

Sūrah 31: Luqmān

Period of Revelation

A perusal of the subject matter shows that it was sent down in the period when persecution to suppress and thwart the invitation to Islām had begun and every sort of machination had started being employed for the purpose. This is borne out by v.14 in which the young reverts to Islām have been told that although the rights of the parents are the uppermost after God they should not listen to them if they prevented them from accepting Islām or compelled them to revert to the creed of Shirk (polytheism). The same thing has been said in Sūrah al-Ankabut which indicates that both these Sūrahs were sent down in the same period. A study of the style and subject matter of the two Sūrahs on the whole however shows that Sūrah Luqman was sent down earlier for one does not see any sign of the antagonism in its background, though contrary to this while studying Sūrah Al-Ankabut one can clearly feel that the Muslims were being severely persecuted during the period of its revelation.

Theme and Subject Matter

In this Sūrah the people have been made to understand the meaninglessness and absurdity of Shirk (polytheism) and the truth and reasonableness of Tawhid (Oneness of God). They have been invited to give up blind imitation of their forefathers, consider with a cool mind the teachings which the Prophet Muhammad is presenting from the Lord of the worlds and see with open eyes the manifest Signs found in the universe around them and in their own selves which bear evidence to its truth.

In this connection it has also been pointed out that this is not a new teaching which might have been presented in the world or in the land of Arabia for the first time and with which the people might be unfamiliar. The learned and wise people of the past ages said and taught the same thing which Muhammad is teaching today. It is as if to say, 'O people: In your own country there has lived a wise man named Luqmān whose wisdom has been well known among you, whose proverbs and wise sayings are cited in your daily conversation and who is often quoted by your poets and orators. Now you should see for yourselves what creed and what morals he used to teach.'

Sūrah 31: Luqmān¹⁰⁸²

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate,
the Most Merciful

1. Alif, Lām, Meem.¹⁰⁸³
2. These are verses of the wise¹⁰⁸⁴ Book,
3. As guidance and mercy for the doers of good
4. Who establish prayer and give zakāh, and they, of the Hereafter, are certain [in faith].
5. Those are on [right] guidance from their Lord, and it is those who are the successful.
6. And of the people is he who buys the amusement of speech¹⁰⁸⁵ to mislead [others] from the way of God without knowledge and who takes it [i.e., His way] in ridicule. Those will have a humiliating punishment.
7. And when our verses are recited to him, he turns away arrogantly as if he had not heard them, as if there was in his ears deafness. So give him tidings of a painful punishment.
8. Indeed, those who believe and do righteous deeds - for them are the Gardens of Pleasure,
9. Wherein they abide eternally; [it is] the promise of God [which is] truth. And He is the Exalted in Might, the Wise.
10. He created the heavens without pillars that you see and has cast into the earth firmly set mountains, lest it should shift with you, and dispersed therein from every creature. And We sent down rain from the sky and made grow therein [plants] of every noble kind.
11. This is the creation of God. So show Me what those other than Him have created. Rather, the wrongdoers are in clear error.
12. And We had certainly given Luqmān wisdom [and said], “Be grateful to God.” And whoever is grateful is grateful for [the benefit of] himself. And whoever denies [His favor] - then indeed, God is Free of need and Praiseworthy.
13. And [mention, O Muhammad], when Luqmān said to his son while he was instructing him, “O my son, do not associate [anything] with God. Indeed, association [with Him] is great injustice.”
14. And We have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination.
15. But if they endeavor to make you associate with Me that of which you have

¹⁰⁸² *Luqmān*: Luqmān, the Wise, whose learning and wisdom was known among pre-Islāmic Arabs. He was said to have been an Abyssinian or Nubian slave who lived in the area of Madyan and thus knew Arabic.

¹⁰⁸³ See footnote to 2:1.

¹⁰⁸⁴ See footnote to 10:1.

¹⁰⁸⁵ i.e., that which has no benefit. Described by different *sabābah* as *shirk* (association with God), misleading stories, frivolous songs, or music but includes all which distracts or diverts one from the Qur’ān and remembrance of God.

- no knowledge,¹⁰⁸⁶ do not obey them but accompany them in [this] world with appropriate kindness and follow the way of those who turn back to Me [in repentance]. Then to Me will be your return, and I will inform you about what you used to do.
16. [And Luqmān said], “O my son, indeed if it [i.e., wrong] should be the weight of a mustard seed and should be within a rock or [anywhere] in the heavens or in the earth, God will bring it forth. Indeed, God is Subtle and Acquainted.
17. O my son, establish prayer, enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and be patient over what befalls you. Indeed, [all] that is of the matters [requiring] determination.¹⁰⁸⁷
18. And do not turn your cheek [in contempt] toward people¹⁰⁸⁸ and do not walk through the earth exultantly. Indeed, God does not like everyone self-deluded and boastful.
19. And be moderate in your pace and lower your voice; indeed, the most disagreeable of sounds is the voice of donkeys.”
20. Do you not see that God has made subject to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth and amply bestowed upon you His favors, [both] apparent and unapparent? But of the people is he who disputes about God without knowledge or guidance or an enlightening Book [from Him].
21. And when it is said to them, “Follow what God has revealed,” they say, “Ra-
- ther, we will follow that upon which we found our fathers.” Even if Satan was inviting them to the punishment of the Blaze?
22. And whoever submits his face [i.e., self] to God while he is a doer of good - then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold. And to God will be the outcome of [all] matters.
23. And whoever has disbelieved - let not his disbelief grieve you. To Us is their return, and We will inform them of what they did. Indeed, God is Knowing of that within the breasts.
24. We grant them enjoyment for a little; then We will force them to a massive punishment.
25. And if you asked them, “Who created the heavens and earth?” they would surely say, “God.” Say, “[All] praise is [due] to God”; but most of them do not know.
26. To God belongs whatever is in the heavens and earth. Indeed, God is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy.
27. And if whatever trees upon the earth were pens and the sea [was ink], replenished thereafter by seven [more] seas, the words¹⁰⁸⁹ of God would not be exhausted. Indeed, God is Exalted in Might and Wise.
28. Your creation and your resurrection will not be but as that of a single soul.¹⁰⁹⁰ Indeed, God is Hearing and Seeing.

¹⁰⁸⁶ See footnote to 29:8.

¹⁰⁸⁷ For the reason that they are enjoined by God.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Rather, respect them by directing your face and attention to them.

¹⁰⁸⁹ See footnote to 18:109.

¹⁰⁹⁰ The re-creation and resurrection of one or of all is accomplished with equal ease by God.

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29. Do you not see [i.e., know] that God causes the night to enter the day and causes the day to enter the night and has subjected the sun and the moon, each running [its course] for a specified term, and that God, with whatever you do, is Acquainted?
30. That is because God is the Truth, and that what they call upon other than Him is falsehood, and because God is the Most High, the Grand.
31. Do you not see that ships sail through the sea by the favor of God that He may show you of His signs? Indeed in that are signs for everyone patient and grateful.
32. And when waves come over them like canopies, they supplicate God, sincere to Him in religion [i.e., faith]. But when He delivers them to the land, there are [some] of them who are moderate [in faith]. And none rejects Our signs except everyone treacherous and ungrateful.
33. O mankind, fear your Lord and fear a Day when no father will avail his son, nor will a son avail his father at all. Indeed, the promise of God is truth, so let not the worldly life delude you and be not deceived about God by the Deceiver [i.e., Satan].
34. Indeed, God [alone] has knowledge of the Hour and sends down the rain and knows what is in the wombs.¹⁰⁹¹ And no soul perceives what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul perceives in what land it will die. Indeed, God is Knowing and Acquainted.

¹⁰⁹¹ i.e., every aspect of the fetus' present and future existence.