

SPREAD KNOWLEDGE

THE  
HOLY QURAN

ENGLISH TAFSEER  
CHAPTER 94  
SURAH ASH-SHARH

COMMENTARY & EXPLANATORY

By  
ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI

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**HOLY QURAN**

**CHAPTER**

**094**

**SURAH ASH-SHARH**

*ABDULLAH YUSUF ALI*

**Introduction and Summary**

This short Surah gives a message of hope and encouragement in a time of darkness and difficulty. It was revealed to the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) soon after the last Surah (*Al Duha*), whose argument it supplements.

**C.274 (The running Commentary, in Rhythmic Prose)**

*The Prophet's mind and heart had indeed  
Been expanded and purified: the burden*

*Which pressed on his soul had been removed;  
And his name exalted in this world and the next.  
For the righteous man there is no trouble  
But is linked with ease and joy; he must strive  
At every stage, and look to Allah  
Alone as the goal of all his hopes.*

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

أَلَمْ نَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ (١)

1. Have We not expanded thee thy breast?

**C6188.** Cf. the prayer of Moses in 20:25.

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.

وَوَضَعْنَا عَنْكَ وِزْرَكَ (٢)

2. And removed from thee thy burden

**C6189.** 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.

الَّذِي أَنْقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ (٣)

3. The which did gall thy back? --

وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ (٤)

4. And raised high the esteem (in which) thou (art held)? --

**C6190.** 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 37:119 etc;

"We left this blessing for them among generations to come in later times".

فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا (٥)

5. So, verily, with every difficulty, there is relief:

**C6191.** 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 92:7, 1 have translated **Yusr** as Bliss, and in 92:10 **'Usr** as Misery.

إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا (٦)

6. Verily, with every difficulty there is relief.

فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ (٧)

7. Therefore, when thou art free (from thine immediate task), still labor hard,

**C6192. 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.

وَالِى رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ (۸)

8. And to thy Lord turn (all) thy attention.

**C6193.** 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.