SAMPLE

Luqman: The Wise

Luqman the Wise in the Quran

Aira Aurora

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This free sample contains the Introduction and Chapter 1. The complete book contains the full contents above.

Introduction

Luqman is one of the most intriguing figures in the Quran. He is not a prophet — at least, the Quran does not identify him as one. He is not a king, not a warrior, not a ruler. He is a wise man. And the Quran dedicates a surah to him — Surah Luqman, the thirty-first surah of the Quran — and within that surah, it preserves his wisdom, his counsel, and his advice to his son.

The Quran mentions Luqman in three passages (31:12, 31:16-19, and a reference in 38:26 in connection with Dawud). The core passage is 31:12-19, where the Quran presents Luqman's counsel to his son — a series of teachings that cover theology, ethics, family, social conduct, and personal character.

These teachings are the Quran's most concentrated example of parental wisdom — a father's advice to his son, preserved by Allah in His eternal book.

This book is the fifth in The Honored Ones sub-series. The first four books explored Maryam (purity and trust), Asiya (faith under tyranny), Hajar (perseverance and effort), and Bilqis (guided leadership). This book explores Luqman — the model of wisdom. Luqman's story is not a narrative in the traditional sense; it is a collection of counsels — words of wisdom spoken by a father to a son, preserved by Allah as a model for all parents and all believers.

The surah named after Luqman is one of the few surahs of the Quran named after a figure who is not a prophet. This naming is a statement: the wisdom of a non-prophet can be as significant as the message of a prophet. The words of a father to a son can be as valuable as the words of Allah to a nation. And the counsel that is given in private — in the intimacy of a home, between a parent and a child — can be preserved by Allah for all humanity, for all time.

Luqman's significance lies in what he represents: the person who is wise, who is not a prophet, and whose wisdom is nonetheless so valuable that Allah preserves it in His book. Luqman is the Quran's proof that wisdom is not confined to prophethood. The prophet receives revelation; the wise person receives insight. The prophet speaks from Allah; the wise person speaks from understanding. And the Quran honors both — the revelation of the prophet and the insight of the wise man — by preserving both in its pages.

The surah named after Luqman begins with the letters Alif Lam Mim and immediately establishes the purpose of the book: "These are the verses of the wise Book, as guidance and mercy for the doers of good" (31:2-3). The "wise Book" — kitaban hakiman — is the Quran itself, and the wisdom of the Quran includes the wisdom of Luqman. The Quran is wise, and one of the ways it demonstrates its wisdom is by preserving the wisdom of a man who was not a

prophet but whose words were worth preserving for all eternity.

Chapter 1: Luqman in the Quran — The Wise Man

The Quran introduces Luqman with a single statement: "And We had certainly given Luqman wisdom" (31:12). This is the Quran's first word about Luqman — not a biography, not a narrative, not a story. A statement: Allah gave Luqman wisdom.

The Verse of Endowment

The full verse reads: "And We had certainly given Luqman wisdom [saying]: Be grateful to Allah. And whoever is grateful is grateful for [the benefit of] himself.

And whoever is ungrateful — then indeed, Allah is Free of need and Praiseworthy" (31:12). The verse establishes three things in a single sentence: Luqman was given wisdom, the first fruit of wisdom is gratitude, and gratitude benefits the grateful one, not Allah.

The structure is significant. The verse does not say: "And We gave Luqman wisdom, and he became wise." It says: "And We gave Luqman wisdom [saying]: Be grateful to Allah." The wisdom is immediately connected to gratitude. The first act of the wise person is gratitude. The first word of the wise person is "thank you." Before Luqman counsels his son, before he speaks of theology or ethics or character, the Quran establishes his fundamental orientation: gratitude to Allah.

The Identity of Luqman

The Quran does not tell us who Luqman was. It does not give his lineage, his tribe, his era, or his profession. The Hadith and later tradition fill in some details — that he was from Ethiopia, or from Nubia, or from the tribe of Ayn; that he was a carpenter, a tailor, a shepherd, or a slave freed by his master because of his wisdom. But the Quran itself is silent on all of these details. The Quran gives Luqman only one identity: the wise man. Not the Ethiopian, not the carpenter, not the slave. The wise man.

This silence is significant. The Quran's treatment of Luqman is consistent with its treatment of other figures whose biographical details are less important than their spiritual significance. The Quran does not tell us where Luqman was from because where he was from does not matter. What matters is what he said. What matters is his wisdom. The Quran strips away the biography and preserves the teaching — as if to say: the identity of the wise person is in their wisdom, not in their background.

The Wisdom of Luqman

The Arabic word for wisdom is hikmah (حكمة). The Quran uses this word in several contexts. It says that Allah gives wisdom to whom He wills (2:269). It says that the prophets received wisdom (2:251, 3:81, 6:89). It says that Luqman received wisdom (31:12). And it says that believers should pray for wisdom: "My Lord, increase me in knowledge" (20:114) — the knowledge that includes wisdom.

But what is hikmah? The word comes from a root meaning to judge, to restrain, to prevent. The hakim — the wise one — is the one who judges rightly, who restrains from error, who prevents harm. Wisdom is not merely knowledge; it is the application of knowledge — the ability to know what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. The wise person is not the one who knows the most; the wise person is the one who acts the best.

The Quran's statement that Luqman was given wisdom means that he was given the ability to judge rightly, to counsel wisely, and to guide effectively. His wisdom was not theoretical; it was practical. The counsels he gave his son are not abstract principles but actionable advice — things to do and things to avoid, attitudes to cultivate and behaviors to shun. The wisdom of Luqman is the wisdom of a parent who knows how to raise a child, a person who knows how to live a life, and a believer who knows how to relate to Allah.

The Meccan Context of the Surah

Surah Luqman is generally considered a Meccan surah, revealed during the period of the Prophet's mission in Makkah. The Meccan context is significant because the Meccan surahs focus primarily on the fundamentals of faith — the oneness of Allah, the reality of the Hereafter, and the basic moral framework of the believer. The content of Luqman's counsel — tawhid, gratitude, parents, Allah's knowledge, prayer, patience, humility — is perfectly aligned with the Meccan emphasis on the fundamentals.

The Meccan context also explains the relevance of Luqman's story to the Prophet's audience. The Quraysh of Makkah were a people who valued wisdom, poetry, and counsel. The story of a wise man whose counsel was preserved by Allah would have resonated with an audience that appreciated wisdom literature. And the content of the counsel — particularly the rejection of shirk and the call to humility — directly addressed the spiritual condition of the Quraysh, who associated partners with Allah and walked through the earth with arrogance.

The Quran's Pedagogy — Wisdom Through Example

The Quran's use of Luqman's story is an example of the Quran's pedagogical method: teaching through example rather than through abstract principle. The

Quran could have said: "Parents, teach your children tawhid, gratitude, and humility." Instead, it shows a parent doing it — Luqman counseling his son. The example is more powerful than the principle because the example is concrete, relatable, and actionable. The reader sees a father talking to his son and learns how to talk to their own children.

This pedagogical method — teaching through example — is one of the Quran's most distinctive features. The Quran teaches prayer through the example of the prophets. It teaches patience through the example of Ayyub. It teaches trust through the example of Ibrahim. It teaches perseverance through the example of Musa. And it teaches parental wisdom through the example of Luqman. The examples are not illustrations of principles; they are the principles themselves — embodied, enacted, lived. And the reader who studies the example is learning the principle through the most effective method: seeing it in action.

The Surah Named After Luqman

The thirty-first surah of the Quran is named Luqman. It is one of the few surahs named after a non-prophet. Most surahs named after individuals are named after prophets — Ibrahim, Nuh, Yusuf, Maryam (though Maryam is not a prophet). The naming of a surah after Luqman is a statement about the significance of his wisdom: the Quran considers Luqman's wisdom important enough to name an entire surah after him — to give him a place in the structure of the book that is usually reserved for prophets.

The surah begins with the characteristics of the wise book: "These are the verses of the wise Book, as guidance and mercy for the doers of good" (31:2-3). The "doers of good" — muhsineen — are the people who benefit from the wisdom of the Quran. And Luqman, whose counsel is preserved in this surah, is the model of the person who does good with wisdom — who takes the guidance of the Quran and translates it into practical counsel for the next generation.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aira Aurora is an independent researcher and writer specializing in Quranic studies. Her work focuses on close reading of the Quranic text, exploring its themes, narratives, and moral framework with attention to both the original Arabic and the broader human context.

The NurOne master series is her primary project -- a multi-sub-series exploration of the Quran covering prophets, people, places, events, lessons, commands, signs, the unseen, the hereafter, and everyday life. Each book is a close reading of the Quranic verses on a specific topic, presented in clear, accessible language.

Her work is published under the pen name Aira Aurora.

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