

homily for the Second Sunday of Lent and reproduced above.³² This set of admonitions is followed in the manuscript by *The Testament of Luqmān to his Son before His Death* (*Waṣīyyat Luqmān al-ḥakīm qabla waḥātīhi*), and here we find the saying about death and poverty, with wording practically identical to that found in the homily for the Third Sunday of Lent.³³ It is not far-fetched to think that the preacher of the “Shenoutian” homilies in *Paris, B.N. ar. 4761* was familiar with a work such as that preserved in *Paris, B.N. ar. 309*.

Muslims, too, were familiar with Luqmān material of the sort preserved in *Paris, B.N. ar. 309*, and edifying maxims of Luqmān may be found in a wide range of sources. To illustrate, I shall conclude this paper with three instances of the saying about the rooster.

(1) The lexicon *Thimār al-qulūb* (*Fruit of the Hearts*) by ‘Abd al-Malik ibn Muḥammad al-Tha‘ālibī (961-1038) devotes an entry to “the wisdom of Luqmān,”³⁴ identified as an Abyssinian slave of an Israelite at the time of King David. Al-Tha‘ālibī gives a sampling of Luqmān’s “most beautiful exhortations to his son,” beginning with:

O my son, sell this world for the sake of the hereafter,
and you will gain them both!³⁵
O my son, beware of an evil companion, for he is like a sword:
its appearance is beautiful, but its trace is ugly!
O my son, don’t let the ant be more clever than you,
for it gathers during the summer [in preparation] for the winter!

³² Leroy, “Vie, Préceptes et testament de Lokman,” 230, lines 1-3 (Arabic text); 244 (French translation).

³³ Ibid., 238, lines 2-4 (Arabic text); 252 (French translation).

³⁴ Abū Maṣṣūr ‘Abd al-Malik Muḥammad ibn Ismā‘īl al-Tha‘ālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb fī l-muḍāf wa-l-mansūb*, ed. Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ (Damascus: Dār al-Bashā‘ir, 1994), I:228-30.

³⁵ We note that this is a precise complement to the saying found in *Paris, B.N. ar. 309*: “Whoever sells the hereafter for the sake of this world will lose them both!”

O my son, don't let the rooster be more clever than you,
for it cries out before daybreak while you are sleeping! ...³⁶

Al-Tha'ālibī's sampling of Luqmān sayings is just that, a sampling, and so it is difficult to interpret the saying about the rooster. Should it be taken with the saying about the ant, and interpreted simply as an exhortation to early rising and hard work? Or should it be taken with the exhortation to "sell this world for the sake of the hereafter," in which case it could be interpreted as an exhortation to wake from spiritual slumber, and to devote oneself to ascetic endeavor?

(2) There is no question about the force of the saying about the rooster in a classic of the Islamic spiritual tradition, *Ayyuhā l-walad (Letter to a Disciple)* by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (1058-1111). The saying appears in the same form as in *Thimār al-qulūb*, but in the context of an exhortation to keep vigil by night and to pray:

[Sufyān al-Thawrī] said:

In the first part of the night, a Caller from beneath the Throne calls out:

"Let the worshippers [*al-ʿābidūn*] arise!"

And they arise and pray as God wills.

At midnight, the Caller calls out:

"Let the pious [*al-qānitūn*] arise!"

And they arise and pray until the latter part of the night.

And at the latter part of the night, the Caller calls out:

"Let those who seek forgiveness [*al-mustaghfirūn*] arise!"

And they arise and seek forgiveness.

And when dawn breaks, the Caller calls out:

³⁶ Ibid., 230. I was alerted to the presence of this material in *Thimār al-qulūb* by ʿAbd Allāh Kannūn al-Ḥasanī, *Luqmān al-ḥakīm*, pp. 74-75.

“Let the heedless [*al-ghāfilūn*] arise!”

And they arise from their beds

as the dead shall be raised from their graves.

O my child ...

It is narrated in *The Counsels of Luqmān the Wise to His Son* that he said:

O my son, don't let the rooster be cleverer than you,
for it cries out before daybreak while you are sleeping!

The one who said this in verse did well:

In the dark of night, a dove called out
from a branch, after midnight – while I was sleeping.

By the House of God, I am a liar! Where I truly a Lover,
doves would not have outdone me in weeping.

I claim to be in love, fervently longing
for my Lord – but I weep not, while the beasts are weeping.³⁷

(3) A more recent example comes from the super commentary of Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣāwī (d. 1825/6) on the well-known *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*.³⁸ In his comment on *Sūrat Luqmān*, al-Ṣāwī reproduces a number sayings attributed to Luqmān, beginning as follows:

O my son, take the fear of the Lord as commerce,
and gain will come to you without merchandise!

O my son, attend funerals,
but do not attend weddings;
for funerals will remind you of the hereafter,

³⁷ Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Ayyuhā l-walad*, ed. ‘Abd Allāh Aḥmad Abū Zīnah (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1975), 43-46. [See now the bilingual edition: al-Ghazali, *Letter to a Disciple = Ayyuha l-walad*, trans. Tobias Mayer (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 2005).]

³⁸ Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣāwī, *Hāshiyat al-Ṣāwī ‘alā Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*, 4 parts (Mumbai: Molvi Mohammad bin Gulamrasul Surtis Sons, 1981). Again, I was directed to this reference by ‘Abd Allāh Kannūn al-Ḥasanī, *Luqmān al-ḥakīm*, pp. 70-73.

while weddings will arouse your desire for this world!
O my son, do not be weaker than this rooster
who cries out before daybreak while you are sleeping in your bed!
O my son, do not put off repentance,
for truly death comes suddenly! ...³⁹

Although we once again simply have a sampling of the sayings of Luqmān, those reproduced here have a consistent message: live this life in watchfulness, repentance and the fear of the Lord, in preparation for Judgment and the world to come. With the saying, “Do not put off repentance, for truly death comes suddenly,” we have returned to the major theme of the Lenten homilies of *Paris, B.N. ar. 4761*.

Whether in the Christian or the Islamic texts sampled here, Luqmān’s saying about the rooster is used to exhort believers to prayer and to rouse them from heedlessness and negligence. Reading the Christian and the Islamic texts together, we become aware of realms of common wisdom and common piety shared by Christians and Muslims in the medieval Middle East. Luqmān the Wise was a teacher for them all.

³⁹ *Hāshiyat al-Şāwī*, III:239.