*The Story of Luqman*

*Ramadan – Ashton Central Mosque – 24/07/13*

We have a new story which is mainly addressed to parents-children relationship.

***The Great Status Of Luqman In The Qur'an:***

There is an entire surah in the Qur'an named after his name, and this shows his noble and lofty status. The Ever-Glorious Qur'an is a miracle in itself and every letter it encompasses is a miracle too. So, this means that Luqman enjoys a great status for which Allah assigned an entire surah describing his wisdom.

**وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا لُقْمَانَ الْحِكْمَةَ**

“And indeed We already brought Luqman (the) wisdom.” (31:12)

Wisdom is, in fact, a precious thing, yet we miss it.

**يُؤْتِي الْحِكْمَةَ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا يَذَّكَّرُ إِلا أُولُو الألْبَابِ**

“He brings (the) Wisdom to whomever He decides; and whoever is brought (the) Wisdom, then he has been given abundant good." (2:269)

What is wisdom? Wisdom combines the mere words of truth, goodness, righteousness and guidance which enlightens and revives human life. Such words are said to a certain person on a proper occasion and in a proper setting. Wisdom is mentioned 20 times in the Qur'an. Allah starts the surah by describing Luqman's wisdom, as if his wisdom is a light derived from the greatness of Qur'an.

***How Did Luqman Attain Such Wisdom?***

*There Are Four Prerequisites For Attaining Wisdom:*

1. Contemplating of Allah's creation. I invite young people to contemplate of Allah's creation as it is not only limited to be an act of worship, but also it helps in broadening one's mind and way of thinking.

2. Knowledge and reading. Reading a book helps one to attain the wisdom and thought of another person.

3. Interpersonal rapport. Luqman was a slave, and then he became a worker, manager and finally a supreme judge. He used to travel overseas and mix with people. Here, I invite all parents-even if they are rich- to let their children work during the summer and do much effort. Moreover, I invite young people to work, learn, travel and mix with people. Indeed, whoever attains wisdom, will be the ever happiest individual in this world.

4. Communicate while intending reformation. One will never attain wisdom unless he does much effort in reformation. Coexistence and interaction with people allow a chance of understanding and consequently attain wisdom. That was what Luqman did and the reward was the wisdom he attained and his wisdom is immortalized in the Qur'an.

***Luqman's Wisdom And Life:***

It is worthy to mention that raising children has nothing to do with richness or poverty; it is rather affiliated with good manners and principals. Luqman started his life as simple Abyssinian carpenter; however, his wisdom set him free from slavery. How did this happen? Luqman realized that everything in this world can be good if it is rightly used, and it could be bad, if it is badly used. Once, his master ordered him to slaughter a sheep or a calf and bring him the best part of it. Luqman brought him the tongue and heart. Then he ordered him to bring the worst part of it. Luqman also brought the tongue and heart. Upon being asked why did he do so? He answered his master, "Everything in this world can be good or bad, according to the nature of things they are used for." Thereupon, his master declared him free.

In fact, I am sorry to say that most of people nowadays are interested in beatifying their outer appearance while neglecting their inner soul. The Prophet used to pray to Allah upon looking into the mirror and say, "O Allah beautify my manners the same way you beautified my shape". Luqman's wisdom states that one's tongue reflects what is instilled within one's heart.

After attaining freedom, Luqman travelled to Palestine where he met Dawud who was given wisdom and kingdom and was leading the nation,

**وَشَدَدْنَا مُلْكَهُ وَآتَيْنَاهُ الْحِكْمَةَ وَفَصْلَ الْخِطَابِ**

"And We upheld his kingdom and brought him (the) Wisdom and decisive speech (Literally: the verdict, the address) (38:20)

Dawud was succeeded by his son Solaiman who founded the strongest kingdom in the history of the children of Israel.

**قَالَ رَبِّ اغْفِرْ لِي وَهَبْ لِي مُلْكًا لا يَنْبَغِي لأحَدٍ مِنْ بَعْدِي إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْوَهَّابُ**

"and bestow on me a kingdom such as may not behoove anyone even after me." (38:35).

Dawud, whose craft was manufacturing shields, noticed that Luqman was distinguished, although he kept silent all the time. This is the essence of being wise.

***Luqman's Struggle And Essential Role As A Father:***

Dawud nominated Luqman a judge for the children of Israel, and then he was promoted to a supreme judge. Here, I invite young people to live with hope, work, do much effort, produce, worship Allah and strengthen your relationship with Allah. You have to read, learn, travel, move and never waste your time. Luqman transformed form a slave to a supreme judge. He got married and had children. Despite the entire missions that Luqman's was shouldering, he never forgot his role as a father. His son topped the list of his responsibilities, unlike many other fathers nowadays who even do not care to ask about their children and attributing the entire responsibility to the mother.

Luqman gives a perfect example of the social reformer who combines reforming his society together with his family. The Qur'an focuses on Luqman's wisdom with his son to instruct parents and especially fathers on how to treat one's children and how the relation between them should be. The Prophet mentioned that it is better for one to raise and educate his son than to do a voluntary act of worship.

***Message To Parents:***

1. The essence of the father's role.

2. Parents are role models to be followed [by children].

**يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لا تَفْعَلُونَ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لا تَفْعَلُونَ**

"O you who have believed, why do you say that which you do not perform? Greatly detested (is it) in the Reckoning of Allah, that you say what you do not perform (61:2-3).

The best way to preach your child is to be silent and a good example at the same time. This is what Luqman did with his son. It happened once that Ali Ibn Abu-Talib was sitting with 'Umar Ibn Al-khattab. They saw the booties are kept in the mosque as they are without being touched, even the small pieces of jewelry. Thereupon, 'Umar commented, "What a trusty people", 'Ali replied " O prince of the believer you refrained from ill manners, and so they did, and if you to bow, they will follow you." Here, 'Umar was a good example to be followed by his people. The same way parents should be with their children. It is enough for the father to wake up for al-fajr prayer and his son sees him performing prayer.

***Luqman's Preaching:***

Here, I ask all parents to read and reflect on the verses through which Luqman is preaching his son. I want all parents to learn how to raise their children, and how children should treat their parents.

**وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَانُ لابْنِهِ وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ يَا بُنَيَّ لا تُشْرِكْ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمٌ عَظِيمٌ (١٣)وَوَصَّيْنَا الإنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَى وَهْنٍ وَفِصَالُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ (١٤)وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلى أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبْهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (١٥)يَا بُنَيَّ إِنَّهَا إِنْ تَكُ مِثْقَالَ حَبَّةٍ مِنْ خَرْدَلٍ فَتَكُنْ فِي صَخْرَةٍ أَوْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ أَوْ فِي الأرْضِ يَأْتِ بِهَا اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ (١٦)يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَاصْبِرْ عَلَى مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الأمُورِ (١٧)وَلا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكَ لِلنَّاسِ وَلا تَمْشِ فِي الأرْضِ مَرَحًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ لا يُحِبُّ كُلَّ مُخْتَالٍ فَخُورٍ (١٨)وَاقْصِدْ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاغْضُضْ مِنْ صَوْتِكَ إِنَّ أَنْكَرَ الأصْوَاتِ لَصَوْتُ الْحَمِيرِ (١٩)**

"And as Luqman said to his son (while) he was admonishing him, “O my son, do not associate (others) with Allah. Surely associating (others with Allah) is indeed a monstrous injustice. And We have enjoined upon man concerning his parents- his mother conceived him in feebleness upon feebleness, and his weaning was in two seasons. Give thanks to Me and to your parents; to Me is the Destiny. And in case they (both) strive with you that you associate with Me that of which you have no knowledge, then do not obey them, and keep them company in the present (life) with beneficence. And closely follow the way of him who (turns) penitent to Me. Thereafter to Me will be your return; then I will (fully) inform you of whatever you were doing. “O my son, surely in case it be the weight of one grain of mustard-seed, and it be in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, Allah will come up with it; (i.e., bring it) surely Allah is Ever-Kind, Ever-Cognizant. O my son, keep up the prayer, and command beneficence, and forbid malfeasance, and (endure) patiently whatever may afflict you. Surely that is (an indication of true) resolve concerning His Commands. And do not turn your cheek away haughtily from mankind, and do not walk in the earth merrily. Surely Allah does not love everyone (who is) always conceited, (and) constantly boastful. And be moderate in your walk, and tone down your voice; surely the most repugnant of voices is indeed that of the asses.” (31:13-19).

After reading the above verses, we find that parents need to learn Luqman's wisdom with regard to advising with their children. It seems that the parents-children relationship should be that of friendship. I also draw parents' attention, not to start advising their children unless knowing whether they will listen or not. The perfect example of this friendship that existed between a father and his child is that of the Prophet and his daughter Fatimah. He used to kiss her forehead before leaving or entering Madinah.

***Priorities In Luqman's Commandments: There Are Priorities In Raising One's Children:***

1. Knowing and loving Allah. The first thing that one should instil into his son's heart is the love of Allah. Luqman instructed his son not to associate others with Allah. This was the theoretical side. He went on his preaching giving his son a practical example of loving Allah, “O my son, surely in case it be the weight of one grain of mustard-seed, and it be in a rock, or in the heavens, or in the earth, Allah will come up with it." While he was walking with his son, Luqman took a small grain of mustard and throw it away among rocks, and he told his son that Allah's knowledge encompasses it. Here, he teaches his son the names and attributes of Allah in a practical lesson. He is telling him that Allah is The Watcher, The All-Hearing and The All-Knowing.

2. Being dutiful to one's parents. It is the second commandment. The first thing Luqman taught to his son is to be dutiful to his mother. It is recommended for the father to talk nice about the mother in front of his child, and all parents should not talk about their personal problems in front of their children.

3. At the same time the Prophet commanded us to treat our parents in a gentle manner, even the look we give them. He mentioned that whoever gives his parents unpleasant look, Allah will dismiss him from his mercy. He also mentioned that whoever is undutiful to his parents, Allah will never talk or look to him on the Day of Judgmnet. We are ordered to treat our parents gently in this world.

4. Establish prayer. Parents must instruct their children to perform prayers.

5. Be positive person "enjoin what is good". It is an initiative to work on reforming the community and be tolerant.

6. Manners, "And do not turn your cheek away haughtily from mankind." Do not be haughty, but be modest towards the poor.

7. Live a purpose-driven life.

8. Learn the etiquette of talking and moving. "And be moderate in your walk, and tone down your voice; surely the most repugnant of voices is indeed that of the asses.”

***A Word To Parents:***

The above are Luqman's commandments to his son. However, there is a final word I want to address to all parents:

· Talk to your child using affectionate words. In all his statements addressed to his son, Luqman used the word, "O my son". Children are in need of love especially girls. The word, "O my son" implies impulses and emotions that touches the heart of the child. The Prophet used to use such beautiful tender words in his speech or preaching. Once, he advised Mu'adh Ibn-Jabal; after he took his hand and walked with him, the Prophet said to him, "I love you. Do not ever abandon saying after each prayer: O Allah grant me support to remember, thank and worship you perfectly." Here the Prophet used the language of emotions, he first hold his hand and told him that he loves him, then gave him advice.