



CHAPTER 31

Luqmān

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 4 sections; 34 verses)

The name of this chapter is taken from that of the sage to whose story it refers. *Luqmān* was an Ethiopian, and his mention here testifies to the breadth of the fundamental principles of Islām alluded to in the last chapter. The aim of this chapter is, like its sister chapters, to ensure the success of believers. It belongs, like its two predecessors, to the middle Makkan period.

The first section asserts in unmistakable terms the success of the Muslims; the second refers to the advice of Luqmān to his son, which was now meant for the Muslims; the third speaks of the greatness of Divine power, which could bring about such an impossible thing as the triumph of the Muslims over their enemies; and the fourth foretells the doom of the mighty opponents.

SECTION 1: Believers will be successful

In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

1 I, Allāh, am the Best Knower.

2 These are the verses of the Book of Wisdom —

3 A guidance and a mercy for the doers of good,

4 Who keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate and who are certain of the Hereafter.

5 These are on a guidance from their Lord, and these are they who are successful.

6 And of men is he who takes instead frivolous discourse to lead astray from Allāh's path without knowledge, and to make it a mockery. For such is an abasing chastisement.^{6a}

7 And when Our messages are recited to him, he turns back proudly, as if he had not heard them, as if there were deafness in his ears; so announce to him a painful chastisement.

8 Those who believe and do good, for them are Gardens of bliss,

9 To abide therein. A promise of Allāh in truth! And He is the Mighty, the Wise.

10 He created the heavens without pillars that you see, and cast mountains on the earth lest it should be convulsed with you,^{6a} and He spread on it animals

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْم

تِلْكَ آيَاتُ الْكِتَابِ الْحَكِيمِ

هُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّلْمُحْسِنِينَ

الَّذِينَ يُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ

الزَّكَاةَ وَهُمْ بِالْآخِرَةِ هُمْ يُوقِنُونَ

أُولَئِكَ عَلَى هُدًى مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَأُولَئِكَ

هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ

وَمِن النَّاسِ مَن يَشْتَرِي لَهْوَ

الْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ

عِلْمٍ ۖ وَيَتَّخِذَهَا هُزُوًا ۚ أُولَئِكَ

لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّهِينٌ

وَإِذَا تُتْلَىٰ عَلَيْهِ آيَاتُنَا وَتِلْكَ مِثْلًا لِّمُسْتَكْبِرٍ

كَأَن لَّمْ يَسْمَعْهَا كَأَنَّ فِي أُذُنَيْهِ

وَقْرًا ۚ فَبَشِّرْهُ بِعَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ النَّعِيمِ

خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا ۚ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ حَقًّا طَوْهَوْا

الْعَزِيدُ الْحَكِيمُ

خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ بِغَيْرِ عَمَدٍ تَرَوْنَهَا

وَآلْفَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ رَوَاسِيَ أَن تَمِيدَ

بِكُمْ وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ ط

6a. It is a mistake to think that a particular person is meant here. The concluding words of the verse show clearly that the statement is general and applies to all those who take the Qur'an for a mockery.

10a. See 16:15a.

of every kind. And We send down water from the clouds, then cause to grow therein of every noble kind.

11 This is Allāh's creation; now show Me that which those besides Him have created. Nay, the unjust are in manifest error.

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَنْبَتْنَا
فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَرَاوِجٍ كَرِيمٍ ﴿١١﴾
هَذَا خَلْقُ اللَّهِ فَأَرُونِي مَاذَا خَلَقَ
الَّذِينَ مِنْ دُونِهِ بَلِ الظَّالِمُونَ
فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿١٢﴾

SECTION 2: Luqmān's Advice to his Son

12 And certainly We gave Luqmān wisdom,^a saying: Give thanks to Allāh. And whoever is thankful, is thankful for his own soul; and whoever denies, then surely Allāh is Self-Sufficient, Praised.

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ أَنْ اشْكُرْ
لِلَّهِ ۖ وَمَنْ يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ
ۖ وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿١٢﴾

13 And when Luqmān said to his son, while he admonished him: O my son, ascribe no partner to Allāh. Surely ascribing partners (to Him) is a grievous iniquity.

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لِابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ
يَبْنَىءُ لَا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ
لظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿١٣﴾

14 And We have enjoined on man concerning his parents — his mother bears him with faintings upon faintings and his weaning takes two years — saying: Give thanks to Me and to thy parents. To Me is the eventual coming.^a

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ
أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَى وَهْنٍ وَفِصْلُ فِي
عَامَيْنِ أَنْ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ
إِلَى الْمَصِيرِ ﴿١٤﴾

15 And if they strive with thee to make thee associate with Me that of which thou hast no knowledge, obey them not, and keep kindly company with them in this world,^a and follow

وَأِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي
مِمَّا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَ
صَاحِبْهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا وَاتَّبِعْ

12a. From what is stated of him, Luqmān seems to have been an Ethiopian. It is very probable that the Greek "Æsop" is a corruption of "Ethiopian" and is identical with Luqmān. The Qur'ān accepts many prophets besides those mentioned in the Bible.

14a. Verses 14 and 15 are parenthetical, enjoining the duty of obedience to parents, because it is a parent who is advising his son.

15a. Notwithstanding the great stress that the Holy Qur'ān lays here and elsewhere on the duty of obedience to parents, it also warns against attaching undue importance to that duty when the same clashes with a still higher duty, viz., one's duty to one's Maker.

the way of him who turns to Me; then to Me is your return, then I shall inform you of what you did.

16 O my son, even if it be the weight of a grain of mustard-seed, even though it be in a rock, or in the heaven or in the earth, Allāh will bring it forth. Surely Allāh is Knower of subtilities, Aware.

17 O my son, keep up prayer and enjoin good and forbid evil, and bear patiently that which befalls thee. Surely this is an affair of great resolution.

18 And turn not thy face away from people in contempt, nor go about in the land exultingly. Surely Allāh loves not any self-conceited boaster.

19 And pursue the right course in thy going about and lower thy voice. Surely the most hateful of voices is braying of asses.^a

سَبِيلَ مَنْ آتَابَ إِلَىَّ ثُمَّ إِلَىَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ
فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

يُبَيِّنُ لَهَا إِنْ تَكِ مِنْ ثِقَالِ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ
خَرْدَلٍ فَتَكُنْ فِي صَخْرَةٍ أَوْ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ
أَوْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يَأْتِ بِهَا اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
أَلْبِيبٌ حَبِيرٌ ﴿١٧﴾

يُبَيِّنُ آتِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَإِنه عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا
أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ ﴿١٨﴾

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا تَمْشِ
فِي الْأَرْضِ مَرْحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ
كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴿١٩﴾

وَأَقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاغْضُضْ مِنْ
صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الْأَصْوَاتِ
لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ ﴿٢٠﴾

SECTION 3: Greatness of Divine Power

20 See you not that Allāh has made subservient to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth, and granted to you His favours complete outwardly and inwardly? And among men is he who disputes concerning Allāh without knowledge or guidance or a Book giving light.^a

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مِمَّا
فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَسْبَغَ
عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَهُ ظَاهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً وَمِنْ
النَّاسِ مَنْ يُجَادِلُ فِي اللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ
وَلَا هُدًى وَلَا كِتَابٍ مُنِيرٍ ﴿٢٠﴾

In fact any duty, however great, must be sacrificed before a higher duty, and one's duty to one's Maker is the highest of all duties.

19a. Humility and meekness were taught by every prophet. Even an Ethiopian preached the meekness and humility which was preached by Jesus.

20a. The words are meant as well for the Muslims. So long as they adhered to the *Book giving light* they continued to advance in the world, and they will again lead the world when they place the *Book giving light* in the forefront.

21 And when it is said to them, Follow that which Allāh has revealed, they say: Nay, we follow that wherein we found our fathers. What! Though the devil calls them to the chastisement of the burning Fire!

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ اتَّبِعُوا مَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُوا بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَا وَجَدْنَا عَلَيْنَا آبَاءَنَا وَإِن كَان الشَّيْطَانُ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ ①

22 And whoever submits himself to Allāh and does good (to others), he indeed takes hold of the firmest handle. And Allāh's is the end of affairs.

وَمَنْ يُسْلِمْ وَجْهَهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ اسْتَمْسَكَ بِالْعُرْوَةِ الْوُثْقَىٰ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ ②

23 And whoever disbelieves, let not his disbelief grieve thee. To Us is their return, then We shall inform them of what they did. Surely Allāh is Knower of what they did. Surely Allāh is Knower of what is in the breasts.

وَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَلَا يَحْزُنكَ كُفْرُهُ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ فَنُنَبِّئُهُمْ بِمَا عَمِلُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ③

24 We give them to enjoy a little, then We shall drive them to a severe chastisement.

نُمَتِّعُهُمْ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ نَضْطَرُّهُمْ إِلَىٰ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ ④

25 And if thou ask them who created the heavens and the earth? they will say: Allāh. Say: Praise be to Allāh! Nay, most of them know not.

وَلَيْن سَأَلْتَهُمْ مَنْ خَلَقَ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضَ لَيَقُوُنَّ اللَّهُ ط قُلِ الْعَسَدُ لِلَّهِ بَلْ أَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ⑤

26 To Allāh belongs whatever is in the heavens and the earth. Surely Allāh is the Self-Sufficient, the Praised.

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ ط اِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ الْحَمِيْدُ ⑥

27 And if all the trees in the earth were pens, and the sea with seven more seas added to it (were ink), the words of Allāh would not be exhausted. Surely Allāh is Mighty, Wise.^a

وَلَوْ اَنَّ مَا فِي الْاَرْضِ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ اَقْلَامًا وَالْبَحْرُ يَدُّهُ مِنْ بَعْدِهٖ سَبْعَةٌ اَبْحَرُ مَا نَفَدَتْ كَلِمٰتُ اللَّهِ ط اِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيْزٌ حَكِيْمٌ ⑦

27a. I'Ab thinks this verse and the two that follow belong to Madinan revelation, but there is no indication in the text, nor any evidence, to show that they were not revealed at Makkah. A similar statement is contained in another early Makkah revelation; see 18:109. It is noteworthy that a man who himself could not use the pen and who lived in a country where pen and ink were at any rate scarce, expresses such an idea of the abundance of pens and ink. While containing a prophetic allusion to the abundant use of pen and ink in the world, the words are expressive of the unimaginable vastness of the Creation of God, for everything created is a word of God in the sense that it is created by Divine commandment.

28 Your creation or your raising is only like a single soul. Surely Allāh is Hearing, Seeing.

مَا خَلَقُكُمْ وَلَا بَعَثُكُمْ إِلَّا كَنَفْسٍ
وَاحِدَةٍ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ بَصِيرٌ ﴿٢٨﴾

29 Seest thou not that Allāh makes the night to enter into the day, and He makes the day to enter into the night, and He has made the sun and the moon subservient (to you) — each pursues its course till an appointed time — and that Allāh is Aware of what you do?

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُولِجُ اللَّيْلَ فِي النَّهَارِ
وَيُولِجُ النَّهَارَ فِي اللَّيْلِ وَسَخَّرَ الشَّمْسَ
وَالْقَمَرَ كُلٌّ يَجْرِي إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى
وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

30 This is because Allāh is the Truth, and that which they call upon besides Him is falsehood, and that Allāh is the High, the Great.

ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَا
يَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِهِ الْبَاطِلُ وَأَنَّ
اللَّهَ هُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْكَبِيرُ ﴿٣٠﴾

SECTION 4: The Doom comes

31 Seest thou not that the ships glide on the sea by Allāh's grace, that He may show you of His signs? Surely there are signs in this for every patient endurer, grateful one.^a

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ الْفُلَکَ تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ
بِنِعْمَتِ اللَّهِ لِيُرِيَكُمْ مِنْ آيَاتِهِ إِنَّ
فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّكُلِّ صَبَّارٍ شَاكِرٍ ﴿٣١﴾

32 And when a wave like awnings covers them, they call upon Allāh, being sincere to Him in obedience. But when He brings them safe to land, some of them follow the middle course. And none denies Our signs but every perfidious, ungrateful one.

وَإِذَا غَشِيَهُمْ مَوَّجٌ كَالظُّلُمِ اللَّيْلِ
دَعَا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ فَلَمَّا
نَجَّاهُمْ إِلَى الْبَرِّ فَمِنْهُمْ مُّقْتَصِدٌ
وَمَا يَجْحَدُ بِآيَاتِنَا إِلَّا كُلُّ خَتَّارٍ كَفُورٍ ﴿٣٢﴾

33 O people, keep your duty to your Lord and dread the day when no father can avail his son in aught, nor the child will avail his father. Surely the promise of Allāh is true, so let not this world's life deceive you, nor let the arch-deceiver deceive you about Allāh.^a

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ وَأخْشَوْا يَوْمًا
لَّا يَجْزِي وَالِدٌ عَنْ وَلَدِهِ وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ
هُوَ جَارٍ عَنْ وَالِدِهِ شَيْئًا إِنَّ وَعْدَ
اللَّهِ حَقٌّ فَلَا تَغُرَّكُمْ الْحَيَاةُ الدُّنْيَا إِنَّهَا
وَلَا يَغُرُّكُمْ بِاللَّهِ الْعُرُورُ ﴿٣٣﴾

31a. The signs for the patient endurer and the grateful one no doubt contain a hint to the suffering but grateful Muslims, and to their being made a great nation.

33a. *Gharūr*, which literally means *the great deceiver*, stands for *the devil*.

34 Surely Allāh is He with Whom is the knowledge of the Hour, and He sends down the rain, and He knows what is in the wombs. And no one knows what he will earn on the morrow. And no one knows in what land he will die. Surely Allāh is Knowing, Aware.^a

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنزِلُ
الْغَيْثَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ ط
وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا ط
وَمَا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ
تَمُوتُ ط إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ٤

34a. By *the Hour* is meant *the hour* of the fulfilment of prophecy and of the downfall of the opponents, as well as the Resurrection. The wonderful disclosure of knowledge relating to the future could not be made by a mere mortal, who cannot foretell the ordinary events of life happening before his eyes day and night. But there may also be a deeper reference to the transformation that was to be brought about in Arabia: the sending down of rain signifying the quickening of the spiritually dead; those that were in the wombs were ordained to be Muslims; the opponents of today would prove the supporters of tomorrow; and those who turned the Muslims out of their houses would themselves meet death, when away from their habitations, even as they did when they attacked Madinah to crush the Muslims.