman that are mentioned in the verses of this Surah, some commentators have reiterated some of the wise sayings of this godly man, a concise portion of them are as follow:

1- Luqman used to say to his son:

"O My son! Verily the world is a deep sea wherein many people have drowned. Then appoint your ship in it 'the Faith in Allah'; and appoint its sail reliance on Allah; and appoint your provision in it 'God-fearing'.

Then if you relieve (from sea) it is by the mercy of Allah, the Almighty, and if you are annihilated, it is because of your sins."

These very admonitions are recorded in Al-Kafi, through the sayings of Imam Kazim (as) to Hisham-ibn-Hakam in a more complete form narrated from Luqman, the wise, as follows:

"O my son! Verily the world is a deep sea. Many people have drowned in it; then your ship in it must be fright of God, and your provision must be Faith, and the sail of it must be reliance, and its captain is intellect, its leader is knowledge, and its rudder is patience."

There are also some other admonitions recorded in 'Usul-i-Kafi, Vol. 1, and the commentary books by Baydawi, Tha'labi, and Tabarsi in Majma'ul-Bayan.

Surah Luqman – Verse 14

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَيَّ وَهْنًا وَفَصَّالَهُ فِي سَامَيْنِ أَنْ اشْكُرْ
لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ

14. “And We did enjoin upon man concerning his parents, did his mother bear him with fainting upon fainting and his weaning takes two years, (saying:) ‘Be grateful to Me and to your parents: unto Me is the ultimate return (of all).”

The Arabic word */wahn/* means bodily weakness, and the word */tauhin/* means to weaken the personality.

The circle of ‘kindness’ is wider than that of disbursement. The act of */’ihsan/* (kindness) envelops any kind of affection and favour, but */’infaq/* (disbursement) is usually used in financial aids. In the Qur’an, the term */’ihsan/* (kindness) is mentioned beside Monotheism.

It says:

“And your Lord has commanded that you worship none but Him and (to show) kindness to your parents...”

In the verse under discussion at first the kindness to parents has been recommended, then the Qur’an points to the course of mother’s pregnancy in order to awaken the moral conscience of man and that he should not forsake the events of the past.

He must always remember that his mother bore him and fed him with her own milk. She dispensed with her sleep and food for the sake of his tranquillity in a manner that no one was ready to bear such troubles.

Since mother’s right is more probable to be wasted, or her right is greater than the father, Allah has recommended her in particular.

Parents and their child have mutual rights. In the previous verse, the admonition of father to the child was referred to, while in this verse the kindness and gratitude of the child unto the parents is mentioned.

It says:

“And We did enjoin upon man concerning his parents...”

Then it points to the extraordinary labours of the mother and says:

“...did his mother bear him with fainting upon fainting...”

This subject has scientifically been proved, and experience has shown it, too, that mothers will faint during the course of pregnancy because they allocate nearly all their own milk and the marrow of their bone to the growth of their embryo, and they give her child the best materials of their own vitality out of all of them.

For this reason, during their pregnancy, mothers will be in need of kinds of vitamins and if they are not provided there will be some distresses for them. This matter continues even in the suckling course, too, because milk comes from inside of mother's body.

Then, the verse continues saying:

“...and his weaning takes two years...”

Pointing to this matter, in another place, the Qur'an says:

“And the mothers shall suckle their children for two whole years...”

The purpose, of course, is a complete course of suckling, though it may sometimes be less than that.

However, during these thirty three months (the pregnancy course and suckling course) mother performs the greatest self-sacrifice both from the spiritual and emotional points of view, and also from the point of body, and from the point of services to her child.

It is interesting that at first the Qur'an recommends about both parents and at the time of stating the labours and services, it emphasizes on mother's labours in order to attract the man's attention to the donations and great right of mother.

Then it says:

“...(saying:) ‘Be grateful to Me and to your parents:...”

You should be grateful to both the Creator and the main giver of blessings and the kind parents He has given to you, and you should be grateful to your parents, too, who are the mediate of this emanation and undertake the transition of Allah's bounties to you.

And how interesting and expressive is that the gratitude to the parents has been set and mentioned just beside the gratitude to Allah.

And, at the end of the verse, with a tune of statement which is not far from threat, it says:

“...unto Me is the ultimate return (of all).”

Yes, if we neglect here, all the rights, labours, and services will be dealt with there and will be exactly

counted. We must fulfil the Divine account in respect to the gratitude of both His bounties and the bounty of the existence of parents and their pure and sincere affections.

Some of the commentators here have pointed out that the Qur'an has repeatedly emphasized on observing the rights of parents, while recommendation due to children is rarely seen in the Qur'an (except the prohibition of killing children which was an evil and ugly exceptional tradition during the Age of Ignorance).

This is because of the fact that parents, as the result of their strong affections to their children, may rarely forget them, while there have frequently happened that children have forgotten their parents specially at the time of senescence and weakness. This is counted the most painful state for them and the worst ingratitude for the children.

A Few Traditions About Parents

1- Ibn-i-Mas'ud said:

"I asked the Messenger of Allah (S) 'Which one of deeds is the dearest one with Allah, Almighty and Glorious?'

He answered:

'Prayer at its time.'

I said:

'What is after it?'

He answered:

'Kindness to the parents.'

I said:

'What is after it?'

He answered:

'Struggle in the way of Allah'."

2- The Messenger of Allah (S) once said:

"Whoever obeys the command of Allah concerning the parents, two doors from paradise will be opened to him, and if he obeys Allah's command about one of them one door will be opened."

3- The Prophet of Allah (S) said:

“Every righteous child who looks at his parents kindly will be given the reward of an accepted complete Hajj for each glance.”

He was asked:

“If he looks even for one hundred times a day?”

He answered:

“Yes. Allah is greater and more purified.”

Surah Luqman – Verse 15

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

15. “And if they (both) 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 unto Me is the return of you (all) and then will I inform you of what you were doing.”

It is not necessary to obey parents when there is a deviated thing, but the ordinary way of life must always be observed.

Therefore, since the recommendation on kindness to parents may create this thought for some individuals that even in relation to the subject of beliefs whether faith and infidelity, one must comply with them, the Qur’an says:

“And if they (both) contend with you that you should associate with Me what you have no knowledge of, do not obey them...”

One’s communication with his parents must never be prior to his communication with Allah, and relative affections must never dominate the theological beliefs.

The Qur’anic term */jahadaka/* points to this factual matter that sometimes parents, considering that they wish the happiness of their child, try to drive him toward their own deviated belief, and this action has been seen in almost all parents.

The duty of children is that they should never surrender these pressures and they should protect their own ideological independence and do not exchange the belief in Monotheism for any thing else.

By the way, the Qur'anic sentence:

"...what you have no knowledge of"

means that if supposing we ignore the reasons of nullification of polytheism, at least, there is no reason to prove it, and no seeker of pretext can bring a reason for proving polytheism, either.

Moreover, if polytheism were a reality, there would exist a reason for proving it, and since there is not any reason to prove it, this itself is a reason upon its nullification.

Again, since it is probable that this commandment brings this imagination into being that the irreligious parents must be encountered violently and disgracefully, immediately after it the Qur'an implies that the lack of obedience to them in the subject of disbelief and polytheism is not an evidence for absolute rupture of relation with them; but in the meantime we must have an appropriate manner to them in the world.

The verse continues saying:

"...and keep company with them in (this) world kindly..."

From the point of the world and material living we must have love, affection, and benignity to them but from the point of belief and religious programs we must not surrender to their wrong thoughts and suggestions. This is exactly the essential point of equilibrium in which the rights of Allah and parents are gathered.

That is why, next to it, Allah says:

"...and follow the way of him who turns to Me, then unto Me is the return of you (all) and then will I inform you of what you were doing."

The successive negations and affirmations as well as enjoinders and prohibitions mentioned in the above verse is for the sake that Muslims find out the main line when in such issues there may consider, at first glance, a contradiction between the fulfilment of two duties, and they follow the correct path without the least excess and defect.

This accuracy and delicateness of the Qur'an in these narrow things is out of the features of its deep elegance and rhetoric.

However, the abovementioned verse is completely similar to what is mentioned in Surah Al-'Ankabut, no. 29, verse 8 which says:

“And We have enjoined on man goodness unto his parents; and if they strive with you that you should associate (others) with Me, of which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them, unto Me is your return, and I will inform you of what you were doing.”

Surah Luqman – Verse 16

يَا بُنَيَّ إِنَّهَا إِنْ تَكُ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ فَتَكُنْ فِي صَخْرَةٍ أَوْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ أَوْ فِي
الْأَرْضِ يَأْتِ بِهَا اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ

16. “O’ my son! If there be (your deed but) the weight of a mustard–seed and it were (hidden) in a rock or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth; (for) verily Allah is All–Subtle, All–Aware.”

The man’s faith to the presentation of his deed in the Hereafter is the source of his improvement.

Luqman’s first admonition to his son was about the subject of Monotheism and struggle against polytheism. His second admonition was about the reckoning of deeds in resurrection, and it completes the ring of ‘Origin’ and ‘Resurrection’.

So, in this verse, Luqman says:

“O’ my son! If there be (your deed but) the weight of a mustard–seed and it were (hidden) in a rock or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth; (for) verily Allah is All–Subtle, All–Aware.”

Mustard is a plant which has some very small black seeds the smallness of which is often said as a parable.

This meaning refers to the fact that the man’s good and evil deeds, even the smallest and the most worthless of them, that are hidden, like a mustard–seed that is hidden in a rock, or deep in the earth, or in a corner in the heavens, Allah, the Subtle, the Aware, Who knows everything throughout the world of existence, whether they are small or big, will bring it forth to be reckoned and to be recompensed with reward or retribution, and nothing will be lost in this system.

The pronoun in the Qur’anic word *’innaha/* refers to the good and evil deeds.

The man’s attention to the awareness of Allah concerning his deeds and that all good and evil deeds will be protected in Allah’s knowledge and that nothing will be vanished in this world of existence, is the source of all individual and social improvements, and it is a strong motive towards doing righteous works and it is an effective impedimental factor for man from committing evils and vices.

Mentioning the words: 'the heavens' and 'the earth' after the statement of 'rock', in fact, are of the kind of mentioning a 'general meaning' next to a 'particular meaning'.

A tradition has been recorded in 'Usul-i-Kafi narrated from Imam Baqir (as) who said:

"Avoid (committing) the small sins because once they will be called to account and some of you (sometimes) say that they commit sin and then they will ask forgiveness, while Allah, Almighty and Glorious, says:

'... We will record that which they send before and that which they leave behind, and of all things have We taken account in a clear Book (of evidence).'

And He also says:

'...If there be (your deed but) the weight of a mustard-seed and it were (hidden) in a rock or in the heavens or in the earth, Allah will bring it forth; (for) verily Allah is All-Subtle, All-Aware' ."

Surah Luqman – Verse 17

يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَيَّ مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ
ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ

17. "O' my son! Keep up the prayer and enjoin the good and forbid the evil, and patiently persevere against whatever may befall you, for this (patience) is among the (necessary and) important affairs."

One of the duties of the parents unto their children is to recommend them to perform prayer.

We must train our children to be believers and godly by means of recommending them the prayers, and also through recommending them that they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, we may bring them up thereby some social and responsible persons.

However, after strengthening the foundations of Origin and Resurrection, which are the sources of all theological beliefs, Luqman refers to the most important thing, that is the performance of the prayer.

It says:

"O' my son! Keep up the prayer..."

You must establish prayer because it is the most important link between you and your Lord. Prayer makes your heart awaken, your soul purify, and your living light and bright.

Prayer washes out the signs of sin from you, causes the light of faith to illuminate inside your heart, and keeps you away from indecency and sins.

Next to the subject of prayer, Luqman refers to the most important social affair, i.e. the subject of enjoining right and forbidding what is wrong.

He says:

“...and enjoin the good and forbid the evil...”

After these three practical important instructions, he refers to the subject of patience and perseverance that, comparing with Faith, is like head for the body.

He says:

“...and patiently persevere against whatever may befall you, for this (patience) is among the (necessary and) important affairs.”

It is certain that there are many difficulties in all social affairs and particularly in ‘enjoining right’ and ‘forbidding wrong’, to which the dominant mammonists, and also the experienced polluted self-lovers will not easily surrender.

They even try to hurt, annoy and accuse those who enjoin right and forbid wrong that, without patience and perseverance, it is impossible to become victorious against these difficulties.

The Arabic word */‘azm/* means: ‘a firm determination’, and the application of */‘azm-il-’umur/* here either means the things that Allah has ordered to be serious about them, or the affairs that man must have a decided decision and a firm intention unto them. Either of these two meanings points to its importance.

The Arabic word */alika/* here refers to patience and perseverance. This is also probable that it refers to all of the affairs that have been mentioned in the verse, including: prayer, enjoining right and forbidding wrong, but this subject has been mentioned after the subject of patience in some other verses of the Qur’an, which strengthens the first probability.

Surah Luqman – Verse 18

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

18. “And do not turn your face away from people (in contempt), nor walk in the earth exultantly;

verily Allah does not love any self-conceited boaster.”

After that, Luqman has referred to the morals in relation with people and himself. At first, he recommends his son to have modesty and good temper.

The verse says:

“And do not turn your face away from people (in contempt)...”

Then Luqman continues saying:

“...nor walk in the earth exultantly; verily Allah does not love any self-conceited boaster.”

The Arabic word */tusa'ir/* is derived from */sa'ar/* which originally means a kind of sickness (torticollis) that usually paralyses the camel's neck.

The Qur'anic term */marah/* means haughtiness produced because of affluence of bounties.

The Qur'anic word */muxtal/* is derived from */xiyal/* and */xayla'/* in the sense of the one who, usually because of some imaginations and vain conjectures, considers himself great.

The Arabic word */faxur/* is derived from */faxr/* which means: he who shows haughtiness unto others. (the difference of */muxtal/* and */faxur/* is in this that the former points to inward imaginary pride and the latter refers to outward proudly deeds.)

Thus, Luqman, the wise, points to two very ugly attributes here which cause the sincere social relations to be vanished: one of them is haughtiness and heedlessness, and the other is pride and selfishness, both of which draw man into a world of misconception, delusion, and self-admiration and cease his relation from others.

Specially with regard to the original meaning of the word */sa'ar/* (torlicollis) that makes it clear that this kind of qualities is a sort of psychological ethical sickness, or a kind of deviation in realization and thought, else a safe and sound person from the point of mind and psyche never involves in such misconceptions and delusions.

It is evident that the purpose of Luqman is not only the act of turning the face away from people, or walking exultantly and proudly, but the purpose is to struggle against all manifestations of arrogance and pride, and, before anything else, these qualities show themselves in the ordinary daily manner. Luqman has emphasized on these particular qualities.

Some Examples of the Modesty of the Friends of Allah

1. The first personality of creation, i.e. the holy Prophet (S), used to sit among his companions in a way that he had no superiority to others, and whoever joined their meeting and did not know the Prophet (S)

he would ask:

“Which one of you is the Messenger of Allah?”

2. In a travelling, wherein everybody usually undertook a responsibility for providing food, the holy Prophet (S) undertook a duty, too.

He said:

“I gather pieces of wood.”

3. As soon as the Prophet (S) saw that there was not enough carpet for some ones to sit on, he gave his shoulder-mantle to them to sit on it.

Wearing simple clothing, riding in bare donkey, milking, accompanying with slaves, greeting to little children, patching up his shoe and clothes, accepting people’s invitation, sweeping the house, shaking hand with all individuals, and not holding the food light, were among the Prophet’s ways of life.

4. In order to respect Imam Sadiq (as), some of the believers wanted to forbid the entry of others into the public bathroom where the Imam was bathing, but the Imam did not let them and said:

“You need not to do this. The life of a believer is simpler than this.”

5. Some persons insisted that Imam Rida’s table cloth could be separate from the table cloth of the servants, but he (as) did not accept.

6. Someone did not recognize Imam Rida in a public bathroom; and he wanted him (as) to rub his body. Without introducing himself, and with a complete dignity, the Imam accepted his demand. After that, when the man recognized the Imam, he began apologizing him. The Imam (as) comforted him.

Accepting others’ suggestions and critics, and sitting in a place lower than the one’s position, are among the signs of modesty.

Surah Luqman – Verse 19

وَأَقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاعْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ

19. “And be moderate in your pace; and lower your voice; verily the most unpleasant of voices is the braying of the asses.”

Imam Hassan (as) said:

“To walk swiftly decreases the value of a believer.”

Another tradition indicates:

“It does not matter that the invitation of people and recitation of the Qur’an be uttered loudly.”

Therefore Luqman by this verse says:

“And be moderate in your pace; and lower your voice; verily the most unpleasant of voices is the braying of the asses.”

In fact, in these two verses two qualities are prohibited and two qualities are enjoined. The qualities which are forbidden are self-admiration and selfishness, one of which causes man to be proud unto the servants of Allah, and the other causes man to consider himself as a complete one and, consequently, he closes the doors of development to him although he does not compare himself with another person.

Although these two qualities in a man are often with together and have a common root, sometimes they also separate with each other.

Observing to be moderate in ‘action’ and speech’ are two useful commandments, because emphasizing on moderation, in pace and the tune of the sound, of a person are mentioned as two examples.

Verily he who has these four qualities is a successful, happy and victorious person both amongst people and before Allah (s.w.t.).

It is noteworthy that there may be some sounds in our living place which are more troublesome than the braying of asses, but no doubt these sounds are not general and common. Moreover, to be troublesome and to be uglier are different.

Whatever that a person hears and is truly the most unpleasant of voices is that very braying of an ass, to which the shouts of the proud and the foolish persons have been likened.

Not only because of ugliness, the loudness and the style of the braying of an ass, but also because of its being sometimes unreasonable, for as some of the commentators have said, the sound of other animals are often because of a need or a reason, but this animal sometimes unreasonably and without having any need suddenly brays.

There may be for this reason that some Islamic narrations denote that when an ass brays, it has seen a Satan.

Some commentators have said the sound of every animal is the glorification to Allah except the sound of an ass! However, the ugliness of this sound comparing other sounds does not need to be discussed.

And if we see that in a tradition narrated from Imam Sadiq (as) this verse has been rendered into the

sneeze with a loud voice, or into speaking very loudly, it is, indeed, the statement of a clear extension of it.

Some Traditions on Islamic Rules of Etiquette

Islamic traditions narrated from the Prophet (S) and the Imams of Ahlul Bayt (as) have been considered giving more importance unto the subject of modesty, good character, benignity in meetings, and absence of harshness in social intercourse than other things.

The best and the most expressive reason in this regard are the Islamic narrations themselves, the examples of which are as follow:

1- Hadrat Sadiq (as) has been narrated from that he said:

“Allah has enjoined faith upon the man’s limbs and has divided it among them.

Among them is that He has enjoined man’s feet not to go toward sin and iniquity and to move in the path of the content of Allah. So the Qur’an says:

‘...do not walk in the earth exultantly...’

and it also says:

‘...be moderate in your pace...’.”

2- Another narration indicates that once the holy Prophet (S) was passing through a lane. He saw a madman around whom people had gathered and looking at him.

He (S) said:

“What have they gathered there for?”

People answered:

“For a madman who has an epileptic fit.”

The Prophet (S) looked at them and said:

“This is not mad. Do you want me to introduce the real mad one to you?”

They answered:

“Yes. O Messenger of Allah.”

He said:

“The real mad is he who walks proudly, constantly looks at his side, and moves his sides with his shoulders (and shows haughtiness). This is the true mad (one), but this one (that you are looking at) is sick.”

3- A person once came to the Prophet (S) and asked him to admonish him. Then he (S) told him:

“Do meet your brother with a joyful face.”

4- Another tradition indicates that the Prophet (S) said:

“On the Day of Hereafter there will not put anything of actions in the scale of a man better than good character.”

5- Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

“Pious goodness and good character flourish houses and increase in lifetimes.”

6- Again the holy Prophet (S) said:

“The things for which my people may enter Paradise most of all are piety for Allah and good character.”

Concerning modesty we also read that Imam Ali (as) has said:

“The adornment of the honourable people is modesty.”

Imam Sadiq (as) in a tradition said:

“Modesty is the origin of every goodness and happiness. It is a high rank, and if there were a word for modesty which people understood, it would state many hidden secrets of the sequel of the affairs...And he who has modesty for Allah, He will elevate him above many of his servants...No worship is accepted by Allah and He is pleased of but that its door is modesty.”

1. Kanz-ul-'Ummal, 8849

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