

# Lighthouse for Humanity

*Dear Bereaved Parents of Newtown,*

*It is with deepest sorrow that we heard about your loss. We were heartbroken to hear the news, and would like you to know that our deep and sincere thoughts and prayers are with you. Our faith tells us that all kids are innocent; and that they will undoubtedly go to Heaven for everlasting bliss.*

*To offer our heartfelt condolence, we would like to share with you the attached letter from the Risale-i Nur (Treatise of Light) Collection, which was written to a father who lost his beloved son. We hope it lessens your great agony even though to a small extent as it did for several others in the past.*

*With our sincere regards and sorrows,*

*Lighthouse for Humanity*

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# The Seventeenth Letter

## A Letter of Condolence

### On the Death of a Child

*And in His Name, be He glorified!*

*And there is nothing but it glorifies Him with praise.(17:44)*

My Dear Brother of the hereafter, Hafiz Halid Efendi!

*In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.*

*And give good news to the patient, \* Those who when afflicted with calamity say: To God do we belong and to Him is our return.(2:155-6)*

My brother, your child's death saddened me, but, "*the command is God's,*"(40:12) being resigned to the divine decree and submitting to divine determining are marks of Islam. May Almighty God grant you all patience, and may He make the deceased a helper and intercessor for you in the hereafter. I shall explain five points which are truly good news and offer real consolation for you, and for pious believers like you:

***F i r s t P o i n t :*** The meaning of the phrase, "*immortal youths*"(56:17; 76:19) in the All-Wise Qur'an is this: with this phrase, the verse indicates and gives the good news that the children of believers who die before reaching maturity will remain perpetually as eternal, lovable children in a form worthy of Paradise; that they will be an everlasting source of happiness in the embrace of their fathers and mothers who go to Paradise; and will ensure that their parents receive the sweetest of pleasures, the loving and carressing of children; and that all pleasurable things will be found in Paradise; that those who say that since Paradise is not the place for reproduction there will be no loving and carressing of children, are not correct; and that gaining millions of years of pure, painfree loving and caressing of eternal children instead of a brief ten years or so of loving them mixed with the sorrows of this world, is a source of great happiness for believers.

***S e c o n d P o i n t :*** One time when a man was in prison they sent one of his lovable children to him. The unhappy prisoner suffered both his own sorrows, and since he could not make the child happy, he also suffered at his pain. Then the compassionate judge sent someone to him with a message which said: "For sure the child is yours, but he is my subject and one of my people. I shall take him to a fine palace and look after him there." The man wept in anguish.

He said: "I won't give you my child, he is my one comfort!" His friends said to him: "Your grief is meaningless. If it is the child you pity, he will go to a spacious, happy palace in place of this dirty, distressing dungeon. If you are sorry for yourself and seeking your own interests, you will suffer much distress and pain at the child's difficulties if he remains here, in addition to the single dubious, temporary benefit you receive. If he goes there, it will be of manifold advantage for you, for he will attract the king's mercy and will be an intercessor for you. The king will want you to see him, and he is sure not to send him to the prison, so he will release you, summon you to the palace, and allow you to meet with the child there. But on condition you have confidence in the king and you obey him!"

My dear brother, like this comparison, you must think as follows, as should other believers if their children die: the child was innocent and his Creator is All-Compassionate and All-Generous. He has taken him to His perfect grace and mercy in place of my deficient upbringing and compassion. He has released him from the grievous, calamitous, difficult prison of this world and sent him to the gardens of Paradise. How happy for the child! If he had stayed in this world, who knows how he would have grown up. Therefore, I do not pity him, I know him to be fortunate. There remains my own benefits, and I don't pity myself in connection with them, and I am not sad and sorry. For if he had remained in the world, he would have had ten years of a child's temporary love mixed with pains. Then if he had been righteous and if he had been capable in worldly matters, perhaps he would have helped me. But by dying, he has become a sort of intercessor who will win me ten million years of a child's love in eternal Paradise and everlasting happiness. Certainly, a person who loses a doubtful, immediate benefit and gains a thousand certain, postponed benefits does not weep and lament, nor cry out in despair.

***Third Point:*** The child who died was the creature, possession, servant, and with all his members the artefact of the Most Compassionate Creator; he belonged to Him and was a friend of his parents, put temporarily under their supervision. The Creator made the parents the child's servants. In return for their services, He gave them pleasurable compassion as an immediate wage. Now, if as the requirement of mercy and wisdom, the Compassionate Creator, who owns nine hundred and ninety-nine shares of the child out of a thousand, takes the child from you and puts an end to your service, to cry out in grief and despair due to that apparent single share in the face of the true owner of the thousand shares in a way that infers complaint, does not befit a believer; it befits rather the people of neglect and misguidance.

***Fourth Point:*** If the world had been eternal, and man was to have remained in it eternally, and separation had been unending; grievous sorrow and despairing woe would have had some meaning. But since this world is a guesthouse, wherever the dead child has gone, you, and we too, shall go there. Moreover, he is not the only one to die; it is a general highway. And, since separation is not for ever, you will meet with him in the future, both in the Intermediate Realm and in the hereafter. One should say: "The command is God's. He gave him and He took him away;" and: "All praise be to God for all circumstances," and offer thanks in patience.

***Fifth Point***: Compassion, one of the most subtle, beautiful, agreeable, and sweet manifestations of divine mercy, is a luminous elixir. It is much more direct than passionate love; it is a swift means of union with Almighty God. Temporary love and worldly love are transformed into true love and find Almighty God only with the greatest difficulty, but compassion binds the heart to Him in purer, more direct fashion – and without difficulty. Both father and mother love their child more than all the world. If they are fortunate and are true believers, when he is taken from them it turns their faces from this world and they find the True Bestower of Bounties. They say: “The world is transitory and not worth binding one’s heart to.” They become attached to where the child has gone, and this gains high spiritual rank for them.

The people of neglect and misguidance are deprived of the happiness and good news of these five points. You can see from the following how grievous their situation is: they see their only child in the throes of death, and because they imagine the world is eternal and as a result of their heedlessness and misguidance, they suppose death is non-existence and eternal separation. They think of him in the earth of his grave in place of his soft bed, and due to their heedlessness or misguidance, the merciful Paradise and bounteous heaven of the Most Compassionate of the Compassionate does not occur to them. You can see by comparison the despairing sorrow and grief they suffer. Whereas belief and Islam say to the believer: the Most Compassionate Creator will take this child of yours who is in the throes of death from this lowly world to Paradise. He will make him both an intercessor for you, and an eternal child. Don’t worry, separation is temporary! Say: “*The command is God’s.(40:12) \* To God do we belong and to Him shall we return,*”(2:156) and bear it patiently.

*The Eternal One, He is the Eternal One!*

*S a i d N u r s i*