INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT Luqmān, 31.

The argument of the Final End of Things is here continued from another point of view. What is Wisdom? Where shall she be found? Will she solve the mysteries of Time and Nature, and that world higher than physical Nature, which brings us nearer to Allah? "Yes," is the answer; "if, as in the advice of Luqmān the Wise, human wisdom looks to Allah in true worship, ennobles every act of life with true kindness, but avoids the false indulgence that infringes the divine law,—and in short follows the golden mean of virtue." And this is indicated by every Sign in nature.

The chronology of this Sūra has no significance. In the main, it belongs to the late Makkan period.

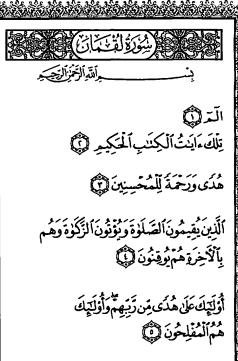
Summary,—The earnest seekers after righteousness receive guidance, unlike the seekers after vanity, who perish: all Creation bears witness to this: Wisdom, as expounded by Luqmān the Wise, is true service to Allah, and consists in moderation (xxxi. 1-19)

True Wisdom is firm and enduring, and discerns Allah's Law in the working of His Creation: it looks to the Final End of Things, whose mystery is only known to Allah (xxxi. 20-34).

Luqmān (the Wise).

In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful.

- 1. A. L. M. 3579
- 2. These are Verses
 Of the Wise Book,-3580
- 3. A Guide and a Mercy
 To the Doers of Good,-3581
- Those who establish regular Prayer, And give zakat
 And have sure faith in
 The Hereafter. 3582
- 5. These are on (true) guidance³⁵⁸³
 From their Lord; and these
 Are the ones who will prosper.



3579. See n. 25 to ii. 1 and Introduction to S. xxx.

3580. This Sūra relates to Wisdom, and the Qur-ān is appropriately called the Wise Book, or the Book of Wisdom. In verse 12 below there is a reference to Luqmān the Wise. "Wise" in this sense (Ḥakīm) means not only a man versed in knowledge human and divine, but one carrying out in practical conduct ('amal) the right course in life to the utmost of his power. His knowledge is correct and practical, but not necessarily complete: for no man is perfect. Such an ideal involves the conception of a man of heroic action as well as of deep and workman-like knowledge of nature and human nature,—not merely dreams or speculation. That ideal was fulfilled in a most remarkable degree in the holy Prophet, and in the sacred Book which was revealed through him. "The Wise Book" (Kitāb-ul-hakīm) is one of the titles of the Qur-ān.

3581. A guide to all, and, to those who accept its guidance, a source of mercy as leading them to Salvation.

3582. The righteous are distinguished here by three marks, which are summed up in the phrase "doers of good", viz.: (1) they yearn towards Allah in duty, love, and prayer, (2) they love and serve their fellow-men in charity, (3) they win peace and rest for themselves in the assured hope of the Future.

3583. They get these blessings because they submit their will to Allah's Will and receive His guidance. They will do well in this life (from the highest standpoint) and they will reach their true Goal in the Future.

- 6. But there are, among men, Those who purchase idle tales,³⁵⁸⁴ Without knowledge (or meaning), To mislead (men) from the Path Of Allah and throw ridicule (On the Path): for such There will be a humiliating Chastisement.
- 7. When Our Signs are rehearsed To such a one, he turns³⁵⁸⁵ Away in arrogance, as if He heard them not, as if There were deafness in both His ears: announce to him A grievous Chastisement.
- For those who believe
 And work righteous deeds,
 There will be Gardens
 Of Bliss,
- To dwell therein. The promise
 Of Allah is true: and He
 Is Exalted in power, 3586 Wise.
- He created the heavens
 Without any pillars that ye³⁵⁸⁷

وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يَشْتَرِى لَهْوَ ٱلْحَدِيثِ لِيُضِلَّ عَن سَيِيلِ ٱللَّهِ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمِ وَيَتَّخِذَهَا هُرُوَّا أُوْلَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابُّ مُّهِينٌ ﴿

ۅٙٳۮ۬ٲڹ۫ؾۘڵؽۘ؏ڷؿۅۦؘٳؽڶؙٮؙؗٵۅڶۜؽؙؗؗڡؙۛۺؾؘڝٞؠؚؚٵ ڬٲۘڹڷؘڎؽۺ۫ؠۼۿٳػٲڹٞ؋ۣٲۛڎؙڹؿٙۅۉڨٞڒؖڣۺؚۨۧڒۛۄؙ ؠٟۼۮؘٳٮ۪ٲڸۑٮڔ۞

إِنَّالَّذِينَ اَمَنُواْ وَعَمِلُواْ الصَّلِحَنتِ لَمُ الصَّلِحَنتِ لَمُمْ جَنَّنتُ النَّعِيمِ ﴿

خَلِدِينَ فِيهَ أَوْعَدَا للَّهِ حَقًّا وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ ٱلْحَكِيمُ ۞

خَكَقَ ٱلسَّنَوَتِ بِغَيْرِعَهُ دِ تَرَوْنَهَ أُوْ ٱلْقَىٰ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ

3584. Life is taken seriously by men who realise the issues that hang upon it. But there are men of a frivolous turn of mind who prefer idle tales to true Realities and they are justly rebuked here. In the time of the holy Prophet there was a pagan Nadhr ibn al-Hārith who preferred Persian romances to the Message of Allah, and turned away ignorant men from the preaching of Allah's Word.

3585. Such men behave as if they had heard nothing of serious import, or laugh at serious teaching. The loss will be their own. They will miss the higher things of life and be left out of Allah's blessings. Ignorance and arrogance are in most cases the causes of their fall.

3586. He is Exalted in power, and can carry out His Will, and nothing can stop the carrying out of His promise. He is also infinitely Wise: His promise is therefore full of meaning: it is not merely without purpose: it has a place in the Universal Plan.

3587. Cf. xiii. 2 and n. 1800.

Can see; He set
On the earth mountains³⁵⁸⁸
Standing firm, lest it
Should shake with you;
And He scattered through it
Beasts of all kinds.³⁵⁸⁹
We send down rain³⁵⁹⁰
From the sky, and produce
On the earth every kind
Of noble creature, in pairs.³⁵⁹¹

11. Such is the Creation of Allah:
Now show Me³⁵⁹² what is there
That others besides Him
Have created: nay, but
The Transgressors are
In manifest error.

رَوَسِىَ أَن تَمِيدَ بِكُمْ وَبَثَّ فِيهَامِن كُلِّ دَاَبَةٍ وَأَنزَلْنَا مِنَ ٱلسَّمَاءَ مَاءَ فَأَنْلِنْنَا فِيهَا مِنڪُلِّ ذَفْج كَرِيمٍ ﴿

هَنذَاخَلْقُ ٱللَّهِ فَأَرُّونِ مَاذَا خَلَقَ ٱلَّذِينَ مِن دُونِهِ عِنْ بَكِ ٱلظَّلِيلُمُونَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿ اللَّا

3588. Cf. xvi. 15 and n. 2038.

3589. Cf. ii. 164 and n. 166.

3590. Note the change of the pronoun at this stage in the verse. Before this, Allah was spoken of in the third person, "He", and the acts of Creation referred to were acts that in the main were completed when the universe as we see it came into being, though its slow age-long evolution continues. After this, Allah speaks in the first person "We"—the plural of honour, as explained before (see n. 56 to ii. 38); and the processes spoken of are those that go on continually before us, as in the case of rain and the growth of the vegetable kingdom. In some way the creation of the heavens and the earth and animal life on it may be considered impersonal to man, while the processes of rain and vegetation may be considered in special personal relationship to him.

3591. I think that sex life in plants is referred to, as in xiii. 3, where see n. 1804, though the pairs here may refer to animals also. "Noble" (karīm) may refer to the more beneficent plants and trees (and animals), which Allah has created for man's use.

3592. The transition from "We" in the last verse to "Me" in this verse means a still more personal relation to Allah: (see n. 56 to ii. 38): as we are now asked about the true worship of Allah, as against the false worship of others besides Allah.

SECTION 2.

- 12. We bestowed (in the past)
 Wisdom on Luqmān: 3593
 "Show (thy) gratitude to Allah."
 Any who is (so) grateful
 Does so to the profit
 Of his own soul: but if
 Any is ungrateful, verily 3594
 Allah is free of all wants,
 Worthy of all praise.
- 13. Behold, Luqmān said³⁵⁹⁵
 To his son admonishing him
 "O my son!
 Join not in worship
 (Others) with Allah: for
 False worship is indeed
 The highest wrong-doing."
- 14. And We have enjoined on man (To be good) to his parents:

وَلَقَدْءَ الْيَنَا لُقَمْنَ الْفِحْمَةَ أَنِ اَشْكُرْ لِلَّهِ وَمَن يَشْكُرْ فَإِنَّمَا يَشْكُرُ لِنَفْسِهِ مُّ وَمَن كَفَرَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَنِيُّ حَمِيكُ اللَّ

وَإِذْ قَالَ لُقْمَنُ لِابْنِهِ ، وَهُوَ يَعِظُهُ ، يَنُهُ نَى لَانُشْرِكَ بِاللَّهِ إِنَّ الشِّرْكَ لَظُلْمُ عَظِيمٌ ﴿ ﴿ اللَّهِ الْمُ

وَوَصَّيْنَا ٱلْإِنسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْ مُ أُمِّهُ

3593. The sage Luqman, after whom this Sura is called, belongs to Arab tradition. Very little is known of his life. He is usually associated with a long life, and his title is *Mu'ammar* (the long-lived). He is referred by some to the age of the 'Ād people, for whom see n. 1040 to vii. 65. He is the type of perfect wisdom. It is said that he belonged to a humble station in life, being a slave or a carpenter, and that he refused worldly power and a kingdom. Many instructive apologues are credited to him, similar to Æsop'e Fables in Greek tradition. The identification of Luqman and Æsop has no historical foundation, though it is true that the traditions about them have influenced each other.

3594. Cf. xiv. 8. The basis of the moral Law is man's own good, and not any benefit to Allah, for Allah is above all needs, and "worthy of all praise"; i.e., even in praising Him, we do not advance His glory. When we obey His Will, we bring our position into conformity with our own nature as made by Him.

3595. Luqmān is held up as a pattern of wisdom, because he realised the best in a wise life in this world, as based upon the highest Hope in the inner life. To him, as in Islam, true human wisdom is also divine wisdom: the two cannot be separated. The beginning of all wisdom, therefore, is conformity with the Will of Allah (xxxi. 12). That means that we must understand our relations to Him and worship Him aright (xxxi. 13). Then we must be good to mankind, beginning with our own parents (xxxi. 14). For the two duties are not diverse, but one. Where they appear to conflict, there is something wrong with the human will (see n. 3597).

In travail upon travail
Did his mother bear him.
And in years twain³⁵⁹⁶
Was his weaning: (hear
The command), "Show gratitude
To Me and to thy parents:
To Me is (thy final) Goal.

15. "But if they strive³⁵⁹⁷
To make thee join
In worship with Me
Things of which thou hast
No knowledge, obey them not;
Yet bear them company
In this life with justice
(And consideration), and follow
The way of those who
Turn to Me:³⁵⁹⁸
In the End the return
Of you all is to Me,

وَهْنَاعَكَ وَهْنِ وَفِصَالُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ أَنِ أَشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَ لِدَيْكَ إِلَى ٱلْمَصِيرُ ﴿ اللَّهِ اللَّهِ اللَّهِ اللَّهِ اللَّهِ اللَّهِ اللَّهِ ا

وَإِن جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَىٰ أَن تُشْرِكَ بِي مَالِيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمُ فَلَا تُطِعْهُ مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمُ فَلَا تُطِعْهُ مَا وَصَاحِبْهُ مَا فِ الدُّنْ اَمَعُرُوفَاً وَاتَّ بِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَى ثُمْرَ إِلَى مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنْبِئُ كُمُ مِيمَا كُنتُ مُ يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿ اللَّهِ اللَّهِ اللَّهِ اللَّهِ اللَّهِ اللَّهِ اللَّهِ اللَّهِ

3596. The set of milk teeth in a human child is completed at the age of two years, which is therefore the natural extreme limit for breast-feeding. In our artificial life the duration is much less.

3597. Where the duty to man conflicts with the duty to Allah, it means that there is something wrong with the human will, and we should obey Allah rather than man. But even here, it does not mean that we should be arrogant or insolent. To parents and those in authority, we must be kind, considerate, and courteous, even where they command things which we should not do and therefore disobedience becomes our highest duty.

The worship of things other than Allah is the worship of false things, things which are alien to our true knowledge, things that go against our own pure nature as created by Allah.

3598. In any apparent conflict of duties our standard should be Allah's Will, as declared to us by His command. That is the way of those who love Allah: and their motive in disobedience to parents or human authority where disobedience is necessary by Allah's Law is not self willed rebellion or defiance, but love of Allah, which means the true love of man in the highest sense of the word. And the reason we should give is: "Both you and I have to return to Allah; therefore not only must I follow Allah's Will, but you must command nothing against Allah's Will."

And I will tell you All that ye did. 3599

- 16. "O my son!" (said Luqmān), 3600

 "If there be (but) the weight
 Of a mustard-seed and
 It were (hidden) in a rock, 3601
 Or (anywhere) in the heavens or
 On earth, Allah will bring it
 Forth: for Allah is subtle and
 Aware. 3602
- 17. "O my son! establish
 Regular prayer, enjoin what is
 Just, and forbid what is wrong:
 And bear with patient constancy
 Whate'er betide thee; for this
 Is firmness (of purpose)
 In (the conduct of) affairs.
- 18. "And swell not thy cheek³⁶⁰³ (For pride) at men.

يَنُهُنَّ إِنَّهَ آإِن تَكُ مِثْقَ الْحَبَّةِ مِِنْ خَرْدَلِ فَتَكُن فِصَخْرَةٍ أَوْفِ ٱلسَّمَوَتِ أَوْفِي ٱلْأَرْضِ يَأْتِ جَهَا اللَّهُ أَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَطِيفُ خَبِيرٌ ﴿ اللَّهِ اللَّهَ أَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَطِيفُ خَبِيرٌ ﴿ اللَّهِ

> يَنْبُنَى َأَقِدِ ٱلصَّكَوْةَ وَأَمُّرُ بِٱلْمَعْرُوفِ وَٱنْهَ عَنِ ٱلْمُنْكَرِ وَٱصْبِرْعَلَىٰ مَاۤ أَصَابَكَ ۖ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْعَزْمِ ٱلْاَّمُورِ ﴿ ﴾

وَلَا تُصَعِّرْ خَدَّكُ لِلنَّاسِ وَلَا نَمْشِ فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ

3599. These conflicts may appear to us strange and puzzling in this life. But in Allah's Presence we shall see their real meaning and significance. It may be that that was one way in which our true mettle could be tested: for it is not easy to disobey and love man at the same time.

3600. Verses 14-15 are not the direct speech of Luqmān but flow by way of commentary on his teaching. He was speaking as a father to his son, and he could not very well urge respect for himself and draw the son's attention to the limitations of filial obedience. These verses may be supposed to be general directions flowing from Luqmān's teaching to men, and not directed to his son; though in either case, as Luqmān got wisdom from Allah, it is divine principles that are enunciated.

3601. The mustard-seed is proverbially a small, minute thing, that people may ordinarily pass by. Not so Allah. Further emphasis is laid by supposing the mustard-seed to be hidden beneath a rock or in the cleft of a rock, or to be lost in the spacious expanse of the earth or of the heavens. To Allah everything is known, and He will bring it forth, i.e., take account of it.

3602. For Latif as a title applied to Allah, see n. 2844 to xxii. 63.

3603. The word "cheeck" in English, too, means arrogance or effrontery, with a slightly different shade added, viz.: effrontery from one in an inferior position to one in a superior position. The Arabic usage is wider, and includes smug self-satisfaction and a sense of lofty superiority.

Nor walk in insolence Through the earth: For Allah loveth not Any arrogant boaster.

19. "And be moderate
In thy pace, and lower³⁶⁰⁴
Thy voice; for the harshest
Of sounds without doubt
Is the braying of the ass."

SECTION 3.

20. Do ye not see
That Allah has subjected³⁶⁰⁵
To your (use) all things
In the heavens and on earth,
And has made His bounties
Flow to you in exceeding
Measure, (both) seen and
unseen?³⁶⁰⁶

مَرَعًا إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ كُلُّ مُعْنَالٍ فَخُورٍ ﴿

وَافْصِدْ فِ مَشْيِكَ وَاغْضُضْ مِن صَوْتِكَ الْفَصِدُ فِي مَشْيِكَ وَاغْضُضْ مِن صَوْتِكَ الْمَارِ اللهَ إِنَّ الْخَصِيرِ اللهَ

ٱلۡمَرَوۡاۡ أَنَّالَهُ سَخَرَلُكُمْ مَّافِى ٱلسَّمَوَٰتِ وَمَافِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعَمَهُ وَظَنِهِرَةً وَيَاطِئَةً وَمِنَ ٱلنَّاسِ مَن يُجَدِلُ فِ ٱللَّهِ بِغَيْرِعِلْمِ وَلَاهُدَى

3604. The "Golden Mean" is the pivot of the philosophy of Luqmān as it is of the philosophy of Aristotle and indeed of Islam. And it flows naturally from a true understanding of our relation to Allah and His universe and to our fellow-creatures, especially man. In all things be moderate. Do not go the pace, and do not be stationary or slow. Do not be talkative and do not be silent. Do not be loud and do not be timid or half-hearted. Do not be too confident, and do not be cowed down. If you have patience, it is to give you constancy and determination, that you may bravely carry on the struggle of life. If you have humility, it is to save you from unseemly swagger, not to curb your right spirit and your reasoned determination.

3605. Allah's Creation is independent of man. But Allah, in His infinite mercy, has given man the faculty to subdue the forces of nature and to penetrate through high mysteries with his powers of reason and insight. But this is not merely a question of power. For in His Universal Plan, all are safeguarded. But man's destiny, as far as we can see, is noble to the highest degree.

3606. Allah's grace and bounties work for us at all times. Sometimes we see them, and sometimes we do not. In things which we can apprehend with our senses, we can see Allah's grace, but even in them, sometimes it works beyond the sphere of our knowledge. In the inner or spiritual world, sometimes, when our vision is clear, we can see it working, and often we are not conscious of it. But it works all the same.

Yet there are among men Those who dispute about Allah, Without knowledge and without Guidance, and without a Book³⁶⁰⁷ To enlighten them!

- 21. When they are told to follow The (Revelation) that Allah Has sent down, they say: "Nay, we shall follow The ways that we found Our fathers (following)." 3608 What! even if it is Satan beckoning them To the Chastisement Of the (Blazing) Fire?
- 22. Whoever submits
 His whole self to Allah,
 And is a doer of good,
 Has grasped indeed
 The firmest hand-hold: 3609
 And to Allah shall
 All things return. 3610
- 23. But if any reject Faith, Let not his rejection Grieve thee: to Us³⁶¹¹

وَلَاكِتَكِ مُّنِيرٍ ۞

وَإِذَا قِيلَ هَٰمُ اُتَّبِعُواْ مَا أَنزَلَ اللَّهُ قَالُواْ بَلْ نَتَّبِعُ مَاوَجَدُنَا عَلَيْهِ ءَابَآءَنَا أَوَلَوْكَانَ الشَّيْطَنُ يَدْعُوهُمْ إِلَى عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ (اللَّ

﴿ وَمَن يُسْلِمْ وَجْهَهُ وَإِلَى اللَّهِ وَهُوَ مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ السَّاسَةِ وَهُو مُحْسِنٌ فَقَدِ السَّاسَةُ الْمُحُرِوةِ الْوُثْقَى اللَّهُ مُورِ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ مُورِ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ مُورِ اللَّهُ اللَّهُ مُورِ اللَّهُ اللَّالَةُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ اللّهُ

وَمَن كُفُرُفُلا يَحْزُنك كُفُوهُۥ إِلَيْنَا مَرْجِعُهُمْ

3607. Such men lack knowledge, as they make no use of their intellects but are swayed by their passions; they lack guidance, as they are impatient of control; and the fruits of revelation, or spiritual insight, do not reach them, as they reject Faith and Revelation.

3608. They do not realise that in the spiritual world, as in the physical world, there is constant progress for the live onces: they are spiritually dead, as they are content to stand on ancestral ways, many of them evil, and leading to perdition.

3609. Cf. ii. 256 and n. 301.

3610. Cf. xxii. 41. Everything goes back to Allah. He is our final Goal, as He is the final Goal of all things.

3611. The man of God should not grieve because people reject Faith. He should do his duty and leave the rest to Allah. Every soul must return to Allah for his reckoning. Allah knows everything, and His Universal Plan is full of wisdom.

Is their Return, and We Shall tell them the truth Of their deeds: for Allah Knows well all that is In (men's) hearts.

- 24. We grant them their pleasure
 For a little while: 3612
 In the end shall We
 Drive them to
 A chastisement unrelenting.
- 25. If thou ask them,
 Who it is that created
 The heavens and the earth. 3613
 They will certainly say,
 "Allah", Say: "Praise be to
 Allah!" 3614

But most of them Know not.

26. To Allah belong all things In heaven and earth: verily Allah is He (that is) Free of all wants, Worthy of all praise.³⁶¹⁵ فَنُيِّتَهُم بِمَاعَمِلُوٓأُ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ بِذَاتِ ٱلصُّدُودِ (اللَّهُ)

نُمَنِعُهُمْ قَلِيلًا ثُمَّ نَضْطُرُهُمْ اللهُمُ اللهُمُ اللهُمُ اللهُمُ اللهُمُ اللهُمُ اللهُمُ اللهُمُ اللهُ

وَلَيِن سَأَلْتَهُم مَّنْ خَلَقَ السَّمَوَتِ وَالْأَرْضَ لَيَقُولُنَّ ٱللَّهُ قُلِ ٱلْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ بَلِّ اَحْتُرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ اللَّهُ

يلَّهِ مَافِي السَّمَوَتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَافِي السَّمَوَتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَ

3612. Cf. ii. 126. The respite in this life is of short duration. The ultimate Penalty of Evil is such as cannot be quenched. Cf. xiv. 17. It will be too late then to repent.

3613. Cf. xxiii. 84-89, and xxix. 61 and n. 3493. Men will acknowledge that Allah created the heavens and the earth, and yet fail to understand the love and goodness of Allah in continuing to cherish and maintain them with His gifts. Even if they allow this, they sometimes yet fall short of the corollary, that He is the only One to be worshipped, and run after their own false gods in the shapes of their fancies and lusts. They do not do the duties which, if they rightly understood their own nature and position, they should take a delight in doing.

3614. This ejaculation expresses our satisfaction that at least this is recognised,-that the Creator of the whole world is Allah. It is a pity that they do not go further and recognise other facts and duties (see the last note).

3615. Cf. above, xxxi. 12. There was begun the argument about showing gratitude to Allah, introducing Luqmān's teaching and philosophy. Such gratitude is shown by our understanding His love and doing our duty to Him by serving our fellow-men. For Allah =

- 27. And if all the trees
 On earth were pens
 And the Ocean (were ink),
 With seven Oceans behind it
 To add to its (supply),
 Yet would not the Words³⁶¹⁶
 Of Allah be exhausted
 (In the writing): for Allah
 Is Exalted in power,
 Full of Wisdom.
- 28. And your creation
 Or your resurrection
 Is in no wise but
 As an individual soul: 3617
 For Allah is He Who
 Hears and sees (all things).
- Seest thou not that
 Allah merges Night into Day³⁶¹⁸
 And He merges Day into Night;

وَلَوْ أَنَّمَا فِي ٱلْأَرْضِ مِن شَجَرَةٍ أَقْلَاثُرُ وَٱلْبَحْرُ يَمُذُّهُ وَمِنْ بَعْدِهِ عَسَبْعَةُ ٱلْجُرِ مَّانَفِدَتْ كَلِمَتُ ٱللَّهِ إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَزِيزُ حَكِيدٌ ﴿

مَّاخَلْقُكُمُّ وَلَابَعْثُكُمْ إِلَّاكَنَفْسِ وَحِدَةٍّ إِنَّاللَّهُ سَمِيعُ بُصِيرُ ۞

ٱلۡةِتَرَٱنَّٱللَّهَ يُولِجُٱلَّيْلَ فِٱلنَّهَارِ وَيُولِجُٱلنَّهَارَ فِٱلَّيِّلِ وَسَخَّرَٱلشَّمْسَ وَٱلْقَمَرُكُلُّ يَجْرِي

Himself is Free from all wants and is in no way dependent on our service. That argument has been illustrated in various ways. But now we are told that it can never be completed, for no human tongue or human resources can be adequate either to praise him or to expound His Word.

3616. "Words of Allah": his wonderful Signs and Commandments are infinite and cannot be expressed if all the trees were made into pens, and all the wide Ocean, multiplied seven times, were made into ink. Any Book of His Revelation would deal with matters which man can understand and use in his life: there are things that man can never fathom. Nor would any praise that we could write with infinite resources be adequate to describe His power, glory, and wisdom.

3617. Allah's greatness and infinitude are such that He can create and cherish not only a whole mass, but each individual soul, and He can follow its history and doings until the final Judgment. This shows not only Allah's glory and Omniscience and Omnipotence: it also shows the value of each individual soul in His eyes, and lifts individual responsibility right up into relations with Him.

3618. Cf. xxii. 61 and n. 2841. Even when we can form a conception of Allah's infinitude by His dealings with each individual in His Creation as in verse 28 above, it is still inadequate. What is an individual himself? What is his relation to the universal Laws of Allah? In outer nature we can see that there is no clear-cut line between night and day: each merges into the other. Yet the sun and moon obey definite laws. Though

That He has subjected the sun And the moon (to His Law), Each running its course For a term appointed; and That Allah is well acquainted With all that ye do?

30. That is because Allah is
The Truth and because
Whatever else they invoke³⁶¹⁹
Besides Him is Falsehood;
And because Allah,-He is
The Most High, Most Great.

SECTION 4.

31. Seest thou not that

The ships sail through

The Ocean by the grace

Of Allah?—that He may

Show you of His Signs?

Verily in this are Signs

For all who constantly persevere³⁶²⁰

And give thanks.

إِلَىٰٓ أَجَلِ مُّسَمَّى وَأَتَ اللَّهُ بِمَاتَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ ۖ

ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ ٱلْحَقُّ وَأَنَّ مَايَدَّعُونَ مِن دُونِهِ ٱلْبَطِلُ وَأَنَّ ٱللَّهَ هُوَ ٱلْعَلِيُّ ٱلْكَبِيرُ

ٱلْهَرَّرَأَنَّ ٱلْفُلْكَ تَجْرِي فِٱلْبَحْرِينِعْمَتِٱللَّهِ لِيُرِيكُرُ مِّنْ ءَايَنتِدِ ﴿ إِنَّ فِى ذَلِكَ لَآيَتِ لِكُلِّ صَبَّارِ شَكُورِ ۞

= they seem to go on for ever, yet their existence and duration themselves are but an atom in Allah's great universe. How much more "merging" and imperceptible gradation there is in the inner and spiritual world? Our actions themselves cannot be classified and ticketed and labelled when examined in relation to motives and circumstances. Yet they are like an open book before Allah.

3619. Cf. xxii. 62 and note 2842 and 2843. All the wonderful complexities, gradations, and nuances, that we find in Creation, are yet blended in one harmonious whole, that obeys Law and exemplifies Order. They therefore point to the One True God. He is the only Eternal Reality. Anything put up in competition or equality with Him is only Falsehood. For He is higher and greater than anything we can imagine.

3620. Even the things that man makes are, as using the forces of Nature, evidence of the grace of Allah, Who has subdued these wonderful forces to the use of man. But this gift of mastery can only be understood and appreciated by constant perseverance, combined with a recognition of the divine gifts ("giving thanks"). Sabbār is an intensive form from sabr and I have indicated it by the adverb "constantly".

- 32. When a wave covers them
 Like the canopy (of clouds),
 They call upon Allah,
 Offering Him sincere devotion. 3621
 But when He has delivered them
 Safely to land, there are
 Among them those that falter 3622
 Between (right and wrong).
 But none reject Our Signs
 Except only a perfidious
 Ungrateful (wretch)!
- 33. O mankind! do your duty
 To your Lord and fear
 (The coming of) a Day
 When no father can avail
 Aught for his son, nor
 A son avail aught
 For his father. 3623
 Verily, the promise of Allah
 Is true: let not then
 This present life deceive you,
 Nor let the Chief Deceiver 3624
 Deceive you about Allah.

وَلِذَا عَشِيهُم مَّوْجٌ كَالظُّلَاِ دَعَوُا ٱللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ ٱلدِّينَ فَلَمَّا جَعَنْهُمْ إِلَى ٱلْبَرِ فَمِنْهُم مُّقْنَصِدُّ وَمَا يَعْحَدُ بِعَا يَنِينَا إِلَا كُلُّ خَتَّارِكَ فُورِ ﴿

يَّنَأَيُّهَا ٱلنَّاسُ ٱتَّقُواْ رَبَّكُمْ وَٱخْشُواْ يَوْمَا لَا يَجْزِى وَالِدُّعَنَ وَلَدِهِ وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ هُوَجَازِعَنَ وَالِدِهِ مَشَيَّاً إِنَّ وَعَدَ ٱللَّهِ حَقُّ فَلَا تَغُرَّنَ صَحْمُ ٱلْحَيَوْةُ ٱلدُّنْ اَوْلَا يَغُرَّنَكُمْ بِاللَّهِ ٱلْغَرُورُ لَيْ

3621. Cf. vii. 29. Unlike the people mentioned in the last verse, who constantly seek Allah's help and give thanks for His mercies by using them aright and doing their duty, there is a class of men whose worship is merely inspired by terror. When they are in physical danger—the only kind of danger they appreciate,—e.g., in a storm at sea, they genuinely think of Allah. But once the danger is past, they become indifferent or wish to appear good while dallying with evil. See next verse.

3622. They halt between two opinions. They are not against good, but they will not eschew evil. They are a contrast to those who "constantly persevere and give thanks". But such an attitude amounts really to "perfidious ingratitude".

3623. On the Day of Reckoning no one can help another. The most loving father cannot help his son or be a substitute for him, and *vice versa*. Each will have his own personal responsibilities.

3624. The Chief Deceiver is Satan. It may make us forget that Time is fleeting and delude us by suggesting that the Reckoning may not come, whereas it is certain to come, because Allah's promise is true. We must not play with Time nor be deceived by appearances. The Day may come to-day or to-morrow or when we least expect it.

34. Verily the knowledge
Of the Hour is
With Allah (alone).
It is He Who sends down
Rain, and He Who knows
What is in the wombs. 3625
Nor does any one know
What it is that he will
Earn on the morrow: 3626

إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عِندَهُ, عِلْمُ ٱلسَّاعَةِ وَيُنَزِّكُ ٱلْغَيْثَ وَيَعْلَرُمَا فِي ٱلْأَرْحَامِّ وَمَاتَدْرِي نَفْشُ مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ غَذَا وَمَاتَدْرِي نَفْشُ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتً إِنَّ ٱللَّهَ عَلِيمُ خَبِيرٌ ﴿

3625. The question of Knowledge or Mystery governs both clauses here, viz.: Rain and Wombs. In fact it governs all the five things mentioned in this verse: viz. (1) the Hour; (2) Rain; (3) the Birth of a new Life (Wombs); (4) our Physical Life from day to day; (5) our Death. See n. 3627 below. As regards Rain we are asked to contemplate how and when it is sent down. The moisture may be sucked up by the sun's heat in the Arabian Sea or the Red Sea or the Indian Ocean near East Africa, or in the Lake Region in Central Africa. The winds drive it hither and thither across thousands of miles, or it may be, only short distances. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." No doubt it obeys certain physical Laws established by Allah, but how these Laws are interlocked, one with another! Meterology, gravity, hydrostatics and dynamics, climatology, hygrometry, and a dozen other sciences are involved, and no man can completely master all of them, and yet this relates to only one of the millions of facts in physical nature, which are governed by Allah's Knowledge and Law. The whole vegetable kingdom is primarily affected by Rain. The mention of Wombs brings in the mystery of animal Life, Embryology, Sex, and a thousand other things. Who can tell-to take man alone-how long it will remain in the womb, whether it will be born alive, what sort of a new individual it will be,-a blessing or a curse to its parents, or to Society?

3626. "Earn" here, as elsewhere, means not only "earn one's livelihood" in a physical sense, but also to reap the consequences (good or ill) of one's conduct generally. The whole sentence practically means; "no man knows what the morrow may bring forth."

Nor does any one know
In what land he is
To die. Verily with Allah
Is full knowledge and He
Is acquainted (with all things). 3627

3627. See the five Mysteries summed up in n. 3625 above. The argument is about the mystery of Time and Knowledge. We are supposed to know things in ordinary life. But what does that knowledge amount to in reality? Only a superficial acquaintance with things. And Time is even more uncertain. In the case of rain, which causes vegetable life to spring up, or in the case of new animal life, can we answer with precision questions as to When or How or Wherefore? So about questions of our life from day to day or of our death. These are great mysteries, and full knowledge is with Allah only. How much more so in the case of the $Ma'\bar{a}d$, the Final House, when all true values will be restored and the balance redressed? It is certain, but the When and the How are known to Allah alone.