

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَلَمْ تَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ ۗ وَوَضَعْنَا عَنكَ وِزْرَكَ ۗ
الَّذِي أَنْقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ ۗ وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ ذِكْرَكَ ۗ فَإِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ۗ إِنَّ مَعَ
الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا ۗ فَإِذَا فَرَغْتَ فَانصَبْ ۗ وَإِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ فَارْغَبْ ۗ
وَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ:
الظُّلْمُ ظُلُمَاتٌ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ.

GLAD TIDINGS OF MERCY AND PEACE: SURAH AL-SHARH

Honorable Muslims!

It was the early years of the prophethood of the Messenger of Allah (saw). The oppression and cruelty of the polytheists against the Muslims in Mecca had increased, and life had become unbearable for the believers. At a time of such distress, Allah the Almighty (swt) revealed Surah al-Sharh, which contains many glad tidings and much wisdom for us. Our Prophet (saw) found great relief and joy in the revelation of this surah, and conveyed the glad tidings that our Lord (swt) would surely grant ease and peace after every hardship.¹

Dear Believers!

Today, I would like to address all our brothers and sisters who are suffering from oppression and persecution all over the world, especially in Palestine, with the messages of Surah al-Sharh, which comforts the hearts and instills hope in the believers:

أَلَمْ تَشْرَحْ لَكَ صَدْرَكَ ۗ وَوَضَعْنَا عَنكَ وِزْرَكَ ۗ
الَّذِي أَنْقَضَ ظَهْرَكَ ۗ وَرَفَعْنَا لَكَ
ذِكْرَكَ ۗ

“Have We not uplifted your heart for you, o Prophet, relieved you of the burden which weighed so heavily on your back, and elevated your renown for you?”²

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

We believe that it is Allah (swt), Who has power over everything. It is Allah (swt), Who encompasses us with His mercy and compassion. It is also He (swt), Who will remove the distress in our souls and grant relief to our hearts. Allah the Almighty (swt) will lift the heavy burdens from our shoulders and will certainly save us from all kinds of difficulties and troubles.

Dear Believers!

Another truth that the Surah al-Sharh reminds us of is the following one: إِنَّ مَعَ الْعُسْرِ يُسْرًا. “So, surely with hardship comes ease. Surely with that hardship comes more ease.”³

Yes, we believe that a joy will surely come after every sadness and a relief will surely come after every distress. For Allah the Almighty (swt) has never abandoned the prophets and the believers. He (swt) has never left them alone in the hands of oppressors and enemies. He (swt) saved the Prophet Nuh from the destruction of the flood, the Prophet Ibrahim from the fire of Nimrod, the Prophet Musa from the oppression of Fir'awn, and the Prophet Yusuf from the darkness of the dungeon.

And finally, He (swt) brought our Prophet (saw) out of all sorts of persecution and torment of the disbelievers to prosperity, and paved many ways of victory for him.

Dear Muslims!

Surah al-Sharh also teaches us the following truth: “So once you have fulfilled your duty, strive in devotion, turning to your Lord alone with hope.”⁴

As stated in the verses, laziness and negligence do not benefit us. The believer cannot be irresponsible, negligent, or complacent. They strive to live by, uphold and spread right and truth, and justice and mercy until the good prevails on earth. They do everything by observing Allah's (swt) pleasure. They do not lose hope in the face of difficulties thanks to the strength that their faith gives them. They do their utmost in the defence of their independence and future.

Dear Believers!

One of the greatest atrocities ever witnessed in human history is taking place today in Palestine and in Gaza. Innocent people, including babies, children, women and the elderly, are being brutally massacred. Residential areas, mosques, schools and even hospitals are being mercilessly bombed. A great crime against humanity is being committed in front of the eyes of the whole world. While thousands of innocent people are perishing in a matter of seconds, the world, which has lost its mercy and conscience, is only watching this genocide. The ethnicity, language and religion of the oppressed cannot be a reason for discrimination. We invite all humanity to stand by the side of the oppressed against the oppressor.

Dear Believers!

In one of his hadiths, our Prophet (saw) says, “Oppression will be a darkness on the Day of Resurrection for the oppressor.”⁵ The troubles experienced by Muslims today will surely come to an end and the oppressors will suffer a bitter fate both in this world and in the Hereafter. The believers will surely be victorious with the help of Allah (swt). The difficult times we are going through are the harbingers of new revivals. As long as we, as Muslims, act in unity and solidarity, always embrace our brotherhood and love, remain compassionate towards each other and wise and strong against the enemy, do not give up our hope in the mercy of Allah (swt), and fulfill our responsibilities towards our Lord (swt), our brothers and sisters, and humanity. So that our Lord (swt) may turn our difficulties into ease and our suffering into mercy. And so that He (swt) may make us a leader and example for humanity again.

I would like to conclude this Friday's khutbah with the following verse:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِن تَنْصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنْصُرْكُمْ وَيُخْرِجْ أَعْدَاءَكُمْ .

“O believers! If you stand up for Allah, He will help you and make your steps firm.”⁶

¹ Muwatta, Jihad, 6; Suyuti, Jami' al-Saghir, 7374.

² Sharh, 94/1-4.

³ Sharh, 94/5-6.

⁴ Sharh, 94/7, 8.

⁵ Bukhari, Mazalim, 10.

⁶ Muhammad, 47/7.