

Mr Mohamed Ali Luqman, the lawyer - An introduction (Part 1)

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The late Mohammed Ali Luqman was borne in Aden on November 6th, 1898 and died on March 24th, 1966 while on a pilgrimage in Mecca where he was buried.

This is the first of a number of articles that I hope I shall write on the late Mohamed Ali Luqman, the lawyer.

I have always been fascinated by the achievements and character traits of the late Mr Luqman.

He was a unique man. Many authors wrote books about him. I am hardly going to add much to what was said about him. In a way I am not writing this for the purpose of praising him, he hardly needs this from me. It is because of being a celebrity and a self-made man, as an Adeni, with a wide range of accomplishment that had almost certainly and directly affected my life in a positive way.

Aden produced a number of home-grown educated achievers. I am certain that even they would acknowledge that Mr Mohamed Ali Luqman was ahead of all them. This was partly due to the variety and wide range of his achievements – a few of which I shall discuss later in this article and future ones. In my personal view, Aden was his obsession - the place and people. In other words his aspirations were not primarily academically driven but duty-driven.

It was as if he was a self-guided compass driven by his focus on Aden. I also believe that he knew – with his innate intelligence and inherent statesmanship that he had a historical, and fateful role to play in the history of Aden. Thus he was determined to play this role well, and by God, he did that with distinction.

Let me highlight some interesting aspects on his fascinating and unique personality and hopefully expand on this in future articles.

1. He was a **polymath**. According to Merriam Webster Dictionary a polymath is a “person of encyclopaedic learning” and according to the Free Online Dictionary a polymath is a “a person of great and varied learning”. In a future article, I shall prove and show what a marvellously true polymath Luqman was.

Interestingly enough, some dictionaries, however use the term "polymath" as synonym with "renaissance man" which is interesting as this description also fits Mr Luqman to a teeth as I shall explain later.

2. **Social reformer.** He was also known as a man of enlightenment for a good reason. I would guess that his writings and practical philosophy combined both "enlightenment" and "renaissance" philosophies. He was not merely an "enlightenment explainer" and 'advocate"; he was an "enlightenment maker" and there is a huge difference between the two. The former tells us why enlightenment is good; the latter leads and implements it on the ground.

Enlightenment was originally a term used to describe social, cultural and scientific changes that occurred in Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries which, it is believed culminated in the French revolution. It was championed by the French philosopher Voltaire, the British philosopher David Hume and the German philosopher Kant. The latter defined enlightenment as "humankind's release from its self-incurred immaturity; "immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another."

I only mention this simply because Mr Luqman's method of spreading enlightenment in Aden society was precisely through imploring the citizenry to use their minds and through his realization that enlightenment was only possible through education. I should mention that Western enlightenment thoughts encompassed abandonment of religious thought. Our Mr Luqman, on the other hand enshrined proper teachings of Islam as a springboard to enlightenment. It might surprise you to know that Mr Luqman often preached the pure teachings of Islam from the pulpits of Mosques in Crater, Tawahi and Sheikh Othman.

In a future articles I shall give examples of his well-defined and well-articulated enlightened philosophy.

3. **Persuasive orator and writer.** In a future article, I shall, hopefully, illustrate this aspect of his abilities. His narrative was amazingly captivating and his ability of choosing the right word in the right place was astonishing. Being a lawyer by training, he would not leave a case he was advocating, without utilizing all possible logical and convincing arguments to support it, as well as going over all

potential opposing arguments in order to refute and abolish them in a devastatingly powerful argument.

4. **Lover of the Arabic language and Arabic heritage.** In fact this aspect of his character underlined and defined much of his politics. I will illustrate this in a future article. He believed that education in general and the enrichment of the Arabic language was central in his enlightenment process. He established the first Arabic newspaper in the Arabian Peninsula and indicated in the very first issue of the newspaper that he wished it to be the mouthpiece and media of communication for all young people of the Arabian Peninsula, including its writers and intellectuals.

He also postulated that active and vibrant newspapers (being the only viable information medium in his time) were the driving tools for national, cultural, literary and indeed the surge in economic development and growth.