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Whose pleasure shall we seek?

Many, many years ago there lived a man called Luqman. He was not a Prophet. But he was very wise. He was an African who was caught as a slave and sold in another country.

Luqman was so wise and respected that a Surah in the Qur'an also is called by his name (Chapter 31). He gave good advice to his children. His advice is equally good for all the children of the world even today.

Once Luqman said to his son, “Oh son! Do not tie your heart in seeking the pleasure of people. You are not likely to succeed. Do not pay attention to what people say. Instead tell yourself always to seek the pleasure of God.”

Luqman wanted this lesson to be always remembered. Never to be forgotten. He thought of a way. He then told his son to ride a donkey. The son obeyed. The father followed behind on foot. They travelled in this way for some distance. After some distance they came across a group of people. Seeing the son on the donkey, one of them said, “What an impolite and bad boy. The old father is walking on foot. The young son is comfortably riding on the donkey. This is no manner to show respect to one's father”.

Father and son heard this. The son came down from the donkey. Luqman rode on the animal. After sometime they came across another group of people. On seeing the father riding the donkey, the elder of the group said, “Oh you old man! This is not the way to bring up a son. You make him walk in the hot sun, while you sit comfortably on the donkey.”

Luqman paid attention to what the people said. He came down from the donkey. Both father and son walked on foot. The donkey walked in front. They went a little further. People seeing them, said, “How foolish you are? You walk behind a donkey. Why don't you ride it?”

Luqman and his son once again accepted what the people said. They both rode the donkey and went further. They came across a river. There was a bridge to be crossed. Some people were sitting there. They saw Luqman and his son riding the donkey. One of them said, “It is very unkind and cruel of you two to ride on the poor donkey. The little animal can hardly take all your burden.”

So taking this advice Luqman and his son dismounted from the donkey. They travelled a little distance further. Looking very lovingly Luqman said to his son, “You have heard and seen what the people said. It must have assured you, by now, that whatever you do or whichever way you move, one is not able to please the people of the world.” He pointed at the flowing river and added,

“A person can build a wall across the river. It will stop the flow of the water. But it is not possible to shut the mouth of the people from criticism.”

Very clearly, similar is the case in our world today. The tongue has no bone. It can speak even without thought. There are as many opinions as there are people in the world. It is very bad to find fault with the other person. Especially when he is doing something good.

A person can feel very hurt when he listens to all the tongues that talk loose. To avoid getting hurt by loose talk, a person can train himself. He can discipline himself to think. By thinking he can know what is wrong and void. When a person is sure that what he is doing will please his Master, the Almighty Allah, then he must never worry what others speak.

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