

Alam Nashrah [The Opening Up] **Makkan Period**

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate

[1] (O Prophet), Did We not lay open your breast¹

[2] and relieve you of the burden

[3] that had well-nigh broken your back?²

[4] And did We not exalt your fame?

1. The expression "to open the breast" occurs at several places in the Qur'an. See, for instance, *al-An'am* 6: 125, *Ta' Ha'* 20: 25, *al-Zumar* 39: 22. If one reflects on its use on different occasions, it is evident that it denotes two things: (1) the state of a person when he overcomes every kind of mental perturbation and reluctance and attains the conviction that Islam is the right Way of life, and (2) the state of a person who has become imbued with the spirit to embark on any task, howsoever arduous, for the sake of Islam and acquires the nerve to shoulder the great responsibilities of prophethood.

2. The word "burden" here signifies the burden of sorrow and grief and of anxiety and concern which had weighed heavily on the Prophet (peace be on him). Being of a sensitive disposition, he was immensely distressed to see that his people were immersed in ignorance and followed ways far removed from righteousness. He agonised over all this but in the early stage of his life did not know how to bring his people out of this state. At that time of his life the burden of this anxiety virtually broke his back. God removed this burden by directing him to Divine Guidance, Henceforth, the Prophet (peace be on him) felt relieved, enjoyed inner peace and was fully convinced that he could liberate not only the people of Arabia, but all humanity from the evils that afflicted them.

[5] Indeed, there is ease with hardship.

[6] Most certainly, there is ease with hardship.³

[7] So, Whenever you are free, strive in devotion,

[8] and turn to your Lord with longing.⁴

3. This is repeated twice in order to fully assure the Prophet (peace be on him) that the hard times through which he was passing would not endure; that good times would soon follow.

4. The Prophet (peace be on him) is being directed here to devote his free hours to acts of worship and to focus his attention exclusively on God.