

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: SŪRAT *Al-Inshirāh* or *Al-Sharḥ* 94

This short Sūra gives a message of hope and encouragement in a time of difficulty. It was revealed to the holy Prophet soon after the last Sūra (*Ad-Dhuḥā*), whose argument it supplements.

*Al-Inshirāḥ, or The Expansion.**In the name of Allah, Most Gracious,
Most Merciful.*

1. Have We not
Expanded thee thy breast?⁶¹⁸⁸
2. And removed from thee
Thy burden⁶¹⁸⁹
3. The which did gall
Thy back?—
4. And raised high the esteem
(In which) thou (art held)?⁶¹⁹⁰
5. So, verily,
With every difficulty,
There is relief:⁶¹⁹¹
6. Verily, with every difficulty
There is relief.

سُورَةُ الشَّرْحِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ ۝١

وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ ۝٢

الَّذِي أَنْقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ ۝٣

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ ۝٤

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ۝٥

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ۝٦

6188. Cf. the prayer of Moses in xx. 25. The breast is symbolically the seat of knowledge and the highest feelings of love and affection, the treasure-house in which are stored the jewels of that quality of human character which approaches nearest to the divine. The holy Prophet's human nature had been purified, expanded, and elevated, so that he became a Mercy to all Creation. Such a nature could afford to ignore the lower motives of ordinary humanity which caused shameful attacks to be made on him. Its strength and courage could also bear the burden of the galling work which it had to do in denouncing sin, subduing it, and protecting Allah's creatures from its oppression.

6189. See last note. It is indeed a grievous and galling burden for a man to fight single-handed against sin. But Allah sends His grace and aid, and that burden is removed, or converted into joy and triumph in the service of the One True God.

6190. The Prophet's virtues, the magnanimity of his character, and his love for mankind were fully recognised even in his lifetime, and his name stands highest among the heroic leaders of mankind. The phrase used here is more comprehensive in meaning than that used for various prophets in xxxvii. 119 etc.; "We left this blessing for them among generations to come in later times".

6191. This verse is repeated for extra emphasis. Whatever difficulties or troubles are encountered by men, Allah always provides a solution, a way out, a relief, a way to lead to ease and happiness, if we only follow His Path and show our Faith by patience and well-doing. The solution or relief does not merely come *after* the Difficulty: it is provided *with* it. I understand the definite article in *al-'usr* in a generic sense, and translate: "every difficulty". In xcii. 7, I have translated *Yusr* as Bliss, and in xcii. 10 *'Usr* as Misery.

7. Therefore, when thou art
Free (from thine immediate task),
Still labour hard,⁶¹⁹²

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ ﴿٧﴾

8. And to thy Lord
Turn (all) thy attention.⁶¹⁹³

وَالْإِلَهَ رَبِّكَ فَاَرْغَبْ ﴿٨﴾

6192. *When thou art free:* or when thou art relieved. The words understood may be: from thy immediate task, that of preaching to men, denouncing sin, and encouraging righteousness; or, from the difficulties that confronted thee. When that happens, that does not finish the labours of the man of Allah. It is only one step to them. He has constantly and insistently to go on. When there is rest from the task of instructing the world, the contact with the spiritual kingdom continues, and indeed it becomes more intimate and concentrated.

6193. The kingdom of Allah is everything. Other things are incidental, and really do not matter. Worldly greatness or success may be a means to an end, but it may also be a hindrance to true spiritual greatness. Allah is the goal of the righteous man's whole attention and desire.