

INTRODUCTION TO SŪRAT *Ar-Rūm*, 30.

This Sūra, as remarked in the Introduction to the last Sūra, deals with the question of Ma'ād or the Final End of Things, from various points of view. In the last Sūra, we saw that Revelation was linked up with Life and Conduct, and Time (looking backwards and forwards) figured forth the frailty of this Life. In this Sūra the Time theme and its mystery are brought into relation with human history in the foreground and the evolution of the world in all its aspects *in the background*. The corruption introduced by man is cleared away by Allah, Whose Univeral Plan points to the Hereafter. We shall see that the next two Sūras (xxx. and xxxi.) present the theme in other aspects. All four are introduced with the Abbreviated Letters A.L.M.

The chronology of this Sūra is significant. It was revealed about the 7th or the 6th year *before* the Hijrat, corresponding to 615-16 of the Christian era, when the tide of Persian conquest over the Roman Empire was running strong, as explained in Appendix VI (to follow this Sūra). The Christian Empire of Rome had lost Jerusalem to the Persians. At that time it seemed outside the bounds of human possibility, even to one intimately acquainted with the inner resources and conditions of the Persian and Roman armies and empires, that the tables would be turned and the position reversed within the space of eight or nine years. The pro-Persian Pagan Quraish rejoiced exceedingly, and redoubled their taunts and persecution against the holy Prophet, whose Message was a renewal of the Message of Christ preached in Jerusalem. Then was this passage xxx. 1-6 revealed, clearly foreshadowing the final defeat of Persia (Appendix VI 14-16) as a prelude to the destruction of the Persian Empire. There is no doubt about the prophecy and its fulfilment. For the exulting Pagans of Makkah laid a heavy wager against the fulfilment of the prophecy with Hadhrat Abū Bakr, and they lost it on its fulfilment.

But the rise and fall even of such mighty empires as the Persian and Roman Empires, were but small events on the chequer-board of Time, compared to a mightier movement that was taking birth in the promulgation of Islam. In the seventh or sixth year *before* the Hijrat, and for a year or two after the Hijrat, Islam was struggling in the world like the still small voice in the conscience of humanity. It was scarcely heeded, and when it sought to insist upon its divine claim, it was insulted, assaulted, persecuted, boycotted, and (as it seemed) suppressed. The agony of Ṭāif (two years before the Hijrat) and the murder-plot on the eve of the Hijrat were yet to come. But the purpose of Allah is not to be thwarted. Badr (A.H. 2 = A.D. 624), rightly called the critical Day of Decision, began to redress the balance of outward events in early

Islam, in the same year in which Issus (Appendix No. 6) began to redress the balance of outward events in Perso-Roman relations. Mightier events were yet to come. A new inner World was being created through Islam. This spiritual Revolution was of infinitely greater moment in world-history. The toppling down of priestcraft and false worship, the restoration of simplicity in faith and life, the rehabilitation of this life as the first step to the understanding of the Hereafter, the displacement of superstition and hair-splitting theology by a spirit of rational enquiry and knowledge, and the recognition of the divine as covering not merely an isolated thing called "Religion" but the whole way of Life. Thought, and Feeling,—this was and is the true Message of Islam and its mission. Its struggle—its fight—continues, but it is not without effect, as may be seen in the march of centuries in world-history.

Summary.—The ebb and flow of worldly power—as symbolised in the conflict of the Persian and Roman Empires—are but outward events: the deeper meaning is in the working of Allah's Universe—how Good and Evil reach their final End (xxx. 1-19).

The changes and changing variety in Allah's Creation, physical, moral, and spiritual; yet point to Unity in Nature and Religion: man should not break away from that Unity, but glorify Him, the One, for there is none like unto Him (xxx. 20-40).

The hands of men have wrought corruption and mischief: but Allah purifies the moral world as He does the world of physical nature, strengthening the weak and pulling down the mighty in due season: wait therefore in patience and constancy, and be not depressed (xxx. 41-60).

Ar-Rūm, or The Romans.

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

1. A. L. M.³⁵⁰⁴
2. The Romans³⁵⁰⁵
Have been defeated—
3. In a land close by:
But they, (even) after
(This) defeat of theirs,
Will soon be victorious—³⁵⁰⁶
4. Within a few years,³⁵⁰⁷
With Allah is the Command
In the Past
And in the Future:

سُورَةُ الرَّوْمِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْم

عَلَيْتِ الرُّومُ

فِي آدْنَى الْأَرْضِ وَهُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ

عَلَيْهِمْ سَيَكْفُلُونَ

فِي بَضْعِ سِنِينَ ۗ لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ

وَمِنْ بَعْدِ ۗ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ

3504. See n. 25 to ii. 1 and Introduction to this Sūra.

3505. The remarkable defeats of the Roman Empire under Heraclius and the straits to which it was reduced are reviewed in Appendix No. 6 (to follow this Sūra). It was not merely isolated defeats; the Roman Empire lost most of its Asiatic territory and was hemmed in on all sides at its capital, Constantinople. The defeat, "in a land close by" must refer to Syria and Palestine, Jerusalem was lost in 614-15 A.D., shortly before this Sūra was revealed.

3506. The Pagan Quraish of Makkah rejoiced at the overthrow of Rome by Persia. They were pro-Persian, and in their heart of hearts they hoped that the nascent movement of Islam, which at that time was, from a worldly point of view, very weak and helpless, would also collapse under their persecution. But they misread the true Signs of the times. They are told here that they would soon be disillusioned in both their calculations, and it actually so happened at the battle of Issus in 622 (the year of Hijrat) and in 624, when Heraclius carried his campaign into the heart of Persia (see Appendix No: 6) and the Makkan Quraish were beaten off at Badr.

3507. *Bidh'un* in the text means a short period—a period of from three to nine years. The period between the loss of Jerusalem (614-15) by the Romans and their victory at Issus (622) was seven years, and that to the penetration of Persia by Heraclius was nine years. See last note.

On that Day shall
The Believers rejoice—³⁵⁰⁸

5. With the help of Allah.
He gives victory to whom He will,³⁵⁰⁹
And He is Exalted in Might,
Most Merciful.
6. (It is) the promise of Allah.³⁵¹⁰
Never does Allah fail
From His promise:
But most men know not.
7. They know but the outer³⁵¹¹
(Things) in the life
Of this world: but
Of the Hereafter³⁵¹²
They are heedless.
8. Do they not reflect
In their own minds?

الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٤﴾

يَنْصُرُ اللَّهُ يَنْصُرُ مَن يَشَاءُ
وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٥﴾

وَعَدَ اللَّهُ لَا يَخْلِفُ اللَّهُ وَعْدَهُ، وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ

لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٦﴾

يَعْلَمُونَ ظَاهِرًا مِّنَ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَهُمْ عَنِ الْآخِرَةِ
هُمْ غَافِلُونَ ﴿٧﴾

أَوَلَمْ يَتَفَكَّرُوا فِي أَنفُسِهِمْ مَا خَلَقَ اللَّهُ السَّمَوَاتِ

3508. See n. 3506 and Appendix No: 6. The battle of Badr (2 A.H. = 624 A.D.) was a real time of rejoicing for the Believers and a time of disillusionment for the arrogant Quraish, who thought that they could crush the whole movement of Islam in Madinah as they had tried to do in Makkah, but they were signally repulsed. See n. 352 to iii. 13.

3509. "Whom He will." As explained elsewhere, Allah's Will or Plan is not arbitrary: it is full of the highest wisdom. His Plan is formed in mercy, so as to safeguard the interests of *all* his creatures, against the selfish aggrandizement of any section of them. And He is able to carry out His Plan in full, and there is no power that can stop or delay His Plan.

3510. The promise refers to the Decision of all things by the Command of Allah, Who will remove all troubles and difficulties from the path of His righteous Believers, and help them to rejoice over the success of their righteous Cause. This refers to all times and all situations. The righteous should not despair in their darkest moments, for Allah's help will come. Ordinarily men are puffed up if they score a seeming temporary success against the righteous, and do not realise that Allah's Will can never be thwarted.

3511. Men are misled by the outward show of things, though the inner reality may be quite different. Many seeming disasters are really godsend if we only understood.

3512. *ĀKhirat*: may refer to the End of things or enterprises in history as well as the Hereafter in the technical theological sense.

Not but in truth³⁵¹³
 And for a term appointed,
 Did Allah create the heavens
 And the earth, and all
 Between them: yet are there
 Truly many among men
 Who deny the meeting³⁵¹⁴
 With their Lord
 (At the Resurrection)!

وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى
 وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ بِلِقَائِ رَبِّهِمْ
 لَكٰفِرُونَ ﴿٨﴾

9. Do they not travel
 Through the earth, and see
 What was the End
 Of those before them?
 They were superior to them
 In strength: they tilled
 The soil and populated it
 In greater numbers than these
 Have done: there came to them
 Their messengers with Clear
 (Signs),³⁵¹⁵
 (Which they rejected, to their
 Own destruction): it was not
 Allah who wronged them, but
 They wronged their own souls.

أَوَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَيَنْظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
 الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِهِمْ ۖ كَانُوا أَشَدَّ مِمَّهِمْ قُوَّةً وَأَنَارُوا
 الْأَرْضَ وَعَمَرُوهَا أَكْثَرَ مِمَّا عَمَرُوهَا وَجَاءَتْهُمْ
 رُسُلُهُم بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ۖ فَمَا كَانُوا لِيُظْلَمَهُمْ
 وَلٰكِن كَانُوا أَنفُسَهُمْ يَظْلِمُونَ ﴿٩﴾

3513. Cf. xv. 85. Here the argument is about the ebb and flow of worldly power, and the next clause is appropriately added, "and for a term appointed". Let not any one who is granted worldly power or advantage run away with the notion that it is permanent. It is definitely limited in the high Purpose of Allah, which is just and true. And an account will have to be given of it afterwards on basis of strict personal responsibility.

3514. It is therefore all the more strange that there should be men who not only forget themselves but even deny that there is a return to Allah or an End or Hereafter, when a full reckoning will be due for this period of probation. They are asked to study past history, as in the next verse.

3515. Let not any generation think that it is superior to all that went before it. We may be "heirs to all the ages, in the foremost files of times." That is no reason for arrogance, but on the contrary adds to our responsibility. When we realise what flourishing cities and kingdoms existed before, how they flourished in numbers and prosperity, what chances they were given, and how they perished when they disobeyed the law of Allah, we shall feel a sense of humility, and see that it was rebellion and self-will that brought them down. Allah was more than just. He was also merciful. But they brought about their own ruin.

10. In the long run evil³⁵¹⁶
Will be the End of those
Who do evil; for that
They rejected the Signs
Of Allah, and held them up
To ridicule.

SECTION 2.

11. It is Allah Who begins
The creation,³⁵¹⁷
Then repeats it; then
Shall ye be brought back
To Him.
12. On the Day when
The Hour will come³⁵¹⁸
The guilty will be
Struck dumb with despair.

ثُمَّ كَانَ عَاقِبَةَ الَّذِينَ أَسْتَوُوا السَّوْءَ ۗ إِنَّ كَذِبُوا
بِعَايِنَاتِ اللَّهِ وَكَانُوا بِهَا يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١٠﴾

اللَّهُ يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ
ثُمَّ إِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴿١١﴾

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُبْلِسُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ ﴿١٢﴾

3516. The Arabic superlative feminine, referring to the feminine noun 'Āqibat, I have translated by "Evil". In this life good and evil may seem to be mixed up, and it may be that somethings or persons that are evil get what seem to be good rewards or blessings, while the opposite happens to the good. But this is only a temporary appearance. In the long run Evil will have its own evil consequences, multiplied cumulatively. And this, because evil not only rejected Allah's Message of Good but laughed at Good and misled others.

3517. Nothing exists of its own accord or fortuitously. It is Allah Who originates all creation. What appears to be death may be only transformation: for Allah can and does recreate. And His creative activity is continuous. Our death is but a phenomenal event. What we become after death is the result of a process of recreation by Allah, Who is both the source and the goal of all things. When we are brought back to him, it will be as conscious and responsible beings, to receive the consequences of our brief life on this earth.

3518. *The Hour will be established:* in due time the Hour will come when Judgment will be established, and the seeming disturbance of balance in this world will be redressed. Then the Good will rejoice, and the Guilty, faced with the Realities, will lose all their illusions and be struck dumb with despair.

13. No intercessor will they have
Among their "Partners",³⁵¹⁹
And they will (themselves)
Reject their "Partners".

وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَائِهِمْ سَفَعَتُونَ
وَكَانُوا بِشُرَكَائِهِمْ كَافِرِينَ ﴿١٣﴾

14. On the Day when
The Hour will come
That Day shall (all men)³⁵²⁰
Be sorted out.

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُومِذِبْنَفَرَقُونَ ﴿١٤﴾

15. Then those who have believed
And worked righteous deeds,
Shall be made happy
In a Mead (of Delight).

فَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
فَهُمْ فِي رَوْضَةٍ يُحْبَرُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

16. And those who have rejected
Faith and falsely denied
Our Signs and the meeting
Of the Hereafter,—such
Shall be brought forth to
Punishment.

وَأَمَّا الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا وَلِقَاءِ الْآخِرَةِ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ فِي الْعَذَابِ مُحْضَرُونَ ﴿١٦﴾

17. So glory be to Allah,
When ye reach eventide³⁵²¹
And when ye rise
In the morning;

فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ حِينَ تُمْسُونَ وَحِينَ تُصْبِحُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

3519. False worship will then appear in its true colours. Anything to which we offered the worship due to Allah alone, will vanish instead of being of any help. Indeed the deluded false worshippers, whose eyes will now be opened, will themselves reject their falsehoods, as the Truth will now shine with unquestioned splendour.

3520. In the fullness of time good and evil will all be sorted out and separated. The good will reach their destination of felicity in rich and luscious, well-watered meadows, which stand as the type of all that is fair to see and pleasant to feel. The evil will no longer imagine that they are enjoying good fortune, for the testing time will be over, and the grim reality will stare them in the face. They will receive their just Punishment.

3521. The special times for Allah's remembrance are so described as to include all our activities in life,—when we rise early in the morning, and when we go to rest in the evening; when we are in the midst of our work, at the decline of the sun, and in the late afternoon. It may be noted that these are all striking stages in the passage of the sun through our terrestrial day, as well as stages in our daily working lives. On this are based the hours of the five canonical prayers afterwards prescribed in Madinah; viz. (1) early morning before sunrise (*Fajr*); (2) when the day begins to decline, just after noon =

18. Yea, To Him be praise,
In the heavens and on earth;
And in the late afternoon
And when the day
Begins to decline.

وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

وَعَشِيًّا وَحِينَ تُظْهِرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾

19. It is He Who brings out
The living from the dead,
And brings out the dead³⁵²²
From the living, and Who
Gives life to the earth³⁵²³
After it is dead:
And thus shall ye be
Brought out (from the dead).

يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ
وَيُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَكَذَلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ ﴿١٩﴾

SECTION 3.

20. Among His Signs is this,
That He created you³⁵²⁴
From dust; and then,—
Behold, ye are men
Scattered (far and wide)!

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ تُرَابٍ

ثُمَّ إِذَا أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ تَنْتَشِرُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾

= (Zuhr); (3) in the late afternoon, say midway between noon and sunset ('*Asr*'); and (4) and (5) the two evening prayers, one just after sunset (*Magrib*); and the other after the evening twilight has all faded from the horizon, the hour indicated for rest and sleep ('*Ishā*). Cf. xi. 114 nn. 1616-17; xvii. 78-79, n. 2275; xx. 130. n. 2655.

3522. Cf. x. 31. From dead matter Allah's creative act produces life and living matter, and even science has not yet been able to explain the mystery of life. Life and living matter again seem to reach maturity and again die, as we see every day. No material thing seems to have perpetual life. But again we see the creative process of Allah constantly at work, and the cycle of life and death seems to go on.

3523. Cf. ii. 164. The earth itself, seemingly so inert, produces vegetable life at once from a single shower of rain, and in various ways sustains animal life. Normally it seems to die in the winter in northern climates, and in a drought everywhere, and the spring revives it in all its glory. Metaphorically many movements, institutions, organisations, seem to die and then to live again, all under the wonderful dispensation of Allah. So will our personality be revived when we die on this earth, in order to reap the fruit of this our probationary life.

3524. Cf. xviii. 37 and n. 2379. In spite of the lowly origin of man's body, Allah has given him a mind and soul by which he can almost compass the farthest reaches of Time and Space. Is this not enough for a miracle or Sign? From a physical point of view, see how man, a creature of dust, scatters himself over the farthest corners of the earth!

21. And among His Signs
Is this, that He created
For you mates from among³⁵²⁵
Yourselfs, that ye may
Dwell in tranquillity with them,³⁵²⁶
And He has put love
And mercy between your (hearts):
Verily in that are Signs
For those who reflect.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا
لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً
إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يُفَكِّرُونَ ﴿٣١﴾

22. And among His Signs
Is the creation of the heavens
And the earth, and the variations³⁵²⁷
In your languages
And your colours: verily
In that are Signs
For those who know.

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَخْتِلَافُ
اللِّسَانِ كُمْ وَالْوَنَاءِ كُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ
لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾

23. And among His Signs
Is the sleep that ye take

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ مَنَامُكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَابْتِغَاؤُكُمْ

3525. This refers to the wonderful mystery of sex. Children arise out of the union of the sexes. And it is always the female sex that bring forth the offspring, whether female or male. And the father is as necessary as the mother for bringing forth daughters.

3526. Cf. vii. 189. Unregenerate man is pugnacious in the male sex, but rest and tranquillity are found in the normal relations of a father and mother dwelling together and bringing up a family. A man's chivalry to the opposite sex is natural and Allah-given. The friendship of two men between each other is quite different in quality and temper from the feeling which unspoilt nature expects as between men and women. There is a special kind of love and tenderness between them. And as woman is the weaker vessel, that tenderness may from a certain aspect be likened to mercy, the protecting kindness which the strong should give to the weak.

3527. The variations in languages and colours may be viewed from the geographical aspect or from the aspect of periods of time. All mankind were created of a single pair of parents; yet they have spread to different countries and climates and developed different languages and different shades of complexions. And yet their basic unity remains unaltered. They feel in the same way, and are all equally under Allah's care. Then there are the variations in time. Old languages die out and new ones are evolved. New conditions of life and thought are constantly evolving new words and expressions, new syntactical structures, and new modes of pronunciation. Even old races die, and new races are born.

By night and by day,³⁵²⁸
 And the quest that ye
 (Make for livelihood)
 Out of His Bounty: verily
 In that are Signs
 For those who hearken.³⁵²⁹

24. And among His Signs,
 He shows you the lightning,
 By way both of fear³⁵³⁰
 And of hope, and He sends

مِنْ فَضْلِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ

لِقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ يُرِيكُمْ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا
 وَيُنزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَيُحْيِي بِهِ الْأَرْضَ

3528. If we consider deeply, sleep and dreams, the refreshment we get from sleep to wakefulness as well as from wakefulness to sleep, as also the state of our thoughts and feelings and sub-conscious self in these conditions, are both wonderful and mysterious. Normally we sleep by night and do our ordinary work "in quest of the Bounty of Allah" by day. But sleep and rest may come and be necessary by day, and we may have to work by night. And our work for our livelihood may pass by insensible transitions to our work or thought or service of a higher and spiritual kind. These processes suggest a background of things which we know but vaguely, but which are as much miracles as other Signs of Allah.

3529. From verse 20 to verse 25 are mentioned a series of Signs or Miracles, which should awaken our souls and lead us to true Reality if we try to understand Allah. (1) There is our own origin and destiny, which must necessarily be our subjective starting-point: "I think; therefore I am": no particular exertion of our being is here necessary (xxx. 20). (2) The first beginnings of social life arise through sex and love: see iv. 1, and n. 506; to understand this in all its bearing, we must "reflect" (xxx. 21). (3) The next point is to understand our diversities in speech, colour, etc., arising from differences of climate and external conditions; yet there is unity beneath that diversity, which we shall realise by extended knowledge (xxx. 22). (4) Next we turn to our psychological conditions, sleep, rest, visions, insight, etc.; here we want teaching and guidance, to which we must hearken (xxx. 23). (5) Next, we must approach the higher reaches of spiritual hopes and fears, as symbolised by such subtle forces of nature as lightning and electricity, which may kill the foolish or bring prosperity in its train by rain and abundant harvest; to understand the highest spiritual hopes and fears so symbolised, we want the highest wisdom (xxx. 24). (6) And lastly, we may become so transformed that we rise above all petty, worldly, ephemeral things: Allah calls to us and we rise, as from our dead selves to a Height which we can only describe as the Heaven of stability: here no human processes serve, for the Call of Allah Himself has come (xxx. 25-27).

3530. See last note, item (5). Cf. xiii. 12. To cowards lightning and thunder appear as terrible forces of nature: lightning seems to kill and destroy where its irresistible progress is not assisted by proper lightning-conductors. But lightning is also a herald of rain-bearing clouds and showers that bring fertility and prosperity in their train. This double aspect is also symbolical of spiritual fears and hopes,—fears lest we may not be =

Down rain from the sky
And with it gives life to
The earth after it is dead:
Verily in that are Signs
For those who are wise.

25. And among His Signs is this,
That heaven and earth
Stand by His Command.³⁵³¹
Then when He calls you,
By a single call, from the earth,
Behold, ye (straightway) come forth.
26. To Him belongs every being
That is in the heavens
And on earth: all are³⁵³²
Devoutly obedient to Him.
27. It is He Who begins
The creation,³⁵³³
Then repeats it; and
For Him it is most easy.

بَعْدَ مَوْتِهِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَا يَتْلِقُوهِنَّ
يَعْقُلُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾

وَمِنَ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ تَقُومَ السَّمَاءُ وَالْأَرْضُ بِأَمْرِهِ
ثُمَّ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ دَعْوَةً مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ إِذْ أَنْتُمْ تَخْرُجُونَ ﴿٢٥﴾

وَلَهُ مَن فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ
كُلُّ لَهُ قَانُونَ ﴿٢٦﴾

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يَبْدَأُ الْخَلْقَ ثُمَّ يُعِيدُهُ وَهُوَ أَهْوَنُ
عَلَيْهِ وَلَهُ الْمَثَلُ الْأَعْلَىٰ فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

= found receptive or worthy of the irresistible perspicuous Message of Allah, and hopes that we may receive it in the right spirit and be blessed by its mighty power of transformation to achieve spiritual well-being. Note that the repetition of the phrase "gives life to the earth after it is dead" connects this verse, with verse 19 above; in other words, the Revelation, which we must receive with wisdom and understanding, is a Sign of Allah's own power and mercy, and is vouchsafed in order to safeguard our own final Future.

3531. In the physical world, the sky and the earth, as we see them, stand unsupported, by the artistry of Allah. They bear witness to Allah, and in—that our physical life depends on them—the earth for its produce and the sky for rain, the heat of the sun, and other phenomena of nature—they call to our mind our relation to Allah Who made them and us. How can we then be so dense as not to realise that our higher Future—our Ma'ād—is bound up with the call and the mercy of Allah?

3532. All nature in Creation not only obeys Allah, but devoutly obeys Him, i.e., glories in its privilege of service and obedience. Why should we not do likewise? It is part of our original unspoilt nature, and we must respond to it, as all beings do, by their very nature.

3533. Cf. xxx. 11 above, where the same phrase began the argument about the beginning and end of all things being with Allah. This has been illustrated by reference to various Signs in Creation, and now the argument is rounded off with the same phrase.

To Him belongs the loftiest³⁵³⁴
 Similitude (we can think of)
 In the heavens and the earth:
 For He is Exalted in Might,
 Full of wisdom.

وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ ﴿٣٧﴾

SECTION 4.

28. He does propound
 To you a similitude
 From yourselves:³⁵³⁵
 Do ye have partners
 Among those whom your right hands
 Possess, to share as equals
 In the wealth We have³⁵³⁶
 Bestowed on you? Do ye
 Fear them as ye fear³⁵³⁷

ضَرَبَ لَكُمْ مَثَلًا مِّنْ أَنفُسِكُمْ هَلْ لَّكُمْ
 مِّنْ مَّا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ مِّنْ شُرَكَاءَ
 فِي مَارَزَقَتِكُمْ فَانْتَرَفِيهِ سَوَاءٌ تَخَافُونَهُمْ
 كَخِيفَتِكُمْ أَنفُسَكُمْ كَذَلِكَ نُفَصِّلُ

3534. Allah's glory and Allah's attributes are above any names we can give to them. Human language is not adequate to express them. We can only form some idea of them at our present stage by means of Similitudes and Parables. But even so, the highest we can think of falls short of the true Reality. For Allah is higher and wiser than the highest and wisest we can think of.

3535. One way in which we can get some idea of the things higher than our own plane is to think of Parables and Similitudes. But even so, the highest we can think of falls short of the true Reality. For Allah is higher and wiser than the highest and wisest we can think of.

3536. Allah is far higher above His Creation than any, the highest, of His creatures can be above any, the lowest, of His creatures. And yet would a man share his wealth on equal terms with his dependants? Even what he calls his wealth is not really his own, but given by Allah. It is "his" in common speech by reason merely of certain accidental circumstances. How then can men raise Allah's creatures to equality with Allah in worship?

3537. Men fear each other as equals in a state of society at perpetual warfare. To remove this fear they appoint an authority among themselves—a King or sovereign authority whom they consider just—to preserve them from this fear and give them an established order. But they must obey and revere this authority and depend upon this authority for their own tranquillity and security. Even with their equals there is always the fear of public opinion. But men do not fear, or obey, or revere those who are their slaves or dependents. Man is dependent on Allah. And Allah is the Sovereign authority in an infinitely higher sense. He is in no sense dependent on us, but we must honour and revere Him and fear to disobey His Will or His Law. "The fear of Allah is the beginning of wisdom."

Each other? Thus do We
Explain the Signs in detail
To a people that understand.³⁵³⁸

29. Nay, the wrong-doers (merely)
Follow their own desires
Being devoid of knowledge.
But who will guide those
Whom Allah leaves astray?³⁵³⁹
To them there will be
No helpers.

30. So set thou thy face
Truly to the religion being
upright,³⁵⁴⁰
The nature in which
Allah has made mankind:
No change (there is)
In the work (wrought)³⁵⁴¹
By Allah: that is

الآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٢٨﴾

بَلِ اتَّبَعَ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا أَهْوَاءَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ
فَمَنْ يَهْدِي مَنْ أَضَلَّ اللَّهُ وَمَا لَهُمْ
مِنْ نَاصِرِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾

فَأَقْرِبْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَتَ اللَّهِ
الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ
ذَٰلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ
النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

3538. Cf. vi. 55, and vii. 32, 174, etc.

3539. The wrong-doers—those who deliberately reject Allah's guidance and break Allah's Law—have put themselves out of the region of Allah's mercy. In this they have put themselves outside the pale of the knowledge of what is for their own good. In such a case they must suffer the consequences of the personal responsibility which flows from the grant of a limited free-will. Who can then guide them or help them?

3540. For *Hanif* see n. 134 to ii. 135. Here "true" is used in the sense in which we say, "the magnetic needle is true to the north." Those who have been privileged to receive the Truth should never hesitate or swerve, but remain constant, as men who know.

3541. As turned out from the creative hand of Allah, man is innocent, pure, true, free, inclined to right and virtue, and endued with true understanding about his own position in the Universe and about Allah's goodness, wisdom, and power. That is his true nature, just as the nature of a lamb is to be gentle and of a horse is to be swift. But man is caught in the meshes of customs, superstitions, selfish desires, and false teaching. This may make him pugnacious, unclean, false, slavish, hankering after what is wrong or forbidden, and deflected from the love of his fellow-men and the pure worship of the One True God. The problem before the Prophets is to cure this crookedness, and to restore human nature to what it should be under the Will of Allah.

The true Religion:³⁵⁴²

But most among mankind
Know not.

31. Turn ye in repentance³⁵⁴³
To Him, and fear Him:
Establish regular prayers,
And be not ye among those
Who join gods with Allah,—

32. Those who split up
Their Religion, and become
(Mere) Sects,—each party
Rejoicing in that which³⁵⁴⁴
Is with itself!

33. When trouble touches men,
They cry to their Lord³⁵⁴⁵
Turning back to Him
In repentance: but when
He gives them a taste
Of Mercy from Himself,

﴿ مَبِينٍ إِلَيْهِ وَاتَّقُوهُ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ
وَلَا تَكُونُوا مِنَ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴾ (٣١)

﴿ مِنَ الَّذِينَ فَرَّقُوا دِينَهُمْ وَكَانُوا شِعَابًا
كُلُّ حِزْبٍ بِمَا لَدَيْهِمْ فَرِحُونَ ﴾ (٣٢)

﴿ وَإِذَا مَسَّ النَّاسَ ضُرٌّ دَعَوْا رَبَّهُمْ مُبِينًا إِلَيْهِ
ثُمَّ إِذَا أَذَاهُمْ مَتَّعَهُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَةِ إِذَا فَرِيقٌ مِنْهُمْ
بَرَّيْهِمْ يُشْرِكُونَ ﴾ (٣٣)

3542. *Din Qaiyim* here includes the whole life, thoughts and desires of man. The "standard Religion," or the Straight Way is thus contrasted with the various human systems that conflict with each other and call themselves separate "religions" or "sects" (see verse 32 below). Allah's standard Religion is one, as Allah is One.

3543. "Repentance" does not mean sackcloth and ashes, or putting on a gloomy pessimism. It means giving up disease for health, crookedness (which is abnormal) for the Straight Way, the restoration of our nature as Allah created it from the falsity introduced by the enticements of Evil. To revert to the simile of the magnetic needle (n. 3540 above), if the needle is held back by obstructions, we must restore its freedom, so that it points true again to the magnetic pole.

3544. A good description of self-satisfied sectarianism as against real Religion. See n. 3542 above.

3545. Cf. x. 12. It is trouble, distress, or adversity that makes men realise their helplessness and turns their attention back to the true Source of all goodness and happiness. But when they are shown special Mercy—often more than they deserve—they forget themselves and attribute it to their own cleverness, or to the stars, or to some false ideas to which they pay court and worship, either to the exclusion of Allah or in addition to the lip-worship which they pay to Allah. Their action in any case amounts to gross ingratitude; but in the circumstances it looks as if they had gone out of their way to show ingratitude.

Behold, some of them
Pay part-worship to
Other gods besides their Lord,-

34. (As if) to show their ingratitude
For the (favours) We have
Bestowed on them! Then enjoy
(Your brief day); but soon
Will ye know (your folly).³⁵⁴⁶

لِيَكْفُرُوا بِمَا آتَيْنَاهُمْ فَتَمَتَّعُوا فَسَوْفَ
تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾

35. Or have We sent down
Authority to them, which
Speaks to them³⁵⁴⁷
The things to which
The pay part-worship?

أَمْ أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانًا فَهِيَ تَكْتُمُ
بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

36. When We give men
A taste of Mercy,³⁵⁴⁸
They exult thereat:
And when some evil
Afflicts them because of
What their (own) hands
Have sent forth, behold,
They are in despair!

وَإِذَا أَذَقْنَا النَّاسَ رَحْمَةً فَرِحُوا بِهَا وَإِن تُصِيبَهُمْ
سَيِّئَةٌ بِمَا قَدَّمَتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ إِذَا هُمْ يَقْنَطُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾

3546. Cf. xvi. 54. They are welcome to their fancies and false worship, and to the enjoyment of the pleasures of this Life, but they will soon be disillusioned. Then they will realise the true values of the things they neglected and the things they cultivated.

3547. Their behaviour is exactly as if they were satisfied within themselves that they were entitled or given a licence to worship God and Mammon. In fact the whole thing is their own invention or delusion.

3548. Cf. xxx. 33. In that passage the unreasonable behaviour of men in sorrow and in affluence is considered with reference to their attitude to Allah: in distress they turn to Him, but in prosperity they turn to other things. Here the contrast in the two situations is considered with reference to men's inner psychology: in affluence they are puffed up and unduly elated, and in adversity they lose all heart. Both attitudes are wrong. In prosperity men should realise that it is not their merits that deserve all the Bounty of Allah, but that it is given out of Allah's abundant generosity; in adversity they should remember that their suffering is brought on by their own folly and sin, and humbly pray for Allah's grace and mercy, in order that they may be set on their feet again. For, as the next verse points out, Allah gives opportunities, gifts, and the good things of life to every one, but in a greater or less measure, and at some time or other, according to His All-Wise Plan, which is the expression of His holy and benevolent Will.

37. See they not that Allah
Enlarges the provision and
Restricts it, to whomsoever³⁵⁴⁹
He pleases? Verily in that
Are Signs for those who believe.

38. So give what is due
To kindred, the needy,
And the wayfarer,
That is best for those
Who seek the Countenance,³⁵⁵⁰
Of Allah, and it is they
Who will prosper.³⁵⁵¹

39. That which you give in usury
For increase through the property
Of (other) people, will have³⁵⁵²
No increase with Allah:
But that which you give
For charity, seeking
The Countenance of Allah,³⁵⁵³

أَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْسُطُ الرِّزْقَ لِمَن يَشَاءُ
وَيَقْدِرُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿٣٧﴾

فَقَاتِ ذَا الْقُرْبَىٰ حَقَّهُ وَالْمَسْكِينِ وَالْبَنِي السَّبِيلِ
ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ وَأُولَٰئِكَ
هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣٨﴾

وَمَا أَتَيْتُم مِّن رَّبًّا لِّتُرْبُوا فِي أَمْوَالِ النَّاسِ فَلَا يَرْبُوا
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَمَا أَتَيْتُم مِّن زَكَاةٍ تُرِيدُونَ وَجْهَ اللَّهِ
فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْمُضْعِفُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾

3549. Cf. xxviii. 82 and n. 3412. Also see last note. Allah's grant of certain gifts to some, as well as His withholding of certain gifts from others, are themselves Signs (trials or warnings) to men of faith and understanding.

3550. For *Wajh* (Face, Countenance), see n. 114 to ii. 112. Also see vi. 52.

3551. In both this life and the next. See n. 29 to ii. 5.

3552. *Ribā* (literally 'usury' or 'interest') is prohibited, for the principle is that any profit which we should seek should be through our own exertions and at our own expense, not through exploiting other people or at their expense, however we may wrap up the process in the spacious phraseology of high finance or City jargon. But we are asked to go beyond this negative precept of avoiding what is wrong. We should show our active love for our neighbour by spending of our own substance or resources or the utilisation of our own talents and opportunities in the service of those who need them. Then our reward or recompense will not be merely what we deserve. It will be multiplied to many times more than our strict account. According to Commentators this verse specially applies to those who give to others, whether gifts or services, in order to receive from them greater benefits in return. Such seemingly good acts are void of any merit and deserve no reward from Allah, since He knows the real intention behind such ostensibly good deeds.

3553. Seeking the "Face" or "Countenance" of Allah, i.e., out of our pure love for the true vision of Allah's own Self. See also n. 3550 above.

(Will increase): it is
These who will get
A recompense multiplied.

40. It is Allah Who has
Created you: further, He has
Provided for your sustenance;
Then He will cause you
To die; and again He will
Give you life. Are there
Any of your (false) "Partners"³⁵⁵⁴
Who can do any single
One of these things?
Glory to Him! and High
Is He above the partners³⁵⁵⁵
They attribute (to Him)!

SECTION 5.

41. Mischief has appeared
On land and sea because
Of (the meed) that the hands
Of men have earned,³⁵⁵⁶
That (Allah) may give them
A taste of some of their

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ تُدْرِكُكُمْ ثُمَّ يُرْسِمُكُمْ
ثُمَّ يُحْيِيكُمْ هَلْ مِنْ شُرَكَائِكُمْ مَنْ يَفْعَلُ
مِنْ ذَلِكَ مِنْ شَيْءٍ سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَى
عَمَّا يُشْرِكُونَ ﴿٤٠﴾

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ
أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا
لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ ﴿٤١﴾

3554. The persons or things or ideas to which we give part-worship, while our whole and exclusive worship is due to Allah, are the "Partners" we set up. Do we owe our existence to them? Do they sustain our being? Can they take our life or give it back to us? Certainly not. Then how foolish of us to give them part-worship!

3555. Cf. x. 18 and similar passages.

3556. Allah's Creation was pure and good in itself. All the mischief or corruption was introduced by Evil, viz., arrogance, selfishness, etc. See n. 3541 to xxx. 30 above. As soon as the mischief has come in, Allah's mercy and goodness step in to stop it. The consequences of Evil must be evil, and this should be shown in such partial punishment as "the hands of men have earned," so that it may be a warning for the future and an invitation to enter the door of repentance.

Deeds: in order that they³⁵⁵⁷
May turn back (from evil).

42. Say: "Travel through the earth
And see what was the End
Of those before (you):
Most of them were³⁵⁵⁸
Idolaters.

43. But set thou thy face
To the right Religion,
Before there come from Allah
The Day which there is³⁵⁵⁹
No chance of averting:
On that Day shall men
Be divided (in two).³⁵⁶⁰

44. Those who reject Faith
Will suffer from that rejection:
And those who work righteousness
Will make provision
For themselves
(In heaven):

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ
الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلُ كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُمْ مُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾

فَاقْرَءْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ الْقَيِّمِ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ
يَوْمَ لَا مَرَدَ لَهُ، مِنْ اللَّهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ يُصَدِّعُونَ ﴿٤٣﴾

مَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ، وَمَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا
فَلِأَنْفُسِهِمْ يَمْهَدُونَ ﴿٤٤﴾

3557. The ultimate object of Allah's justice and punishment is to reclaim man from Evil, and to restore him to the pristine purity and innocence in which he was created. The Evil introduced by his possession of a limited free-will should be eliminated by the education and purification of man's own will. For, with his will and motives purified, he is capable of much greater heights than a creature not endowed with any free-will.

3558. If you contemplate history and past experience (including spiritual experience), you will find that evil and corruption tended to destroy themselves, because they had false idols for worship, false standards of conduct, and false goals of desire.

3559. We should recover the balance that has been upset by Evil and Falsehood before it is too late. For a Day will surely come when true values will be restored and all falsehood and evil will be destroyed. Nothing but repentance and amendment can avert the consequences of Evil. When the Day actually comes, repentance will be too late: for the impassable barrier between Evil and Good will have been fixed, and the chance of return to Allah's pattern will have been lost.

3560. The sharp division will then have been accomplished between the unfortunate ones who rejected Truth and Faith and will suffer for their rejection, and the righteous who will attain Peace and Salvation: see next verse. Note that the state of the Blessed will not be merely a passive state. They will actively earn and contribute to their own happiness.

45. That He may reward those
Who believe and work righteous
Deeds, out of His Bounty.³⁵⁶¹
For He loves not those
Who reject Faith.³⁵⁶²

لِيَجْزِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ
مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْكَافِرِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾

46. Among His Signs is this,³⁵⁶³
That He sends the Winds,
As heralds of Glad Tidings,
Giving you a taste
Of His Mercy,³⁵⁶⁴
That the ships may sail
By His Command
And that ye may seek³⁵⁶⁵
Of His Bounty: in order
That ye may be grateful.

وَمِنْ ءَايَاتِهِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ الرِّيحَ مُبَشِّرَاتٍ لِيُذِيقَكُمْ
مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ ۗ وَلِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلُكُ بِأَمْرِهِ
وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٤٦﴾

47. We did indeed send,
Before thee, messengers
To their (respective) peoples,

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ رُسُلًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِمْ فَجَاءَهُمْ

3561. Though the repose and bliss will have been won by the righteous by their own efforts, it must not be supposed that their own merits were equal to the reward they will earn. What they will get will be due to the infinite Grace and Bounty of Allah.

3562. In form this clause is (here as elsewhere) negative, but it has a positive meaning: Allah loves those who have faith and trust in Him, and will, out of His Grace and Bounty, reward them in abundant measure.

3563. The theme of Allah's artistry in the physical and the spiritual world was placed before us above in xxx. 20-27. Then, in verse 28-40, we were shown how man and nature were pure as they came out of the hand of Allah, and how we must restore this purity in order to fulfil the Will and Plan of Allah. Now we are told how the restorative and purifying agencies are sent by Allah Himself,—in both the physical and the spiritual world.

3564. Cf. vii. 57 and n. 1036 and xxv. 48 and n. 3104.

3565. In the physical world, the winds not only cool and purify the air, and bring the blessings of rain, which fertilises the soil, but they help international commerce and intercourse among men through sea-ways and now by air-ways. Those who know how to take advantage of these blessings of Allah prosper and rejoice, while those who ignore or fail to understand these Signs perish in storms. So in the spiritual world: heralds of glad tidings were sent by Allah in the shape of Messengers: those who profited by their Message prospered and those who ignored or opposed the Clear Signs perished, see next verse.

And they came to them
With Clear Signs: then,
To those who transgressed,
We meted out Retribution:
And it was a duty incumbent upon
Us
To aid those who believed.

48. It is Allah Who sends
The Winds, and they raise³⁵⁶⁶
The Clouds: then does He
Spread them in the sky
As He wills, and break them
Into fragments, until thou seest
Rain-drops issue from the midst
Thereof: then when He has
Made them reach such³⁵⁶⁷
Of His servants as He wills,
Behold, they do rejoice!-

49. Even though, before they received
(The rain)-just before this-
They were dumb with despair!

50. Then behold (O man!)
The tokens of Allah's Mercy!-
How He gives life³⁵⁶⁸
To the earth after
Its death: verily the Same

بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ فَانقَمْنَا مِنَ الَّذِينَ أَجْرَمُوا وَكَانَ حَقًّا
عَلَيْنَا نَصْرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾

اللَّهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ فَتُحْمَلُ السَّحَابَ بِأَيْبُسَاطِهِ
فِي السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُ كِسْفًا فَتَرَى
الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ فَإِذَا أَصَابَ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ
مِنْ عِبَادِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

وَإِنْ كَانُوا مِنْ قَبْلُ أَنْ يُنزَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ
لَمُبْسِرِينَ ﴿٤٩﴾

فَانظُرْ إِلَى آثَارِ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ كَيْفَ يُحْيِي الْأَرْضَ
بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا إِنَّ ذَلِكَ لَمُحْيِي الْمَوْتِ
﴿٥٠﴾

3566. Again the Parable of the Winds is presented from another aspect, both physical and spiritual. In the physical world, see their play with the Clouds: how they suck up the moisture from terrestrial water, carry it about in dark clouds as needed, and break it up with rain as needed. So Allah's wonderful Grace draws up men's spiritual aspirations from the most unlikely places and suspends them as dark mysteries, according to His holy Will and Plan: and when His Message reaches the hearts of men even in the smallest fragments, how its recipients rejoice, even though before it, they were in utter despair!

3567. See last note.

3568. After the two Parables about the purifying action of the Winds and their fertilising action, we now have the Parable of the earth that dies in winter or drought and lives again in spring or rain, by Allah's Grace: so in the spiritual sphere, man may be dead and may live again by the Breath of Allah and His Mercy if she will only place himself in Allah's hands.

Will give life to the men
Who are dead: for He
Has power over all things.

51. And if We (but) send
A Wind from which³⁵⁶⁹
They see (their tilth)
Turn yellow,—behold,
They become, thereafter,
Ungrateful (Unbelievers)!

52. So verily thou canst not
Make the dead to hear,³⁵⁷⁰
Nor canst thou make
The deaf to hear
The call, when they show
Their backs and turn away.

53. Nor canst thou lead back
The blind from their straying:³⁵⁷¹
Only those wilt thou make
To hear, who believe
In Our Signs and submit
(Their wills in Islam).

وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٥٠﴾

وَلَئِن أَرْسَلْنَا رِيحًا فَرَأَوْهُ مُصْفَرًّا لَّظَلُّوا مِنْ بَعْدِهِ
يَكْفُرُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

فَأَنكَ لَا تَسْمَعُ الْمَوْتَىٰ وَلَا تَسْمَعُ الْبُصْمَ الدُّعَاءَ
إِذَا وَلَّوْا مُدْبِرِينَ ﴿٥٢﴾

وَمَا أَنْتَ بِهَادٍ الْعَمَىٰ عَنْ ضَلَالَتِهِمْ إِنْ تُسْمِعُ
إِلَّا مَنْ يُؤْمِنُ بِآيَاتِنَا فَهُمْ مُسْلِمُونَ ﴿٥٣﴾

3569. Another Parable from the forces of nature. We saw how the Winds gladdened, vivified, and enriched those who utilised them in the right spirit. But a wind might be destructive to tilth in certain circumstances: so the blessings of Allah may—by the wrong-doers resisting and blaspheming—bring punishment to the wrong-doers. Instead of taking the punishment in the right spirit—in the spirit in which Believers of Allah take their misfortunes,—the Unbelievers curse and deepen their sin!

3570. The marvels of Allah's creation can be realised in a general way by every one who has a disposition to allow such knowledge to penetrate his mind. But if men, out of perversity, kill the very faculties which Allah has given them, how can they then understand? Besides the men who deaden their spiritual sense, there are men who may be likened to the deaf, who lack one faculty but to whom an appeal can be made through other faculties, such as the sense of sight; but if they turn their backs and refuse to be instructed at all, how can the Truth reach them?

3571. See last note. Then there is the case of men about whom the saying holds true, that none are so blind as those who *will* not see. They *prefer* to stray in paths of wrong and of sense-pleasures. How can they be guided in any way? The only persons who gain by spiritual teaching are those who bring a mind to it—who believe and submit their wills to Allah's Will. This is the central doctrine of Islam.

SECTION 6.

54. It is Allah Who
Created you in a state
Of (helpless) weakness, then
Gave (you) strength after weakness,
Then, after strength, gave (you)
Weakness and a hoary head:³⁵⁷²
He creates whatever He wills,
And it is He Who has
All knowledge and power.
55. On the Day that
The Hour (of reckoning)
Will be established,³⁵⁷³
The transgressors will swear
That they tarried not
But an hour: thus were
They used to being deluded!
56. But those endued with knowledge
And faith will say:
"Indeed ye did tarry,
Within Allah's Decree,
To the Day of Resurrection,

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ ضَعْفٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ
ضَعْفٍ قُوَّةً ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْ بَعْدِ قُوَّةٍ ضَعْفًا وَشَيْبَةً
يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيمُ الْقَدِيرُ ﴿٥٤﴾

وَيَوْمَ تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ يُقْسِمُ الْمُجْرِمُونَ مَا لِيَأْتُوا
غَيْرَ سَاعَةٍ ۗ كَذَلِكَ كَانُوا يُؤْفَكُونَ ﴿٥٥﴾

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ وَالْإِيمَانَ لَقَدْ لَبِثْنَا فِي كِتَابِ
اللَّهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْبَعْثِ ۗ فَهَذَا يَوْمُ الْبَعْثِ

3572. What was said before about the people who make Allah's teaching of "of none effect" does not mean that Evil will defeat Allah. On the contrary we are asked to contemplate the mysteries of Allah's wisdom with another Parable. In our physical life we see how strength is evolved out of weakness and weakness out of strength. The helpless babe becomes a lusty man in the pride of his manhood, and then sinks to a feeble old age: and yet there is wisdom in all these stages in the Universal Plan. So Allah carries out His Plan in this world "as He wills", i.e., according to His Will and Plan, and none can gainsay it. And His Plan is wise and can never be frustrated.

3573. Whatever the seeming inequalities may be now—when the good appear to be weak and the strong seem to oppress—will be removed when the balance will be finally redressed. That will happen in good time,—indeed so quickly that the Transgressors will be taken by surprise. They were deluded by the fact that what they took to be their triumph or their freedom to do what they liked was only a reprieve, a "Term Appointed", in which they could repent and amend and get Allah's Mercy. Failing this, they will then be up against the Penalties which they thought they had evaded or defied.

And this is the Day³⁵⁷⁴
Of Resurrection: but ye—
Ye did not know!”

57. So on that Day no excuse
Of theirs will
Avail the Transgressors,³⁵⁷⁵
Nor will they be allowed
To make amends.

58. Verily We have propounded
For men, in this Qur-ān.
Every kind of Parable:
But if thou bring to them
Any Sign, the Unbelievers³⁵⁷⁶
Are sure to say, “Ye
Do nothing but talk vanities.”

59. Thus does Allah seal up³⁵⁷⁷
The hearts of those
Who understand not.

وَلَيْكَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٦﴾

فِيَوْمَئِذٍ لَا يَنْفَعُ الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مَعذِرَتُهُمْ
وَلَا هُمْ يُسْتَعْتَبُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾

وَلَقَدْ ضَرَبْنَا لِلنَّاسِ فِي هَذَا الْقُرْآنِ مِنْ كُلِّ مَثَلٍ
وَلَئِنْ جِئْتَهُمْ بِآيَةٍ لَيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
إِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا مُبْطِلُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

كَذَلِكَ يَطْمَعُ اللَّهُ عَلَى قُلُوبِ الَّذِينَ
لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥٩﴾

3574. The men of knowledge and faith knew all along of the true values—of the things of this ephemeral life and the things that will endure and face them at the End,—unlike the wrong-doers who were content with falsehoods and were taken by surprise, like ignorant men, when they faced the Realities.

3575. It will be no use for those who deliberately rejected the clearest warnings in Allah's Message to say: “Oh we did not realise this!” The excuse will be false, and it would be unreasonable to suppose that they would then be asked to seek Grace by repentance. It will then be too late.

3576. Things of the highest moment have been explained in the Qur-ān from various points of view, as in this Sūra itself, by means of parables and similitudes drawn from nature and from our ordinary daily life. But whatever the explanation, however convincing it may be to men who earnestly seek after Truth, those who deliberately turn their backs to Truth can find nothing convincing. In their eyes the explanations are mere “vain talk” or false arguments.

3577. When an attitude of obstinate resistance to Truth is adopted, the natural consequence (by Allah's Law) is that the heart and mind get more and more hardened with every act of deliberate rejection. It becomes more and more impervious to the reception of Truth, just as a sealed envelope is unable to receive any further letter or message after it is sealed. Cf. also ii. 7 and n. 31.

60. So patiently persevere: for
 Verily the promise of Allah
 Is true: nor let those³⁵⁷⁸
 Excite thee, who have
 (Themselves) no certainty of faith.

فَاصْبِرْ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَلَا يَسْتَخِفُّكَ
 الَّذِينَ لَا يُوقِنُونَ ﴿٦٠﴾

3578. The Prophet of Allah does not slacken in his efforts or feel discouraged because the Unbelievers laugh at him or persecute him or even seem to succeed in blocking his Message. He has firm faith, and he knows that Allah will finally establish His Truth. He goes on in his divinely entrusted task, with patience and perseverance, which must win against the levity of his opponents, who have no faith or certainty at all to sustain them.

APPENDIX No. 5

FIRST CONTACT OF ISLAM WITH WORLD MOVEMENTS

The contemporary Roman and Persian Empires (see xxx. 2-7 and notes).

The conflict between the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius and the Persian King Khusrāu Parwiz (Chosroes II) is referred to in Sūra xxx. (*Rūm*). It will therefore be convenient now to review very briefly the relations of these two great empires and the way in which they gradually decayed before the rising sun of Islam. The story has not only a political significance, but a deep spiritual significance in world history.

2. If we take the Byzantine Empire as a continuation of the Empire that grew out of the Roman Republic, the first conflict took place in B.C. 53, when the Consul Crassus (famous for his riches) was defeated in his fight with the Parthians. If we go back further, to the time of the Greek City States, we can refer back to the invasion of Greece by Xerxes in B.C. 480-479 and the effective repulse of that invasion by sea and land by the united co-operation of the Greek States. The Persian Empire in those days extended to the western (Mediterranean) coast of Asia Minor. But as it included the Greek cities of Asia Minor, there was constant intercourse in war and peace between Persia and the Hellenic (Greek) world. The cities in Greece proper had their own rivalries and jealousies, and Greek cities or parties often invoked the aid of the Great King (Shahinshah of Persia) against their opponents. By the Peace of Antalcidas, B.C. 387, Persia became practically the suzerain power of Greece. This was under the Achæmenian Dynasty of Persia.

3. Then came the rise of Macedonia and Alexander's conquest of the Persian Empire (B.C. 330). This spread the Hellenic influence as far east as Central Asia, and as far south as Syria (including Palestine), Egypt, and Northern Africa generally. Rome in its expansion westwards reached the Atlantic, and in its expansion eastwards absorbed the territories of Alexander's successors, and became the mistress of all countries with a Mediterranean sea-coast. The nations of the Roman Empire "insensibly melted away into the Roman name and people" (Gibbon, chap. ii).

4. Meanwhile there were native forces in Persia which asserted themselves and established (A.D. 10) the Dynasty of the Arsacids (*Ashkāniān*). This was mainly the outcome of a revolt against Hellenism, and its spear-point was in Parthia. The Arsacids won back Persia proper, and established the western

boundary of Persia in a line drawn roughly from the eastern end of the Black Sea southwards to the Euphrates at a point north-east of Palmyra. This would include the region of the Caucasus (excluding the Black Sea coast) and Armenia and Lower Mesopotamia, in the Persian Empire. And this was the normal boundary between Persia and the Roman Empire until the Islamic Empire wiped out the old Monarchy of Persia and a great part of the Byzantine Empire, and annexed Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and gradually Asia Minor, finally extinguishing the whole of the Byzantine Empire.

5. Another stage in Persian history was reached when the Arsacids were overthrown and the Sāsānians came into power under Ardashīr I, A.D. 225. The Sāsānian Empire was in a sense a continuation of the Achæmenian Empire, and was a reaction against the corruptions of the Zoroastrian religion which had crept in under the Parthian Dynasty of the Arsacids. But the religious reforms were only partial. There was some interaction between Christianity and the Zoroastrian religion. For example, the great mystic Mānī, who was a painter as well as a religious leader, founded the sect of Manichæism. He flourished in the reign of Shāpūr I (A.D. 241-272) and seems to have preached a form of Gnostic faith, in which Alexandrian philosophy was mixed with Christian doctrine and the old Persian belief in the dual principle of Good and Evil. The Sāsānians failed to purify religion and only adhered to fire-worship as the chief feature of their cult. In manners and morals they succumbed to the vices of arrogance, luxury, sensuality, and monopoly of power and privilege, which it is the office of Religion to denounce and root out. That office was performed by Islam.

6. When the seat of the Roman Empire was transferred to Constantinople (Byzantium) in the time of Constantine (A.D. 330), the conflict between Rome and Persia became more and more frequent. The true Peninsula of Arabia was never conquered either by Rome or by Persia, although its outlying parts were absorbed in either the one or the other at various times. It is interesting to notice that the Roman Emperor Philip (A.D. 244-249) was a born Arab and that the architecture of the Nabatæans in the city of Petra and in Hijr shows a mixture of Roman, Greek, Egyptian, and indigenous Arab cultures.

7. Arabia received the cultural influences of Persia and the Byzantine Empire, but was a silent spectator of their conflicts until Islam was brought into the main currents of world politics.

8. The Yemen coast of Arabia, which was easily accessible by sea to Persia, was the battle-ground between the Persian Empire and the Abyssinian Empire just across the Red Sea. Abyssinia and Arabia had had cultural and political relations for many centuries. Amharic, the ruling language of Abyssinia, is closely allied to Arabic, and the Amharic people went as colonists and conquerors from Arabia through Yemen. Shortly before the birth of holy Prophet, Aybssinia had been in occupation of Yemen for some time, having displaced a Jewish dynasty. The Aybssinians professed the Christian religion,

and although their Church was doctrinally separate from the Byzantine Church, there was a great deal of sympathy between the Byzantines and the Abyssinians on account of their common Christian religion. One of the Abyssinian viceroys in Yemen was Abraha, who conceived the design of destroying the Temple at Makkah. He led an expedition, in which elephants formed a conspicuous feature, to invade Makkah and destroy the Ka'ba. He met a disastrous repulse, which is referred to in the Qur-ān (Sūra cv.). This event was in the year of the Prophet's birth, and marks the beginning of the great conflict which enabled Arabia eventually to obtain a leading place among the nations of the world. The year usually given for the Prophet's birth is 570 A.D., though the date must be taken as only approximate, being the middle figure between 569 and 571, the extreme possible limits. The Abyssinians having been overthrown, the Persians were established in Yemen, and their power lasted there until about the 7th year of the Hijra (approximately 628 A.D.), when Yemen accepted Islam.

9. The outstanding event in Byzantine history in the 6th century was the reign of Justinian (527-565) and in Persian history the reign of Anaushīrwān (531-579). Justinian is well-known for his great victories in Africa and for the great Digest he made of Roman Law and Jurisprudence. In spite of the scandalous life of his queen Theodora, he occupies an honourable place in the history of the Roman Empire. Anaushīrwān is known in Persian history as the "Just King". They were contemporary rulers for a period of 34 years. In their time the Roman and the Persian Empires were in close contact both in peace and war. Anaushīrwān just missed being adopted by the Roman Emperor. If the adoption had come off, he would have become one of the claimants to the Byzantine throne. He invaded Syria and destroyed the important Christian city of Antioch in 540-541. It was only the able defence of Belisarius, the Roman general, which saved the Roman Empire from further disasters in the east. On the other hand the Turanian Avars, driven in front of the Turks, had begun the invasion of Constantinople from the western side. Justinian also made an alliance with the Abyssinians as a Christian nation, and the Abyssinians and the Persians came to conflict in Yemen. Thus world conditions were hemming in Arabia on all sides. It was Islam that not only saved Arabia but enabled it to expand and to play a prominent part in world history after the annihilation of the Persian Empire and the partial destruction of the Byzantine Empire.

10. The sixth century of the Christian era and the first half of the seventh century were indeed a marvellous period in the world's history. Great events and transformations were taking place throughout the then known world. We have referred to the Roman Empire and the Persian Empire which dominated the civilised portions of Europe, Africa and Western Asia. The only two other countries of note in history in those days were India and China. In India there was the glorious period of Harsha Vardhana (606-647 A.D.), in which art, science, and literature flourished, political power was on a healthy basis, and religious enquiry was bringing India and China into close relationship. The

famous Chinese Buddhist traveller Yuang-Chwang (or Yüang-Tsang or Hsüan-Tsang) performed his pious pilgrimage to India in 629-45. In China the glorious T'ang Dynasty was established in 618. The Chinese art of that Dynasty led the world. In political power Chinese extended from the Pacific in the east to the Persian Gulf on the west. There was unity and peace, and China—hitherto more or less isolated—received ambassadors from Persia, Constantinople, Magadha, and Nepal, in 643. But all this pomp and glitter had in it the seeds of decay. Persia and Byzantium collapsed in the next generation. India was in chaos after Harsha's death. The Chinese Empire could not long remain free from the "Barbarians": the Great Wall, begun in the third century B.C., was soon to be out of date. By about 683 the Khitans from the north-west and the Tibetans from the south were molesting China. The Germans, the Goths and the Vandals were pressing further and further into the Roman Empire. From Asia the Avars and the Turks were pressing both on the Romans and the Persians, and sometimes playing off the one against the other. The simpler and less sophisticated nations, with their ruder but more genuine virtues, were gaining ground. Into all that welter came the Message of Islam, to show up, as by galvanic action, the false from the truth, the empty from the eternal, the decrepit and corrupt from the vigorous and pure. The ground of History was being prepared for the New Birth in Religion.

11. Anaushīrwān was succeeded on the Persian throne by an unworthy son Hurmuz (579-590). Had it not been for the talents of his able General Bahrām, his Empire would have been ruined by the invasions of the Turks on one side and of the Romans on the other. Eventually Bahrām rebelled, and Hurmuz was deposed and killed. His son Khusrau Parwīz (Chosroes II) took refuge with the Byzantine Emperor Maurice, who practically adopted him as a son and restored him to the Persian throne with Roman arms. Khusrau reigned over Persia from 590 to 628. It was to him that the holy Prophet addressed one of his letters, inviting him to Islam towards the end of his life. It is not certain whether the letter was actually delivered to him or to his successor, as it is not easy to calculate precisely synchronous dates of the Christian era with those of the earliest years of the Hijri era.

12. In Arabic and Persian records the term *Kisrā* refers usually to Khusrau Parwīz (Chosroes II) and sometimes to Khusrau Anaushīrwān (Chosroes I), while the term Khusrau is usually treated as generic,—as the title of the Kings of Persia generally. But this is by no means always the case. "Kisrā" is an Arabic form of "Khusrau". The name of Anaushīrwān has been shortened from the time of Firdausī onwards to Nūshīrwān. The Pehlevi form is Anoshekrūwān, "of immortal soul".

13. The Roman Emperor Maurice (582-602) had a mutiny in his army, and his capital revolted against him. The army chose a simple centurion called Phocas as Emperor and executed Maurice himself. The usurper Phocas ruled from 602 to 610, but his tyranny soon disgusted the Empire. Heraclius, the

governor (exarch) of a distant province in Africa, raised the standard of rebellion, and his young son, also called Heraclius, was sent to Constantinople to depose Phocas and assume the reins of power. It was this younger Heraclius, who ascended the throne of Constantinople in 610 and ruled till 642, who figures in Muslim history as *Hiraql*.

14. *Khusrau Parwiz* called himself the son of the Emperor Maurice. During his refuge at Constantinople he had married a Byzantine wife. In *Nizami's* Romance she is known as Maryam. According to some historians she was a daughter of the Emperor Maurice, but Gibbon throws doubt on that relationship. In any case he used the resources of the Persian Empire to fight the usurper Phocas. He invaded the Byzantine Empire in 603. The war between the Persians and the Romans became a national war and continued after the fall of Phocas in 610. The Persians had sweeping victories, and conquered Aleppo, Antioch, and the chief Syrian cities, including Damascus in 611. Jerusalem fell to their arms in 614-615, just 8 to 7 years before the sacred Hijrat. The city was burnt and pillaged, the Christians were massacred, the churches were burnt, the burial-place of Christ was itself insulted, and many relics, including the "true Cross" on which the Christians believed that Christ had been crucified, were carried away to Persia. The priests of the Persian religion celebrated an exultant triumph over the priests of Christ. In this pillage and massacre the Persians were assisted by crowds of Jews, who were discontented with the Christian domination, and the Pagans to whom any opportunity of plunder and destruction was in itself welcome. It is probably this striking event—this victory of the Persians over the Roman Empire—which is referred to in *Sūra XXX (Rūm)* of the *Qur-ān*. The Pagan Arabs naturally sided with the Persians in their destructive zeal, and thought that the destruction of the Christian power of Rome would also mean a setback to the Message of the Prophet, the true successor of Jesus. For our holy Prophet had already begun his mission and the promulgation of Allah's Revelation in A.D. 610. While the whole world believed that the Roman Empire was being killed by Persia, it was revealed to him that the Persian victory was short-lived and that within a period of a few years the Romans would conquer again and deal a deadly blow at the Persians. The Pagan Arabs, who were then persecuting the holy Prophet in Makkah hoped that their persecution would destroy the holy Prophet's new Revelation. In fact both their persecution and the deadly blows aimed by the Persians and the Romans at each other were instruments in Allah's hands for producing those conditions which made Islam thrive and increase until it became the predominant power in the world.

15. The Persian flood of conquest did not stop with the conquest of Jerusalem. It went on to Egypt, which was also conquered and annexed to the Persian Empire in 616. The Persian occupation reached as far as Tripoli in North Africa. At the same time another Persian army ravaged Asia Minor and reached right up to the gates of Constantinople. Not only the Jews and Pagan Arabs, but the various Christian sects which had been persecuted as heretics

by the Romans, joined in the fray and helped the Persians. The condition of Heraclius became indeed pitiable. With all these calamities, he had to deal with the Avars who were attacking from the other side of Constantinople, which was practically in a state of siege. Famine and pestilence added to the horrors of the situation.

16. In these desperate circumstances Heraclius conceived a brilliant plan. He knew that the Persians were weak in sea power. He used his sea power to attack them in the rear in 622 (the year of the Hijra) he transported his army by sea through the Ægean Sea to the bay just south of the Taurus Mountains. He fought a decisive battle with the Persians at Issus, in the same plain in which Alexander the Great had defeated the Persians of his day in his famous march to Syria and Egypt. The Persians were taken by surprise and routed. But they had still a large force in Asia Minor, which they could have brought into play against the Romans if Heraclius had not made another and equally unexpected dash by sea from the north. He returned to Constantinople by sea, made a treaty with the Avars, and with their help kept the Persians at bay round the capital. Then he led three campaigns, in 623, 624 and 625, along the southern shore of the Black Sea and took the Persians again in the rear in the region round Trebizond and Kars. Through Armenia he penetrated into Persia and got into Mesopotamia. He was now in a position to strike at the very heart of the Persian Empire. A decisive battle was fought on the Tigris near the city of Mosul in December 627. Before this battle, however, he had taken care to get the alliance of the Turks and with their help to relieve Constantinople in 626 against the Persians and the treacherous Avars who had then joined the Persians.

17. Heraclius celebrated his triumph in Constantinople in March 628. Peace was then made between the two Empires on the basis of the *status quo ante*. Heraclius, in pursuance of a vow he had made, went south in the autumn to Emessa (Himş) and from there marched on foot to Jerusalem to celebrate his victories, and restore to its place the holy Cross which had been carried away by the Persians and was returned to the Emperor as a condition of peace. Heraclius's route was strewn with costly carpets, and he thought that the final deliverance had come for his people and his empire. Either on the way, or in Jerusalem, he met a messenger from the holy Prophet, carrying a letter inviting him to the True Faith as renewed in the living Messenger of the age. He apparently received the messenger with courtesy. But he did not realise the full import of the new World which was being shaped according to Allah's plans, and the future that was opening out through the new Revelation. Perhaps in his heart he felt impressed by the story which he heard from the Arabs about the holy Prophet, but the apparent grandeur of his empire and the pride of his people prevented him from openly accepting the renewed Message of Allah. He caused a search to be made for any Arab who was sufficiently acquainted with the Prophet to tell him something about him. Abū Sufyān was then trading in a caravan in Syria. He was a cousin of the Prophet, and belonged to the

Umaiya branch of the family. He was sent for to Jerusalem (Ælia Capitolina).

18. When Abū Sufyān was called to the presence of Heraclius, the Emperor questioned him closely about this new Prophet. Abū Sufyān himself was at that time outside Islam and really an enemy of the Prophet and of his Message. Yet the story he told—of the truth and the sincerity of the holy Prophet, of the way in which the poor and the lowly flocked to him, of the wonderful increase of his power and spiritual influence, and the way in which people who had once received the Light never got disillusioned or went back to their life of ignorance, and above all the integrity with which he kept all his covenants—made a favourable impression on the mind of Heraclius. That story is told in dramatic detail by Bukhārī and other Arabian writers.

19. The relations of the Persian Monarch with Islam were different. He—either Khusrāu Parwiz or his successor—received the holy Prophet's messenger with contumely and tore up his letter. "So will his kingdom be torn up," said the holy Prophet when the news reached him. The Persian Monarch ordered his Governor in Yemen to go and arrest the man who had so far forgotten himself as to address the grandson of Anaushīrwān on equal terms. When the Persian Governor tried to carry out his Monarch's command, the result was quite different from what the great Persian King of Kings had expected. His agent accepted the truth of Islam, and Yemen was lost as a province to the Persian Empire and became a portion of the new Muslim State. Khusrāu Parwiz died in February 628. He had been deposed and imprisoned by his own cruel and undutiful son, who reigned only for a year and a half. There were nine candidates for the Persian throne in the remaining four years. Anarchy reigned supreme in the Sāsānian Empire, until the dynasty was extinguished by the Muslim victory at the battle of Madāin in 637. The great and glorious Persian monarchy, full of pride and ambition, came to an ignominious end, and a new chapter opened for Persia under the banner of Islam.

20. The Roman Empire itself began to shrink gradually, loosing its territory, not to Persia, but to the new Muslim Power which absorbed both the ancient Empires. This Power arose in its vigour to proclaim a new and purified creed to the whole world. Already in the last seven years of Heraclius's reign (635-642) several of the provinces nearest to Arabia had been annexed to the Muslim Empire. The Muslim Empire continued to spread on, in Asia Minor to the north and Egypt to the south. The Eastern Roman Empire became a mere shadow with a small bit of territory round its capital. Constantinople eventually surrendered to the Muslim arms in 1453.

21. That was the real end of the Roman Empire. But in the wonderful century in which the Prophet lived, another momentous Revolution was taking place. The Roman Pontificate of Gregory the Great (590-604) was creating a new Christianity as the old Christianity of the East was slowly dying out. The Patriarch of Constantinople had claimed to be the Universal Bishop, with

jurisdiction over all the other bishops of Christendom. This had been silently but gradually questioned by the Popes of Rome. They had been building up a liturgy, a church organisation and a body of discipline for the clergy, different from those of the Holy Orthodox Church. They had been extending their spiritual authority in the Barbarian provinces of Gaul and Spain. They had been amassing estates and endowments. They had been accumulating secular authority in their own hands. Pope Gregory the Great, converted the Anglo-Saxon invaders of Great Britain to his form of Christianity. He protected Italy from the ravages of the Franks and Lombards and raised the See of Rome to the position of a Power which exercised ample jurisdiction over the Western world. He was preparing the way for the time when one of his successors would crown under his authority the Frankish Charlemagne as Emperor of Rome and of the West (A.D. 800), and another of his successors would finally break away from the Orthodox Church of Constantinople in 1054 by the Pope's excommunication of the Patriarch of Constantinople and Greeks.

References:—Among Western writers, the chief authority is Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*: mainly chapters 40-42, and 45-46: I have given references to other chapters in the body of this Appendix: his delineation of the characters of Heraclius and Chosroes II is brief but masterly, L. Drapeyron's French monograph, *L'Empereur Heraclius* (Paris, 1869) throws further light on an interesting personality. A.J. Butler's *Arab Conquest of Egypt* (Oxford, 1902) gives a good account of Heraclius. The famous French dramatist Corneille has left a Play on Heraclius, but it turns more on an intricate and imaginary plot in the early life of Heraclius than on the character of Heraclius as Emperor. Nizāmi, in his *Khusrāu-o-Shirīn* (571 H. = 1175-66 A.D.) makes a reference at the end of his Romance to the holy Prophet's letter to the Persian King, and does attempt in the course of the Romance a picture of the King's character. He is a sort of wild Prince Hal before he comes to the throne. Shirīn is an Armenian princess in love with Khusrāu: she marries Khusrāu after the death of his first wife Maryam, daughter of the Roman Emperor, and mother of the undutiful son who killed Khusrāu and seized his throne. Among the other Eastern writers, we find a detailed description of the interview of Abū Sufyān in Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* (book on the beginning of Inspiration): the notes in the excellent English translation of Muhammad Asad (Leopold Weiss) are helpful. Tabarī's History is as usual valuable. Mirkhond's (*Khāwind-Shāh*) *Raudhat-us-Ṣafā* (translated by Rehatsek) will give English readers a summary (at second hand) of the various Arabic authorities. Maulāna Shibli's otherwise excellent *Sīrat-un-Nabī* is in this respect disappointing. Maulāna Zafar 'Alī's *Galaba-i-Rūm* (Urdu, Lahore, 1926) is interesting for its comments.

A note on the Persian capitals may be interesting. So long as Persia was under the influence of the Semitic Elamites, the chief residence of the rulers was at Sūsa, near the modern Dizful, about 50 miles north-east of Shustar. In the Medic or Median period (say B.C. 700 to 550) the capital was, as we should expect, in the highlands of Media, in Ecbatana, the site of the modern city of Hamadān, 180 miles west of modern Tīhrān. Ecbatana remained even in Sāsānian times the summer capital of Persia. With the Achāemenians (B.C. 550 to 330) we come to a period of full national and imperial life. Sūsa was the chief Achāemenian capital from the time of Darius I onwards, though Persepolis (Istakhr) in the mountain region near modern Shirāz, and about 40 miles north-

east of Shīrāz, was used as the city of royal burial. Alexander himself, as Ruler in Persia, died in Babylon. Later, when the centre of gravity moved north and north-east, other sites were selected. The Arsacids (*Ashkāniān*) or Parthians were a tribal power, fitly called in Arabic the *mulūk-ut-tawā*; and had probably no fixed or centralised capital. The Sāsānians took over a site where there were a number of cities, among which were Ctesiphon and Seleucia on opposite banks of the river Tigris. This site is about 45 miles north of the old site of Babylon and 25 miles below the later city of Baghdad. Ctesiphon and Seleucia were Greek cities founded by one of Alexander's successors. Seleucia being named after Seleucus. This complex of seven cities was afterwards called by the Arabic name of Madāin ("the Cities"). The Takht-i-Kisrā (or Arch of Ctesiphon) still stands in a ruinous condition on this site. This seems to have been the chief capital of the Sāsānians at the Arab conquest, which may be dated either from the battle of Qādisiya or that of Madāin (both fought in 637 A.D.), after which Persia which then included 'Iraq came into the Muslim Empire. The 'Abbāsī Empire built Baghdād for its capital under Manṣūr in 762 A.D. When that Empire was broken up in 1258 A.D. there was some confusion for two centuries. Then a national Persian Empire, the Ṣafawī (1499-1736) arose, and Shāh Salīm established his capital in the north-west corner in Tabriz. Shāh 'Abbās the Great (1587-1628) had his capital at the more central city of Iṣphān (or Iṣfahān). After the Ṣafwī dynasty confusion reigned again for about four decades, when the Afghans were in the ascendant. When the Qāchār (or Qājār) dynasty (1795-1925) was firmly established under Aga Muḥammad Khān, Ṭihrān (Teheran), near the Caspian, where his family originated, became the capital, and it still remains the capital under the modern Pehlevi Dynasty.

APPENDIX 6.

COMPARATIVE CHRONOLOGY OF THE EARLY YEARS OF ISLAM

(See paras. 11 and 8 of Appendix 5.)

The dates after the Hijrat, when given according to the Arabian Calendar, can usually be calculated exactly according to other Calendars, but it is not possible to synchronise exactly the earliest dates of the Arabian Calendar with the dates of the Christian Calendar, and for two reasons. In the first place, there seems to have been some discrepancy between the Calendars in Madinah and in Makkah. In the second place, the Arabian Calendar was roughly luni-solar, before the years of Farewell Pilgrimage (Zul-Hijjah, 10 H. = March 632). The Pagan Arabs were in the habit of counting months by the appearance of the moon, but irregularly intercalating a month once in about three years to bring the calendar up into conformity with the seasons. They did not do it on any astronomical calculations or on any system, but just as it suited their own selfish purposes, thus often upsetting all the old-established conventions about the months of peace and security from war and thus getting an unfair advantage for the clique in power in Makkah over their enemies (see my n. 1295 to ix. 36). Unless exact mathematical calculations are applied and reduced to a well-established system, there is apt to be confusion, and this can well be taken advantage of by arbitrary cliques in power. After the holy Prophet's adoption of the purely lunar calendar for ecclesiastical purposes, there is no confusion. Every date after A.H. 10 is exactly convertible into a corresponding date in any other accurate calendar. Wüstenfeld's and other Comparative Tables of Muslim and Christian dates may therefore be relied upon for dates after A.H. 10, but much caution is necessary in synchronisation for earlier dates.

Mualānā Shibli, in his *Sīrat-un-Nabī*, Vol. I, p. 124 (edition of 1336 H. 1918 C.), adopts for the Prophet's Brithday the date 20th April 571, following Maḥmūd Pāshā. They go on the basis of an astronomical event, the total eclipse of the sun that was visible in Madinah on the day that the Prophet's son Ibrāhīm was taken to the mercy of Allah. But there is no agreement among the authorities as to the exact date *either* by the Christian or the Arabian Calendar. Shibli, following Maḥmūd Pāshā, takes the date of the eclipse to be the 7th November 632. Muir (*Life*, ed. 1923, p. 429), assumes some date in June or July 631. L. Caetani (*Chronographia Islamica*, A.H. 10) gives the date of the eclipse as 4th or 5th July 631, which he synchronises with the 28th or 29th of Rabi' I, A.H. 10, but he quotes authorities for the death of Ibrāhīm as on the 16th June 631, synchronising it with the 10th of Rabi' I. A.H. 10. There is something wrong here, as the death and the eclipse occurred on the same day. Wāqidi gives the month as Rabi' I, A.H. 10, and gives Ibrāhīm a

life of 15 months. But if Abū Dā-ūd and Baihaqī are correct, Ibrāhīm lived only 2 months and 10 days, and as his date of birth is given in Zul-Hijjah A.H. 8, the date of death according to these authorities would be in Rabī' I, A.H. 9. On a review of all the authorities I feel inclined to accept the date for the eclipse and the death of Ibrāhīm as 28th or 29th of Rabī' I, A.H. 10 = 4th or 5th July 631. But this cannot be asserted with certainty. The French work of reference, *L'art de vérifier les dates*, Paris 1818 (Vol. I, p. 310), gives the date of the solar eclipse as the 3rd of August 631, 2-30 P.M. and according to the system adopted in that book, the corresponding Hijra date would be the 28th Rabī' II, A.H. 10.

Even if this particular date was certain and exact, a certain amount of uncertainty remains in counting dates backwards. Most authorities assume purely lunar year of 354 days for working backwards. Probably the Muslims in Madinah counted in this way even before the lunar year was fixed exactly in A.H. 10. But the mass of Pagan Arabs in Makkah and elsewhere probably were all the time intercalating a month roughly once in three years, as has been stated before, until their power was utterly destroyed by the conquest of Makkah; and therefore precise exactitude in pre-Conquest date or in the counting of people's ages in years before 8-10 A.H. is unattainable. See a note on this subject in Margoliouth's *Life of the Prophet* (p. xix. of the 3rd edition) and in Muir's *Life* (p. x. of the 1923 edition).

The date of the actual Hijrat as given in Caetani may be accepted as Sept-Oct. 622, being in the month of Rabī' I. If the ninth of that month be accepted as the date of departure from the cave of Thaur, the best synchronised date would be 22nd September 622 C. But as the first month of the Arab year was (and is) Muharram, the Hijrī year I is counted as beginning on the 15th or 16th July 622 (= 1 Muḥarram A.H. I). The formal adoption of the Hijrī era in official documents date from the Khilāfat of Ḥadhrat 'Umar,—from the year 17-18 H. according to Ṭabarī.

Sir Wolseley Haig's *Comparative Tables of Muḥammadan and Christian Dates* (London, Luzac, 1932), gives in a handy form three comparative Tables which enable the synchronisation of Hijrī years from A.H. 1 to A.H. 1421. The main Table for these years was printed earlier at the end of S. Haīm's *New English-Persian Dictionary*, Teheran, 1931. The exact title of Wüstenfeld's German Tables is: *Wüstenfeld-Mahler, Vergleichungs-Tabellen*, Leipzig, 1926 (2nd edition).